Leaving The Past.

by LittleWolf95

Summary

After failing to bring Adora back (and facing the wrath of Shadow Weaver) Catra decides to do something she wanted to do a long time ago: Leave the Horde.

Now without anyone who would really miss her She heads through the Whispering wood--and away from Brightmoon.

But where will she go now that she has lost the one person that supposedly cared about her?

Notes

Trigger Warning: Abuse mentioned in the first two chapters.
Everything hurt.

Hell, even her bones seemed to ache with the electrical sting that only magic could leave behind. Only this time, it wasn't only the pain left behind from the magic or the welts she was sure was littering her body.

No, what hurt even worse than that was her heart because, no matter how she looked at it. Adora had left her, left her here without so much as a thought about what the consequences would be once that Shadow Weaver discovered her absence.

Why didn't she let me come with her? Did she really think that she would save me from anything by making me stay behind? She should know by now that any time she screws up... I end up paying for it!

The thought made her stomach turn.

What if that was the only thing that she was to Adora? What if the only thing that the blonde had seen her as was some kind of whipping girl?

Had their friendship really meant nothing to her?

Catra felt like crying at that thought—although she wouldn't—No, she couldn't do anything to make Shadow Weaver think that she was finally broken.

That she had finally gotten to her.

No, she wasn't weak and she would rather die than let anyone think that.
It was with that thought that the half-feline staggered to her feet, panting from the pain.

_This is the worse she's ever done...and that's saying something...guess she was afraid to actually kill me without a cause but she wanted to make me wish that she had_. Catra thought as she glanced around the dimly lit room, seeing no sign of anyone or anyone.

_Looks like the bitch had better things to do than make sure I stayed in a re-education chamber._

She thought as she slowly made her way back toward the barracks, knowing that the infirmary would be useless.

_I shouldn't have stuck around....I should have left while I still had a chance. I shouldn't have....._

Catra froze when that particular thought hit her.

_Who says I can't leave? If Adora could just abandon everyone here when everyone loved her....Then what is keeping me here?_

_It's not like anyone would miss me anyway._

Catra could take the pain.

She _knew_ that. She knew that she was stronger than what people believed she was...She _had_ to be.
But yet if this was true, then why was it that with every jar of the skiff her whole body seemed to spasm?

Hell, even the wind against her fur hurt and she didn't even want to know the condition that her body was in for it to hurt this much.

Come on, you are better than this. You've dealt with this shit your whole life! You can take anything that is thrown at you! What is a beating? You've had worse.

She told herself mentally, although she wasn't quite so sure that this was the truth.

Sure, she had been beaten pretty badly before but she feared that anything worse than this would have killed her.

She wasn't sure how long she drove but she soon found herself outside of the Whispering Wood—and definitely not in Bright-Moon.

Well, this is as good of a place as any to rest....Shadow Weaver and the others wouldn't dream of a traitorous Cadet running to the middle of Nowhere. They would try to infer-trait Bright-Moon first. She thought as she slowly dismounted the Riff, wincing as the movement irritated her injuries even further.

She glanced around then, sniffing at the air in case there was anyone else nearby, hoping that there wasn't since she really didn't feel like putting up with a pity party or being forced to talk to anyone at all at the moment.

All she really wanted was some sleep.

Maybe when I wake up I'll be able to figure out where to go from here. I am absolutely not going to go deal with those prissy princesses. Adora can take them and that big, glowing sword and shove it up her ass.

She thought as she got comfortable the best she could on the ground.
The City Underground

Catra awoke with a start, an uneasy feeling settling in the pit of her stomach. The same uneasy feeling that Catra had felt the night that Adora had left to find that damned sword.

But what could it be? Surely there weren't any weird weapons with glowing princess powers in the area.

However, as she stiffly got to her feet and slowly began to walk around, both to try to get the stiffness out of her body but also to try to figure out where exactly she was. However, as she walked around she suddenly found the ground shift under her and suddenly she felt all the pain from the previous night return as she found herself tumbling through some kind of hole.

*Great...My two options were getting beat to death or dying in a pit somewhere.*

She thought as she slowly got to her feet, wincing when she felt her ankle protest against the movements.

She didn't know how long that she was walking until she began aware of the feeling of something watching her from the shadows—although when she looked she didn't see anything—but the longer she walked, the stronger that sensation became.

*Okay, this place is freaky.*
She thought as she glanced around once again and felt her heart nearly stop as she came face to face with a huge beast with glowing green eyes.

She tried to take a swipe at the creature, only to find herself bowled over by the creature, whose eyes narrowed slightly as it sniffed at her.

At any other time Catra would have tried to at least outsmart the thing—However in the condition that she was in, she froze.

That was until the creature spoke.

“A horde soldier alone? Now I have seen everything.”

Catra was still in shock when she saw more of these creatures—including one who stood slightly taller than most of them who wore a strange purple mask over its face.

“Let's bring her back to the city....She's covered in blood and I can see that her clothing is ripped. I know this isn't the work of any of the surrounding kingdoms. Even the traitors weren't this bad.” The one with the mask spoke, her tone of voice reminding Catra slightly of Hordak's—although the other cat-like creatures didn't seem to fear her.

“Your majesty, are you sure? I mean she is obviously from the Horde....”

One of the creatures began only to earn a growl.

“Tell me, what is one injured teenager going to do to a whole kingdom of warriors? I doubt she
could even *run* if she wanted to with those wounds. We'll figure out everything later...as of right now we better be getting back...The hunters have probably already returned.”

“Ow! Shit! What are you trying to do? Kill me? Why didn't the demon-beasts do that before they brought me here!” Catra exclaimed as she felt something that felt like fire being pressed against the torn skin on her back, earning a chuckle from the woman standing behind her.

“Demon-Beasts? Well, *that* is new. Then again...I bet you don't even know where you are or *what* you are. Do you kid?”

The response caused Catra to freeze.

That was true. Catra had certainly noticed that these people—or most of them—looked similar to her.

She had never seen anyone like her before and now that she thought about it, there wasn't supposed to be anything in this area either.

“Yeah well, I've never seen a huge ass cat the size of a damn horse!” Catra retorted only to yelp again as more of the solution was applied to the wounds.

“I'm sure Queen C'ya will explain *everything* in due time. Right now you probably should just worry about taking care of these wounds so they don't infect Although you have to be pretty strong since you made it *this* far out here with these kinds of injuries I don't know, most would be in bed for weeks.”
Meanwhile, in another part of the underground City, a magicat with a pattern similar to that of a tiger sat behind a desk, blue eyes focusing on a crystal orb in front of him.

“It is true that it is a possibility...talk about this being a huge screw you by Hordak.” he said, earning a sigh from the red-haired female sitting next to him.

“What do you think we should do Tora? I mean...She was raised in the Horde. But you saw that the the cuts on her back were similar to those of the whips used in the mining camps. Seems like she needs a lot more than medical attention. Who knows how messed up she is by whatever those monsters have done to her.”
Too Much History PT 1

Chapter Summary

Catra meets the Royal family.

Catra also figures out that there was a lot that the Horde didn't talk about.

To say that her head was spinning would have been an understatement. No, she was utterly confused.

Why hadn't any of their classes ever mentioned the kingdom that had fallen? Why hadn't she learned about the fact that the Fright Zone was located where another kingdom had once stood?

She was sure she would have remembered *something* about it if they had covered it—even-though she had usually blackmailed Kyle into doing anything remotely like book work that they had.

But now that she lay on the overstuffed bed her mind seemed to echo these questions on repeat.

Was this where she had come from?

Was that why that she had never seen anyone else who had looked like her? Because they had been forced into hiding in the fear of death from the Horde?

She really didn't want to think about it.

She was half asleep when she heard the sound of something slamming into the door of the section she had been given.
Who the hell could that be? I thought they said that I would be left alone to rest?

Catra thought as she got up and headed toward the door, however when she opened it she found herself blinded by a spray of some kind of liquid followed by laughter and a young female voice saying

“Take that Horde Soldier!”

Catra couldn't help but growl as she tried to wipe the burning liquid out of her eyes, however, the next thing that she noticed was a loud, feminine voice calling out

“Raiona! What are you doing? Are you trying to blind the girl? All of you go home and don't think your parents won't hear about this!”

When Catra finally got her vision back she found herself not only in the presence of one of the strange warrior race but it was obvious by the clothing that she wore that this woman standing in front of her was one of the rulers.

“Are you alright?” the woman questioned as she narrowed her eyes at Catra, nose wrinkling slightly at the scent of the liquid as she added under her breath “I'm gonna kill that girl.”

“Yeah, I'm fine. Although next time I see that little brat I swear...” Catra began, earning a chuckle as the queen handed her a handkerchief.

“Don't blame you...that was salt water although I can swear that she isn't usually that big of a brat.” she retorted before she added “now that is out of the way, I am called Queen C'yra the third of the royal family of D'riluth and I would like to talk to you about what ended with you being here to start with.”
Catra sighed as she heard this and nodded.

“guess I can't really say no, can I? What do you want to know?” Catra responded, turning to head back inside and motioning for the woman to follow her.

“First, I want to know how you ended up so banged up.” C'yra asked, earning a sigh.

“Because I was the weakest link in the whole unit?” Catra retorted as she took a seat, not sure how else to explain that since she obviously didn't want to tell this woman—whom she had just met—anything too personal about herself.

“Alright...and why did you come this direction?”

C'yra questioned, wincing at how accusing she sounded in that moment.

“Look, lady. I'm not going to rat you out to Hordak or whatever the hell you think I am going to do. I wanted to get as far away from Bright-Moon and the Fright Zone that I possibly could. I don't even know what you are...Or where I am. I mean, I was told that the Horde drove you underground and destroyed your kingdom but that was all that I know....It's not like I came here searching for anything!”

Catra practically yelled, flinching back as she saw the woman's eyes narrow although C'yra didn't react and instead said.

“I see...Then you will have no arguments about coming to meet with my husband who wishes to speak with you as well. If you have nothing to hide, then you have nothing to fear.”
Catra wasn't sure what she expected when she was lead into the biggest section on the underground kingdom—that she had learned had been dubbed Half-Moon—however, whatever it was, it wasn't a tiger-furred half-feline sitting in a wheelchair.

*This was the king? How is that possible?*

She wondered, knowing how this sort of thing was treated in the Fright-Zone, which obviously wasn't the case here.

"*You're the king?"*

She couldn't keep the words from spilling out of her mouth, the disbelief practically painting her tone although to her surprise he just smirked over at her before he retorted:

“and you're the Horde soldier that everyone in the compound is talking about.”

A heavy silence passed over them for some time before Cyra finally spoke.

“Speaking of Horde soldiers...Did Raiona come back here? Brat decided it was a smart move to spray salt water in Catra's face.” she stated, earning a groan from Tora.

“*so that is what she was going on about.....Spirits. You can handle that mess...I'll talk with Catra, was it?”*
Tora could tell that this teen was nervous, which he assumed was because of his position—plus he was sure that her never interacting with someone in a wheelchair before probably didn't help with the awkwardness.

"why I wanted to speak with you myself is because you are dressed as a soldier and not a slave, yet was obviously treated like one. I remember how the Magi-cat prisoners were treated after the fall of D'riluth. Luckily most escaped and remained undetected for all these years....although it left its mark.” Tora stated, taking note of her confused look.

"Is that what happened to you?” Catra couldn't help but ask, earning a nod.

“Yes, C'yla was held captive at one of the Camps...Her mask stolen and she was injured so she was practically powerless. I was one of the ones who went to free her...The fight was hard but we managed to get our people free...But many were killed and injured in the scuffle. I don't remember what happened but I do know that it was a captain or something. He was the former king of the Crimson kingdom and while fighting him I was slammed back into a rock.”

Catra wasn't sure what to say to that, especially since she didn't know where the Crimson Kingdom even was. However, before either of them could say anything both of them could hear shouting from the top level of the bunker.

“They're the one who killed the true heir and it was their fault Dad can't walk! How can you just
welcome one of them in like that?”

Catra heard Tora sigh and could swear she saw a sparkle of green energy dance around him.

“Please ignore that... Our family has a personal history with the Horde and obviously children can’t think with logic.” he muttered, shaking his head “Why don't we go out somewhere and leave them to whatever that argument is?”
Catra sighed as she glanced over at Tora, who didn't seem the least bit phased by the whispers around them. *How can he be so calm?* She wondered, sticking her hands into the pockets of the jacket she had been given.

“So what was all of that about back there? I mean your kid seemed to be going ballistic.” she questioned, hoping to make conversation however she instantly regretted that as she saw his expression drop slightly.

“five years before Raiona was born, we had another child although briefly because shortly after she was born, the horde attacked and captured our kingdom...Including C'ya and the baby. It always haunted me that we were nearly powerless against that tyrant and his crew of scum.” Tora answered, only to feel a hand rest on his shoulder.

“No disrespect but not everyone in the Horde are that bad. Most just want to survive.” she stated, earning a sigh.

“I am sure that for some that is true.” Tora began, glancing over at her before sighing “I didn't mean to imply...” He began, obviously struggling although Catra just nodded.

“Yeah, they've put you through shit. I get it, but a lot of them are just there because that was all they know...They raise kids to be soldiers. Kids that never know any kindness outside of that of their unit and even that isn't available to everyone.” Catra answered, watching as his fur bristled.

“I didn't know that was what they did with the children they took...We always assumed...” the king trailed off, eyes widening slightly.

“Was there anyone else of your species within the Fright-Zone?” he asked, earning a shrug.

“None I saw...Maybe if there had been I wouldn't have been treated like some kind of freak. Why?” Catra replied, ear twitching slightly as she turned her complete attention to him, arching a brow.

“Nothing...it's not important.” Tora answered, although the teenaged Magi-cat just scoffed.
“Obviously it is if you get all wide-eyed about it. Besides *everyone* has been looking at me weird since I came here and I have a feeling it's *not* just because I am a horde soldier.”

Catra responded, earning a sigh.

“I can't be for sure about anything but....” Tora began to try to explain however he was cut off by a rock that came sailing toward them, only to be blasted away by a well-aimed blast of magic from the king.

“Let's go....we will finish this talk in private.”

Catra remained quiet as she was walking alongside him, lost in thought.

“This mask that Hordak gave me...Was this the one taken from C’yra?” She asked, removing the object from her head and glancing down at it.

“Yes...However, I want to see if you have connected to the enchantment put upon that mask.” Tora answered, and Catra could feel her ears prick up at that.

“Wait you're saying that I could possibly have a connection to that kind of power? What exactly *can* a Magi-cat do?” she questioned, unable to *not* be excited at the idea of doing something new for once.

“The Magi-Cats are a warrior race who sometimes use magic and cunning as well as melee know-how and if you can connect to the magic in that mask you will be even stronger than you already are....that is if you have the determination to work for it.” Tora answered with a chuckle before he
added: “Come, I'll take you to the Clerics training chambers and try to talk you through it.”

Cyra sighed when she saw her husband's closest friend, Anu walk into the room.

“Tora wants you to come to the training chambers....There is something that you have got to see.”

Cyra glanced toward the stairs before sighing once again.

“Can you at least keep Raiona here? I don't need her causing any more of a scene.” she responded, earning a nod.

Cyra wasn't sure what she was going to find however it wasn't that the teenage girl standing there panting hard and coated in sweat.

“Cyra...she can use the power.....Not well...But she managed to make a small orb.” Tora said, his voice shaking as he turned his head toward his wife.

“Spirits.”
Meetings

Chapter Summary

her talk with the royal family leaves Catra even more confused.

“This isn't fair and you know it! She's a Horde soldier! Why don't you try to explain that to my parents? They'll listen to you!” Raiona growled to the guard that stood inside her room, earning an eye roll from the young woman.

“I'm paid to protect you from abuse, not your own stupidity and I'm pretty sure that spraying someone invited here by the queen with hot salt water and getting grounded doesn't signify abuse.” The guard retorted, earning a hiss from the pre-teen who flopped back onto the bed.

“You're the worst bodyguard ever, Praelia!”

The guard bit her lip to keep from snickering at the bratty tone.

“Yeah well, you certainly don't make my job easy Princess.”

Rainoa glared over at Praelia at that before tossing a pillow at her.

“says the one who only became a guard because my parents pitied you because you were orphaned during the fall of D'riluth!”

Praelia growled at that, bluish-green eyes narrowing as she turned toward the girl.
"You know what little miss bad man? Protect your own damned self." she growled before leaving the room, storming past the old, one armed man sitting on the sofa.

“where are you going?” He asked, earning a huff.

“Away from that brat before I end up smacking the shit out of her.” Praelia retorted “If I had talked to anyone like that I'd have been seeing stars.”

Anu sighed at that and moved to put his hand on her shoulder.

“Yes but you must remember that wasn't the only reasons you were hit and that was before anyone found out about it...and before you started your cleric training. Do you remember how you behaved at that age? Would you wish that kind of feeling on anyone?” He questioned, earning a sigh as the young woman visibly deflated.

“No, I wouldn't....Ugh...I'm going out. Tell C'yra I'll be back after I stop contemplating high treason.” Praleia responded earning a laugh.

“I highly doubt that either Tora or C'yra would charge you with treason if you lost your temper. After all, you usually put up with that girl's foolishness.” Anu responded, earning a shrug.

“Yeah well....She's a kid....and...Ugh....I'm going out....Tell C'yra that I'll be back before nightfall.”

“Okay, can someone tell me what the hell is going on? Catra demanded after listening to the monarch's whispering in what had to be another language.

What in the world is going on? I thought they were weird before but now....Ugh....Is everyone outside the Fright Zone brain damaged or something?
“Catra...What you just did...Not just anyone can do it.” C’ryra began, her voice shaking as though suddenly she was nervous—or frightened.

“That much I gathered, but so what? I mean...I of all people managed to do it. So it can't be that special.” Catra responded, taking notice of how the two adults glanced over at each other once again “Am I missing something here?”

Tora wheeled himself forward then, blue eyes narrowing slightly as he seemed to be thinking about something.

“Remember what I told you before we came in here? I told you that the mask had once belonged to C’ryra and that if you could connect to it then you would have great power...”

“Whoa, hold up.....What aren't you saying?” Catra demanded, earning a sigh.

“I—I'm not sure how to even answer that.” C’ryra responded and even Tora—who had been explaining a lot of things to Catra until now—seemed at a loss for words.

They stood there for some time, no one was sure what to say until finally, Catra spoke up.

“Just spit it out....You two are hiding something and I had enough of that shit back in the Fright Zone.” Catra bitterly said, crossing her arms over her chest as she regarded the pair.

Why is my fur standing on end like this? I know something is up but what? What are they hiding? Probably nothing good if this feeling is anything to go by. She thought although something about the looks on their face told her that whatever it was that they weren’t saying was bothering them as well.
“Catra...Remember what I told you about....” Tora began, earning a sigh from Catra.

“Do you guys ever not speak in riddles? I swear you're worse than one of Shadow Weaver's spell books!” She stated just as there was a loud bang from outside the building.

“What in the universe was that?” Tora commented even though he looked relieved at the distraction.

“I have two guessed and one would be your youngest daughter.” C’yra responded, earning a groan from Tora.

“When she does things like this she's you're daughter!”

Out of curiosity Catra followed the adults out of the room although her eyes instantly widened when she saw the girl who had attacked her—who looked like a paler version of C’yra—and a boy a few years older than herself engaged in some kind of sparring match, magic blasts seeming to come from every angle.

Raiona! Amur! What in the name of the other world are you two doing! Raiona! You're supposed to be inside and where is Praelia? She is supposed to be keeping an eye on you!” C'yra demanded, effectively halting the fight.

“Praelia ran off again.” the preteen retorted, earning a look from her mother.

“More like you probably sent her on a wild goose chase or something! You and I will be talking about this later!” C'yla retorted earning a glare.

“Why am I always in trouble when the fucking Horde Soldier is basically welcomed here after
everything that they did!” the princess snarled, earning a sigh as C’yra sent an apologetic look to Catra before answering.

“Because you behave as uncivilized as a barbarian and evidently as heartless as Hordak himself. Tell me, Raiona, what would you have done if you found someone bleeding and unable to walk properly? Would you have locked them away? Have them executed?”

That effectively seemed to shut the younger Magi-cat up and when she didn't get an answer, C’yra continued.

“What is the creed that is taught to all of our kind? Pietas, Misericordia, et Honor. This is why I will not train you under the influence of the Runestone....Because until you can understand the meaning of each of those terms you are not worthy to wield that kind of power because you would end up abusing it.”

Catra was amazed by how C’yra spoke to the girl. There was no trace of anger in her tone nor was there ridicule. So unlike anyone in the Fright Zone that was sure.

“You don't know that! You don't trust me with anything! I bet you only had me because the damned Heir was taken! You never gave a damn about me!”

and with that the preteen bolted off, earning a sigh from C’yra.

“Too bad the heir was taken because I'm pretty sure that you wouldn't act like this if she wasn't.” the queen muttered, sighing as Tora reached over and took her hand.

“Jeez...what has crawled up her ass today? I don't think I've ever heard her talk to you like that?” the white-tiger like Magi-cat questioned, earning a sigh from Tora.

“Raiona does it enough....although I don't think she means any of what she says. It has to be difficult for her....being cooped up like she is with guards always watching.” Tora answered before glancing over at Catra.
“Amur can you show Catra around? I need to speak to Aderes and Eamon about something....and I'm pretty sure that C'yra wishes to speak to Anu on the same topic. Have her back at our place before dinner....and don't let any harm come to her.”

Catra glanced over at the Magi-cat in question, noticing how he smirked toward her before he added

“Okay, but I promised the guys I'd go fishing with them tonight and since I have the night off from my duties I figured the fresh air wouldn't hurt....I mean I can shift now.” Amur answered, earning a quizzical look from C'yra.

“and you think I'm letting you go to the surface why?” she questioned, earning a sigh.

“because I am seventeen and I have been on hunting parties before? Plus three of us who are going are either on the sentry or a cleric so it's not like we won't be safe!” Amur answered, calmly and C’yra nodded.

“I still want to brief them before you leave...I lost too many people to the Horde....I don't want my nephew added to that list.” C'yra answered in a low voice and with that, she turned and walked back the way she came without another word.

“Catra...Wear this....It has our insignia on the back and it'll show other's you're under our protection....No one will bother you as long as you wear this.” Tora said, removing his jacket and handing it to her.

Catra wasn't sure what to make of this gesture—although she knew better than to argue with him since he was the king and she had no desire to end up inside a cell or worse.

“Thanks but I can handle anything.” She responded, earning a smirk.

“I'm sure but give an old man some peace of mind will you? What kind of person would I be if I let our guest get beat up by a mob or something of the sort?”
“What's wrong with you?”

Adora glanced up to see Glimmer standing in the doorway and wondered briefly how long she had been standing there.

“When did you...” She began, only to get cut off by the shorter girl who popped herself over to the window seat.

“You're worrying about what that cat person said back there, aren't you? I mean she attacked a village! You saw that! There is no way someone like that could really care about anyone!”

Glimmer stated, earning a sigh from the blonde who pulled her knee's to her chest.

“I don't know Glimmer, Catra's always been a lot of things but she's not emotionless...not like you think anyway. She runs on autopilot....always doing things first and thinking about them later. Maybe I shouldn't have just left her like that...I mean.....Shadow Weaver had ways to get under your skin and force you to confess anything. Who knows what happened to her when she got
back.” Adora responded, earning a sigh.

“Who knows if anything did? I mean doesn't the Horde need all the soldiers they can get?” Glimmer retorted “Besides, what good will it do to worry about it? I mean, there's no way we can just storm into the fright zone and check things out. You know? That would be a death wish!”

“Yeah, but I can't help but worry. We were best friends since we were little kids....She was actually the first friend I made when I entered the Cadet's ward for the first time.” Adora's voice faltered as she remembered that day, remembered how Lonnie and everyone else had told her to ignore Catra—who they said ate mice and was rabid—and how when she first spoke to Catra the other girl seemed almost overjoyed by the sudden attention.

“Wow...How old were you guys when you first started training then?” Glimmer questioned, eyes growing wide at the implication of those words.

“Those of us without parents either stay in a separate unit or with a superior officer who teaches us basic survival skills and such until we're old enough for the real stuff. I was kept in the same unit as Shadow Weaver—Hordak's second in command until I was six and could enter the academy.”

Adora's simple tone caught Glimmer as off guard as the information did.

“That's really screwed up...I mean you were little more than a toddler! When I was six I was still struggling to color inside the lines.” Glimmer commented, earning a shrug as Adora stood up

“That's just how things were in the Horde. I didn't think that the Fright zone was that bad until you and Bow showed me how different everything was outside of Hordak's rule.”
“Why didn't the healers just use their abilities to heal you? I mean that way it would be a lot easier to move around.” Amur asked as he helped Catra up onto a rocky crevice outside of the underground city.

“Magic did this. Do you honestly think I want magic around me right now?”

Catra retorted, panting slightly as she allowed him to pull her up.

“Ouch...Okay, I saw the shape your clothes were in when you were brought in. How does magic do that?” Amur asked, instantly regretting asking that when he saw how her ears drooped at the question.

“Try being frozen in place and forced to endure beams of energy hitting you. Some cutting into your skin and no matter what you couldn't do anything to defend yourself.” Catra answered as she over at the strange city, which seemed to be built up of crystal and mineral.

“Well you know, you have magic inside of you too right? All magi-cats do in one way or another. C'yra can get wicked strong if she wants to. Tora is a geomancer which means he sees visions using Earth Manipulating magic.” Amur explained, earning a scoff.

“Yeah well, it can stay inside me for all I care. I don't need some kind of fancy power up like Shadow Weaver got from that stupid Black Garnet.” Catra retorted before adding “Why did you bring me up here anyway?”

Amur smirked before he glanced over at her.

“Because this is the best view in the whole place during the solstice festival and since Raiona is grounded for whatever dumb thing she did this time...I figured it would be a good way to introduce you to the culture.” He reasoned simply as he took a seat at the edge of the rock.

“Not to sound stupid but what the heck is a festival?” Catra retorted, taking a seat beside him.
Amur felt his eyes grow wide at her question. After all, how could she not know what a festival was? But she didn't *seem* like she was trying to make a fool of him.

“Like a huge Party...um....We celebrate certain holidays with huge public parties full of games, food and everything else. Tomorrow there is going to be a huge feast which is why me and my friends are going out fishing tonight since the Horde is less likely to just come wondering through a dead zone for any reason that late.” Amur tried to answer, earning a shrug.

“Guess I just have to find out....Is that why everything here looks like a rainbow threw up on it?” Catra quipped, motioning toward a streamer that had been put up nearby.

“Uh yeah...although the minerals are *always* colorful.”

“I don't know how you could welcome her here even if that *is* true! I mean honestly, she works for the Horde and....” C'ya's majordomo—a cougar like Magi-cat called Nahuel said in disgust only to earn a glare from both the royals.

“If it *is* true then you have no say in the matter, then do you? After all, you are just a mage from the concolor clan.” Tora stated, earning a snarl in response.

“oh, so you think you are so much better because you are from the ever so *powerful* Valmere Clan? If you're so powerful then why are you stuck in that chair?” Nahuel retorted.
“Shut up! I could have you in chains for that!” C’yra practically roared, her voice bouncing off the walls and alerting the guards that stood around outside the door.

“Problem?” one of the guards questioned, hand on her sword although C’yra just shook her head.

“No, I am just about to be one councilman less.” the queen retorted, shooting a look toward the other man before adding “Do any of the rest of you share his opinions about the girl?”

“Well if she does prove to be the bearer of the blood of the Azmer clan then we can't really have any say in the matter as she will be the blood heir. However, I do suggest that we all use extreme caution around the girl for the time being since we do not know her full intention or if she still holds any loyalty to Hordak.”

an old woman was the first to answer, earning a nod from C'yra.

“I agree Bira. Trust must be earned besides given after all. I do not think the child has any ill intentions but as long as no one is cruel I don't see the harm in having caution toward her.” C'yra answered, noticing how her husband glared her way as she said those words—but chose to ignore it.

“I had blood taken for testing...Surely there will be an answer soon enough. However, there is something peculiar that I heard from C'yra and Tora....The girl can summon the freeze fire and that is enough proof for me because no one has ever been able to use that enchantment who didn't have Azmer blood running through them.” Anu said, causing yet another roar of whispers to echo through the room.
Catra wasn't sure what it was that she was seeing as she watched a man make shapes using his magic, which seemed to dance along the group of children who seemed amazed by whatever it was he was talking about.

She never thought that Magic could ever be used in such a way. After all, wasn't Magic a form of Power? Wasn't this considered a waste of energy and power? She wondered as she stood back, watching this ritual of sorts—that was until the glowing illusion of a horse came to a stop in front of her, rearing before sprouting wings and flying.

Turning her attention to the man and arching a brow, she saw that he was smiling.

“You seemed entranced.” he said simply as he continued to put on a puppet show of sorts using the illusions.

“What is the point of what you're doing?” Catra replied earning a chuckle.

“Entertainment. Sit down...Perhaps even I can hold your attention.” he retorted, motioning with his free hand toward the group of kids.

“Ugh...No thanks...I'm no child.” she responded, practically sneering although Amur's hand on her shoulder kept her from turning away.

“Stories aren't just for children, Catra. Go ahead and stay if you want, no one is going to judge you for it.” he said, earning a scoff.

“You can act like a toddler if you want, I'm going to go find something to do that isn't a waste of time.” Catra retorted, shrugging away from him and walking off.
That was until she heard someone say

“How about you tell the story about how Catullus conquered our lands with only the help of his three most trusted friends and the sword of Panthera?”

Now *that* caught Catra's attention, after all, how could four people conquer *anything*?

She tried to ignore the smirk on Amur's face as she wordlessly took a seat beside him.

“Thought you said that stories were for cubs?” he teased, earning a hiss.

“Shut up.”

“You basically gave them the right to discriminate on your daughter! Don't you pretend for a second that you don't believe that she is!” Tora said as soon as he and C'ryra were alone.

“What would you have had me do? They are unnerved by the fact that a horde soldier is here in Half-Moon and for good reason! So many people were lost to that band of tyrants...or have you forgotten that your own brother was killed right in front of you and your sister in law was worked to death in the labor camps during *my* time in the same camp?” C'ryra retorted, sighing as she turned to him
“Tora, all that they want is to exercise caution until we can be sure that the girl has pure intentions. It’s not like they want to have her publicly executed or something like that. If things get too bad I will address it but until then....let things play out naturally.” C’yra began, earning a sigh.

“I just don’t want her to think that there is no safety anywhere. She is being brave despite how unnerved she is however when that emotional dam breaks.....all seven layers of hell is going to break loose and woe be on whoever is the target of that.” Tora said, trying not to sound too judgmental despite his own personal feelings on the subject.

“I know....I can smell the nervousness rolling off of her and I assure you that if she needs help, I will do my best to help her. However there are some things I have to do as the ruler of these people...even if I don’t want to do them and one is allowing her to earn the trust of the people.” C’yra said tiredly before adding:

“now if you will excuse me I need to go find a certain member of our guard and see what the hell happened for her to leave Raiona unprotected....although I have a feeling it is our kit to blame for that particular mess.”

“Good luck, you’re going to need it.”
Too Much History PT 2

Catra found herself more confused as the evening went on and without Amur to explain things to her. Why was this sort of thing a tradition? Wasn't it a waste of resources? She wondered, sniffing of something that smelled way too much like the brown ration bars from the Fright Zone for comfort.

Okay, now I really don't want to know what they put inside those things. She thought just as she was about to ask about the so-called food, she heard the sound of laughter coming from down one of the corridors.

What the world is that? She wondered as she followed the sound, only to find a group of children—one she recognized as the brat that had attacked her earlier—running some kind of obstacle course that had been built over what seemed to be an underground lake.

“What's wrong Horde Soldier? Never seen a game before?” A female close to Catra's own age jeered, earning a smirk.

“Even if I hadn't I could still kick your ass at this!” Catra retorted, only to hear a more familiar voice speak out.

“I think you should leave her alone Onya....She is injured and shouldn't get her bandages wet.”

Turning toward the speaker, Catra saw the same healer that had treated her earlier.

“You think that really matters? I've had worse than this and still trained!” Catra retorted defensively although the woman just nodded.

“I am sure you have but I'm also surprised you haven't died from an infection yet if that is the case.” The healer retorted before adding “but do what you want...I don't understand why you didn't let us heal you completely, to begin with.”

Catra hissed at that comment before she turned toward the course.
“I do whatever the hell I want when I want and I don't do magic bullshit.” She retorted before walking away, only to get cut off by a very familiar figure.

“Hey, traitor...Why don't you take on someone who has trained endlessly since they were old enough to walk!” Raiona stated and Catra really had to resist the urge to laugh in her face.

“So you think the training here prepares you for anything? Let's see what you have, runt. Just don't run crying to the queen when I kick your ass.” Catra responded.

“You wish.”

Catra could feel every inch of her skin complaining at the sudden rush of movement as she bolted toward the challenge, easily keeping up with the younger girl.

*This should be easy enough...We had to risk actual injury of the floor falling out from under us into a pit a few meters deep. If the worse thing she has had to fall into was a lake then that isn't real training.*

Catra thought as she dodged what she hoped was a half ass attempt to knock her off the log.

“Gotta do better than *that, brat.*” she stated teasingly, ducking just in time to dodge an energy ball. “Remember I grew up in the Fright Zone...I'm made of tougher stuff than you princesses.”
C'yla walked in just in time to see Raiona shaking water off while Catra was laughing at whatever she was saying.

*I swear I am going to have to put a leash on that girl*

she thought as she glanced over at one of the spectators

“What did I miss?”

The man in question just laughed and shook his head “Your daughter seems to have taken the Horde Soldier as a rival....although when they mentioned that you had given refuge to a horde's man I was expecting someone older than that shrimp of a girl up there.” he retorted, motioning toward Catra.
“Yes well, Chalar sometimes things aren't always what people expect. Catra was badly injured when the hunting party found her...and frightened. Why would I leave a kid out there when we are constantly preaching compassion?” C'yra answered, earning a chuckle.

“Not everyone will be so welcoming....Not after everything we lost but no one has seemed to insult the girl besides your daughter....although I have to say the one called Catra seems to have a colorful vocabulary herself.”

C'yra just chuckled at that.

“I just hope that doesn't rub off on Raiona. Spirits know that girl already tests my patience enough.”

Chalar just smirked at that.

“I remember when you were a kid...You never did anything your mother told you either....No matter how she punished you. Perhaps the girl is just bored? When we were her age we were playing games outside in the fields or climbing trees and annoying the birds.” he answered, expression hardening as he added “I wish we were still the mighty race we were....Then we could wipe Hordak off the damned map and then be free again.”

C'yra sighed and nodded.

“I know but what choice do we have? It's not like in the fairy tales where a hero finds a magical sword and suddenly can slay a thousand enemies at once. Hell, even the so-called alliance failed when it came down to it. No thanks to Thorell....If he hadn't betrayed us then maybe we would have stood a chance.”
Later that night while sitting alone atop one of the buildings, Catra thought over the events of the day. About how weird everything seemed to be. Why were they so secretive suddenly after she had made that damn magic ball appear?

Her tail twitched irritably as she tried to think of whatever reason that it could have been because, besides some paranoid looks and a few whispers—as well as being called 'Horde Soldier' by some of the cats, no one seemed to really care that much that she was there.

And yet there C'yla and Tora—the latter who acted as though Catra was a land mine waiting for any reason to explode.

Then again, it could have been because he was confined to a wheelchair and couldn't defend himself, couldn't it?

For some reason, Catra really didn't think that was it. After all, he had blasted that rock away from her.

Sighing she lay backward on the cool stone, letting the temperature soothe the burn that seemed to linger in her back despite the medicine that had been reapplied in the infirmary.
Maybe I should let them heal me....It's not like I actually deserve this kind of pain .... but then again I'm not a wimp and....

Sighing she sat back up, turning her attention to where C'yra was currently showing off with some kind of sword that seemed to crackle with the same magical electricity that had came from the black garnet.

That thing can't be a rune stone, can it? She wondered before removing the mask that she had worn since she had been ranked up as a junior cadet.

I wonder why this thing reacts to me if it's powers won't react to just anyone. I mean Tora did say that....

Catra froze when the realization hit her and it felt as though her very soul had gone numb as she finally understood why they had been so secretive.

“No flippin' way.”

Catra said aloud to herself before she glanced back down at C'yra who was currently knelt in front of a group of kids, talking to them animatedly about something.

“There is no way.....But.....I....”

Closing her eyes she tried not to think about it.

After all, she had to be going crazy from blood-loss or something, right? Anyone in their right mind would have fought for something they cared about.
But what if they didn't care?

Catra wasn't sure if that thought hurt or angered her—however she knew that there was only one way to get answers and that was to demand it.

After all, asking hadn't got her anywhere.

“Why the fuck didn't you tell me what connection I had here?” She called out as she leaped down in front of C’yra, which earned the whispers from everyone around them.

“Catra...I...I wasn't sure if it would be a good time to bring it up....I....” the queen began, earning a scoff.

“A good time to bring it up? Don't you think that little bit of information would have been good to know after I made a frickin' energy ball? When I was confused as hell by why you let me keep a mask that had been yours?” Catra snarled, turning to walk away only to feel a hand on her shoulder.

Which she quickly grabbed and tossed off her—resulting in her claws ripping into the queen's skin.

“You know? One thing I really don't understand is how you could let them take an infant? Didn't you even try to see if it had somehow survived?” Catra said after a few minutes, whirling around to face C’yra who was nursing her bleeding arm while other people looked on—unsure what to do.

“Why didn't you even try?”

Catra hated how she sounded then, almost like a child which she most certainly wasn't.

Not after everything the Horde had thrown her way.
Not after being ridiculed and abused for every little thing she did.

Not after losing the only person she had ever really cared about.

“You know what? You seem to have done fine without me before so you can just go back to pretending like I didn't exist in the first place. No one is going to use me like I am some kind of object!”

With one final movement, Catra tossed the mask toward the woman before bolting toward the exit as fast as her sprained ankle would allow her.

“Do you want us to go after her?” A guard asked the queen of the magi-cats, eyeing the wound although everyone present knew not to get involved with the queen's affairs if not directly asked.

“No...She is confused and hurt....She doesn't understand the full story. I'll go talk to her.” C’yra answered simply, ears drooping as she knelt down and picked up the mask.

“Mom? What was she talking about a connection?” Raiona asked just as timidly as the guard as she came over and placed a hand on her mother's arm.

“There is a very high probability that she is the heir....Your sister.”
Catra was shaking from both the pain and the fact that she felt as though a tank was sitting square on her chest. She had to get out of there as quickly as possible before she ended up arrested—or worse. How could she had just attacked the monarch like that?

Not only had she hit her but she had drawn blood.

If they didn't want to kill her before, surely they would now.

“Catra.”

The sound of her name caused her to jolt upward, hissing in pain as the movement irritated her already throbbing back.

“Queen C'yra I...I'm....” She couldn't seem to get the words out as her throat felt as though it would close up and she began to shake.
“Catra...It's alright. I need you to focus on me right now alright? Don't think about anything, just try to notice my motions.” C'yra instructed, brow furrowing as she knelt in front of her and leaving the girl's mask on the ground.

Slowly—as not to startle her—C'yra rose a hand, gingerly laying it against a non-bandaged part of her back.

“Your back is bleeding again....but we'll take care of that later. Right now just focus on my hand okay? I am not going to hurt you in any way and if I do, tell me and I will stop.”

C'yra watched as the teenager's breathing finally evened out, although as she did so Catra became sick, although nothing came up.

“I'm not here to make you stay if you don't want but I do wish you would at least let us heal you first.” the queen said after a few minutes, her tone coming out almost a purr.

“Then why are you here? To dispatch me yourself?” Catra sneered, earning a sigh.

“No...I figured you would want to hear the whole truth about what happened during the fall of D'riluth.”

C'yra waited for a response and when she got none, she continued

“I was captured during that battle and was taken very pregnant and half blind to the slave camps. How I didn't miscarry I don't know....but I did give birth prematurely and was too weak to do anything about it when they came to take the child......We always assumed that they had it...you....Killed. Never in our wildest dreams did we imagine child soldiers being used by them. If we had known..”
C'yla trailed off as a knot formed in her throat and glanced down at the mask once again.

“I'm not going to try to convince you to come back or to believe me or whatever but I do want you to take this with you. Perhaps—whatever you decide—it's power will protect you from any harm.” She added, gingerly sliding the mask over the girl's hairline before standing.

“But you're welcome in Half-moon whenever you want to come back.”

She had only gotten a few paces away before she heard Catra speak.

“Why aren't you mad at me? I hit you! I cut you!”

The question earned a light chuckle from C'yla.

“Why be angry or punish someone for a simple flesh wound that they obviously didn't mean to do? Catra, I can't imagine how you must feel and a mere scratch that barely broke the skin isn't something to go up in arms about.”
“This isn't a good idea C'yra. I mean you saw how nervous she was earlier with the healers.” Tora commented as he watched his wife's hands glow a brilliant magenta color.

“She's asleep so it shouldn't freak her out. Besides that, her ankle will never get better if she keeps walking on it and I can't stand seeing anyone in constant pain.” C'yra replied in a whisper, shooting the Tiger-like magi-cat a look before continuing her task.

“fine but if she wakes up, don't be surprised if she hates you for this.”

 Darkness.

That is all that Catra could see as she glanced around, the familiar tentacles of licking about around her, threatening to consume her as bits of red static danced around the area providing only brief reprieve from the darkness.

She could feel her fur standing on end as she glanced around, trying to make sense of where exactly she was. Then it hit her—the smell of blood.

What the world? This can't be real...I was in half-moon....Wasn't I?

She thought as she glanced around, her eyes landing on the source of the metallic smell.

The mangaled form of the one person that she had ever given a damn about.
The person she knew that she should hate.

“This is your fault! She is dead because of you! It should have been you over her!”

Tora, who had been sitting by the couch, reading wasn't the least bit surprised when Catra jerked away, claws extended and looking for a fight.

“What the hell did you do to me? I told everyone I didn't need magic! All you idiots are the same aren't you?” Catra snarled, turning to face her father who just smirked and motioned with his head toward C'yra.

“Don't accuse me, cub. I'm not the stubborn one in this house.” he retorted, watching as she turned her full rage onto his wife.

Well it's not like I didn't warn her. He thought, turning his attention back to his book.

“Why am I not surprised? You royals think you're above all else! Well guess what, C'yra. I don't care what blood I have running through me....I actually know when to stop....What buttons not to press!” Catra growled before leaving, slamming the door so hard behind her that a framed painting fell off of the far wall.

“give her a few minutes and go talk to her...She will probably listen to reason if given time to cool off—and notice that she isn't in as much pain as before.” He stated “I think she was just as terrified as she was angry.”

C'yra nodded and sighed, sinking down onto the sofa that the teen had been sleeping on.
“Why would anyone be that afraid of a healing spell. I wasn’t even touching her so there is no way that it could have hurt her.” C’yra questioned, earning a sigh.

“Perhaps you need to stop blocking out exactly how magic can be used if in the wrong hands. Remember that in the recent past that magic was used by our own people as a form of interrogation.” Tora reminded her before sighing.

“How about I go talk to her first? Perhaps I can at least convince her to hear you out.”

Catra sighed as she sat in the tunnels that lead to the compound, her mind still reeling with the memory of that dream.

Her fault.

The death had been her fault, the voice had said. But who’s voice? Was it possible that Shadow Weaver had found her all the way here? Had she put the other Magi-Cat’s in danger by coming here? She wondered.

Honestly she didn't want to see these people—who had fought so hard to survive—to be captured or slaughtered because of her own stupidity.

“I figured you would be on the surface...Not sitting here.”

Catra jolted from her thoughts when she heard the voice of the King of the magi-cat's coming from behind her.
“How did you even get out here...there's an incline and you....” She was going to say 'can't climb' but she didn't really want to make a ass of herself again so just trailed off, only to hear a chuckle.

“And I'm in a wheelchair. I am also a mage...I can levitate myself if I need to.” he answered as he came up beside her “You seemed pretty freaked out back there and I doubt it was just because of C'yra's healing spell.” he stated in his usual calm way and Catra flinched.

“Look if you are out here to tell me that I am being dramatic or whatever....” the teen began, tail lashing about as she turned to look at him, only to earn a sigh.

“No. You were frightened and even though C'yra just hated to see you in pain she was in the wrong to use magic on you without your permission. I think most couldn't understand why though...Even if magic was half the cause of those gashes on your flesh.” Tora replied, a ball of green light forming in his hand.

“Magic yields to the command of it's user. Not all magic is even defensive or offensive. It is...Like this light spell.” he explained moving to put the orb near her.

Catra flinched slightly but relaxed when it didn't touch her.

“Don't worry. It won't hurt even if you did touch it. You need to at least lose some of the fear so that if someone uses magic around you, you won't stiffen.” he explained “You don't have to use or allow it to be used on yourself. But imagine if in battle you were to see an ally began to charge up and you froze.”

This caught Catra's attention. After all, he did have a point.

“Yeah well it's not easy when all your life you've been blasted by it, manipulated by it, and had shadow creatures invading your head. Speaking of Shadows...If by some chance Shadow Weaver tries to find me...would I be putting your people in danger?” Catra commented lowly, not daring to make eye contact with the man as she spoke.

“I'm sure it isn't. Just know that you are safe from all of that here...Even if she does try to find you the walls of this cavern is home to some of the strongest protective stones there are. Any Negative
energies can not come here and as for my people. Last time I checked, they were your people too since you have just as much right to stay here as anyone.”

He responded gingerly as he place a hand on her shoulder but Catra couldn't help but flinch.

My people? Yeah right....If they had their way I'm sure they would have my head on a pike. She thought, not paying much attention to what Tora's hands were doing at that point since something about how he spoke made her want to trust him.

“I doubt that anyone but you and maybe C'yla wants me here. I mean....I was in the Horde.” she argued, hating how her voice came out sounding so meek for some reason.

“No one knows you Catra and we magi-cats have a motto that translates loosely into Loyalty, Compassion and Honor. Would it be compassion to judge an injured, frightened youth for things they have not done?”

Catra sighed as she walked into the royal's house, not looking forward to talking to C'yla since she had came very near to scratching her again.

“Don't worry, she's not going to be upset. Although I do wish that you would let us try to get to know you....The real you, not whoever you had to be in the Horde.” Tora stated, trying to hide his amusement when he saw her quickly try to school her features to hide her nerves.

“Shut up and I am real! I am never not!” Catra retorted sharply, bristling at the suggestion although she deflated somewhat when he started laughing.

“Calm down bristle brush. It was a suggestion not an accusation.” he retorted, earning a huff.
“Ugh...Both you and C'yra are going to be a pain in my ass aren't you?” she grumbled, earning a chuckle.

“Maybe but I think I would worry more about Raiona being the ass.”

She smirked at that.

Okay so he doesn't act like he has a stick up his royal ass.

She thought before falling into step beside the wheelchair.

“I guess it wouldn't hurt anything to talk to C'yra would it? I mean she was just trying to help.”

Catra didn't like the idea of talking to the woman that she had attacked once and had almost let it happen again and because she was too weak to deal with her own fear.

But there was no hiding from C'yra if she was going to stay in Half-Moon and where else could she go? To Bright-Moon?

Catra would rather face an enraged Magi-Cat queen than face Adora, who had been so two-faced for years and just left her as if it was nothing.

As if the only thing Catra was good for was a distraction.
Before she could get too lost in that particular thought, she felt a hand touch her shoulder—which caused her to jump slightly.

“Relax. It's me and I think I owe you an apology.”

Catra relaxed when she heard that it was just C'yras voice—ad she didn't sound the least bit annoyed.

“No, I get it. You preach pity or whatever. I just am not comfortable with magic, okay? I mean...I'm grateful for the help with my ankle but next time don't just do something like that...I could have hurt you and to even thought twice about it.” Catra responded, shrugging away from the hand on her shoulder before shifting uncomfortably.

“Compassion and pity are two different things Catra and although my intentions wasn't to scare you...it did and I am sorry. I just hate seeing anyone in so much pain and you definitely seemed to be in pain even in sleep and I thought that perhaps I could help.” C'yras responded, taking Catra off guard.

Since when does princesses or anyone with rank give a damn about anyone?

Catra thought, shifting uncomfortably as she found herself unsure what to say but she felt as though she had to say something.

“Yeah, I get it and I know I overreacted but I think that everything that happened with me has messed with my mind...anyway I guess we'd better get to bed because you have crap to do tomorrow and I haven't slept all that well in the last few days.”

She said eventually, only to feel the hand lightly squeeze her upper arm, careful of the bruises.

“If you need anything don't be afraid to call for one of us. I know you're used to dealing with stuff on your own but I just want you to know that you don't have to now. I know I have done nothing to earn your trust but I will help you if you feel you need it.” C'yras responded softly before pulling away.
Catra groaned when she felt something tug at her tail.

“Don't you morons know the meaning of the word personal space?” She grumbled, opening on eye only to see that it was Raiona standing there, looking almost as irritated as Catra felt.

“My mom said to wake you up to come eat.” The preteen said matter-of-factually before turning on her heel and walking back into the dining area.

Catra just groaned and curled back up, throwing the blanket over herself so that it was also covering her head as well.

“Not hungry.”

She could hear nearly silent laughter coming from the other room but chose to ignore it.

That was until a sudden blast of cold air blasted the blanket off of her.

“Hey!”

“You can go back to sleep after you eat. Trust me, you'll like the food better when it's warm than if it's cold.” Tora's voice called from the kitchen, earning a hiss from Catra who begrudgingly got up.

“Ugh...I just knew you two were going to be a pain in the ass if I stayed.” she grumbled.

“Now we know why some animals eat their own children.” Raiona murmured, earning a look from
C'yra that clearly told her to shut up.

“Oh shut up you uneducated peanut. Who asked you?” Catra responded before taking a seat at the table with a yawn.

She noticed how Tora rolled his eyes at this exchange although his expression didn't change from half asleep himself.

“Raiona, you have lessons today so I suggest you do more eating and less trying to stir up trouble.” he said, earning a groan from the preteen.

“Don't remind me! I have to help Maye today and the medical ward smells funny and I would rather train with you or Mom!” Raiona retorted, earning a chuckle from C'yra.

“Yes well I have things to do today and you need to learn how to control your magic before you actually learn how to use it in combat.” she stated “Tell you what, if you don't try to sneak out of class again I'll clear my schedule tomorrow and we'll do something together.”

Catra tuned out the rest of the conversation, having only two things on her mind: Food and bed.

*If this is what family is like how is anyone sane?* She wondered tiredly as she tried to eat the berry filled mush that definitely tasted better than it looked.

“That's what you always say! Then there's always a hunt or something that comes up!” Raiona responded, earning a snort from Catra who glanced over at her.

“Stop whining and be glad that she actually does train with you. Where I'm from only chance you got for private lessons is if you were the best of the best.” Catra commented, earning a growl from Raiona.

“Shut up! What do you know?”
the preteen retorted, earning a snort.

“More than you, obviously.”

Raiona was about to say something else however no sooner did she open her mouth did a piece of fruit levitate in it, effectively muffling whatever it was she was saying.

“Enough! I swear if I am going to have to put up with this constantly I'm moving into the training compounds.” Tora said with a sigh, sharing a look with C’yra who then cleared her throat.

“Anyway...Now that we've settled that little issue. Catra, after lunch today I want to ask you a few questions and then I want to see just how strong you are physically.” she said, earning a nod from the teen in question.

“Fine, at least that gives me time to sleep.” Catra responded, earning a chuckle from the queen.

“how did I know you were going to say that?”
“Why are you letting her even near the training chambers? I mean she can't be trusted!” Raiona demanded once Catra had slinked out of the room, obviously still half asleep.

“Raiona. You said yourself that you enjoyed competing with her yesterday. Don't you think that if she was going to cause harm that she would not have used you to try to get to me? Think about it, kitten. Now if you want to watch you can come along but don't interfere.” C'rya responded, earning a huff.

“Fine but only because I'm worried about you.”

C'rya rolled her eyes at this before smirking.

“You sure it's not because you're curious about her?”
Don't trust anyone. You never know anyone's mindset.

Catra had always figured that was a load of bull back when she had Adora but now, now—after everything that had happened—Catra wondered if perhaps this wasn't some kind of set up.

But if C'yla wanted her dead she would have killed her when she had attacked her, right?

Catra didn't know what to think.

Especially not when she saw not only C'yla enter the room but a magi-cat guard in full regalia an an older man who used his only arm to lean onto a staff.

“Wait...She's the intruder? Master Nahuel made it sound like she was basically Cattalus reincarnated, not a scrawny weasel.” the guard stated and before Catra could say anything in response, C'yla had swatted the guard in back of the head.

“Nahuel's full of shit besides you should know better than to judge an opponent by their size because even the smallest person could be a threat if they knew how to use their size and weight to their advantage. Catra could very well kick your ass if she wanted to.” C'yla said, smirking slightly at the young woman's embarrassed expression.

“Right...Sorry.”

The lack of formality caught Catra by surprise.

Didn't they respect their own queen? Didn't they fear C'yla?
“So what are we doing again?” Catra questioned, feeling more and more like a fish out of water by the second.

“Simple...If you think your body can handle it since you are still very much hurt...I am curious to what the Horde taught you during your life there.” C’yra answered, handing her a blunt training sword.

Now that did take Catra by surprise.

“Wait....This thing is metal....Won't this...” She began, earning a chuckle from all three of the adults there.

“Do not worry about cutting her. The swords aren't sharpened.” the elderly man answered “besides I think you're old enough to know how to use one.”

Catra didn't know what to say to that so she just nodded.

C’yra smirked as she brought her sword down yet again, barely missing Catra's shoulder as the girl slipped out from beneath her.

“Getting a bit winded aren't you cub?” she teased, earning a growl.

“you wish.”

Catra's panted response caused her to let out a scoff although she didn't say anything else, after all they had been going at this for close to twelve minutes now and Catra had managed to keep up with her.

Although C'yra would admit that she was holding back a bit since Catra was obviously still hurting from the wounds on her body.
“Alright then...Here's the final test.” the queen knew that this was risky—that Catra could quite possibly end up hurting her if that was the teen's intentions. But this was the *only* way to know for sure about the girl's lineage without the results of that DNA testing that Maye had done.

Grabbing the sword from Catra's hands and tossing it to the side, C'yra unsheathed her own, it's black blade shimmering in the light which gave it an almost eerie appearance.

“here...I want you to come at me just as hard and fast as you did with the other one.” C'yra instructed, getting into a defensive position with her own blunt blade risen and ready to strike.

“Mom! You've lost your mind!” she heard Raiona exclaim, although C'yra knew that sometimes things like this couldn't be safe or easy.

For either party.

She watched as Catra examined the sword, her ears flattening sideways as she glanced up at her as if to see if she was serious or to.

“Catra, come at me with everything you have. Do not be afraid, I have seen far more battles than you and I'm sure that I can take on one injured cub if need be.” She assured, earning a sigh.

“Alright, crazy lady. Whatever you say.” Catra said before charging at her.

Okay Catra, focus on what you're doing so you don't end up lobbing someone's head off. You can
do this. She told herself mentally as she rushed toward C'yra, doing her best to ignore the burning pain in her back and sides as she brought the sword down with everything she had.

Only to have it deflected.

“Good! Again!”

Catra could feel something strange as she did so, her fur seemingly standing on end just like it had the night that Adora had left or even the night she had fallen quiet literally into an underground city. But what could it mean.

This was just a sword. There was nothing magical about it. Not like Adora's.

But that feeling seemed to worsen as her blade crashed against the lion-like woman's and with each passing minute and the more difficult that the sparring match seemed to become, the feeling seemed to grow stronger.

She could feel this strange form of energy running from the sword, into her hands and then throughout her body.

Then she saw it.

An arc of energy surging through the blade, causing the red crystal at the base of the blade to glow an unusual crimson.

“Holy shit!” she yelped, nearly dropping the sword—and giving her mother the opening she needed to counter attack, knocking the teen a few meter's away where she landed on the floor.

Catra could only focus on the pain that surged through her back—and the fact that she heard
footsteps approaching her.

“Well *that* wasn't what I expected.” C'nya's voice said and even through the moister that had gathered by reflex to the pain, Catra saw her raise her hand.

*I should have kept my guard up! Whatever happens now...* She told herself mentally, bracing herself for a blow that never came.

Instead she felt a burst of warmth—something she instantly recognized and growled despite the pain.

“What did I tell you about doing that?” she demanded, earning a snicker from the queen who stopped glowing,

“So you'd rather I let you bleed when it was my fault you were hurting?” C'nya questioned, holding a hand out toward Catra who found herself even more confused now.

“Yeah well, I was stupid enough to let my guard down.” Catra retorted, sitting up and slowly accepting the help up.

“Yeah well...at least you didn't drop the sword. When I first felt the charms put upon it I nearly chopped off my own foot by dropping the thing. Now come on, that's enough for today....I think you would benefit from private lessons for a while....until I figure out what job you would be good at.”
Catra sighed as she removed her tattered uniform before glancing down at the dark colored tank top that she had put on earlier.

“Do you think that I can keep the belt at least? Like get rid of the insignia but...” Catra asked C'yra who smirked.

“I think I have a buckle somewhere from my days in the guard. I'll let you have it if I find it.” the queen responded, causing Catra to flinch when she put a hand on her shoulder. “Also Tora told me to tell you to keep that jacket...although he wants to know what color you want it.”

“Uh...Red.” Catra answered, earning a nod.

“Alright, will do. Need anything else while you organize everything?” the queen asked, earning a shrug.

“Not really.”

If she was to say that she was confused, that would have been an understatement because everything about this place and about these people confused her. Why hadn't C'yra tried to give her an incentive to pay attention? Most would have actually let at least one blow land, wouldn't they?

Why did everyone treat C'yra as an equal and not as a ruler when it was obvious that she was the ruler over all of them?

What had been up with C'yra's sword and it's strange energy signatures? Why had it begun to get all sparky during their battle? Did that mean anything? Was it because of her supposed royal blood?

Nothing about the magi-cats made any sense.
Heck, even the guard had been informal! Wasn't a monarch to be feared?

Sitting down onto the bed Catra tried to make sense of everything, falling back onto the bed—which threatened to swallow her—and letting the warmth of the plush covers beneath her consume her and lull her into a dreamless sleep.

“How could she do that Mom? I mean I thought only you could do it!” Raiona said as she helped Tora make dinner, earning a sigh from C’yra who motioned her over.

“You’re not old enough to use an actual weapon, blunt or not. However, once you get older you will be old enough to use that kind of power too. I was just as surprised as you that she could use it without training to do so.” C’yra answered simply before turning toward her and smiling slightly “and before you start to complain about it...I got all my paperwork done for tomorrow and Anu promised to fill in for me so we have all day tomorrow to ourselves.”

C’yra watched in amusement at the look on her daughter’s face upon hearing that.

*I really need to start taking more time off...back when we had a council things were so much easier for everyone.* She thought as she stood and sighed as an idea hit her.
“perhaps we will even go to the surface tomorrow... If Praelia and Catra can come with us... In case something happens.” C’yra said, earning a wide-eyed look.

“Wait really? I don't care if half of Half-Moon goes with us! I haven't been outside for more than a few minutes in my life!” Raiona exclaimed, nearly knocking C’yra over as she hugged her.

“Whoa... easy squirt... I think your father would kill us both if we broke the table again.” the queen laughed, earning a chuckle from both her daughter and husband.

“Rai, why don't you help me finish up here while your mother goes and tells Catra dinner is ready. Pretty sure that the girl passed out after the day she's had.” Tora suggested, causing C’yra to smirk as Raiona retorted

“You should have seen it! I never thought she could keep up with mom like that!”

*Well, that seems to have brought Catra off of her shit list. Let's just hope all the drama is over.* The queen couldn't help but think.

“really. Did she now? That makes you wonder how the kids were treated in the Fright Zone.” Tora questioned, turning his attention to C’yra.

“She did struggle but she is far better than any child should be.” C’yra answered, not even noticing that Catra had come downstairs and had heard everything they had said.

“It was hell... and speaking of hell, Why the hell is the king cooking?” Catra suppressed a yawn as she walked in.

“I happen to like cooking thank you very much.... Plus I like giving Miv a break.” Tora retorted
before adding “although his food is much better than mine.”

C'yla sat and watched in amusement as Tora tried to teach Catra how to play Cards although it was obvious that Catra didn't understand the point of learning—Which prompted teasing from Raiona.

“Rai, stop it. You didn't learn how to play overnight either.” C'yla reminded her, earning a dirty look from the preteen who stuck her tongue out at her.

“Oh shut up mom!”

C'yla only rolled her eyes at this and arched a brow at her.

“Is that any way to talk to your mother?” C'yla responded, arching a brow although her youngest just scoffed.

“Oh, what are you going to do about it?” Raiona demanded, only to end up pinned—laughing—beneath a large lion-like cat.

“You really want to challenge me, little one?” Cyra's voice came out almost a growl as she leaned over the pre-teen, who just laughed and pushed the massive muzzle away from her.

“No fair!”

C'yla just growled playfully before leaning down and licking the girl.

“All is fair in love and war.”

She said before lightly headbutting the girl, a deep purr echoing around the room.
As the game went on, Catra found herself enjoying the antics of the family even if she didn't understand half of what was going on.

Why wasn't C'yra getting angry over the disrespect?

Why was Tora's magic—when aimed at either C'yra or Raiona—more of a plaything than a tool?

It made her head spin and she would have rather not think about it, lest she was even more confused than she already was.

“I wanted to ask earlier but I was still in shock. What was that sword doing when we were fighting?” Catra finally asked, trying to distract herself.

“The sword is enchanted and is rumored to be able to fell a hundred enemies in a single swing—although I personally think that is a load of crap.” C'yra responded, leaving the room briefly to retrieve the sword.

When she returned she removed it from the sheath

“Although there are very old, very powerful charms written upon the blade. However, I can only scratch the surface....My mother could make the thing blast energy from its hilt.” C'yra continued, a wry smile coming over her face at the memory.

“I get that but if it's that hard to do, how could I do it?” Catra asked, voice dipping low as she thought about the possibilities of that.
Wait...So she can do it too? Then what they said...Could it be possible that they aren't mistaken? Catra wondered, not really wanting to think about that fact—even if it could be true—after all,

“it reacts on need and emotion...if you have a strong will then it will react but you have to be very determined to achieve anything of the manner.” C’yra explained before adding “would you like for me to teach you?”

Catra debated about that, weighing her options before she nodded.

“Yeah, I need to get stronger.” Catra answered, tail flicking lightly as she glanced back down at her cards, cursing under her breath as she glared up at Tora.

“I swear you're cheating or something. There is no way that you can win so much without magic!” Catra snarled, earning an arched brow from the man who retorted.

“Maybe you're just bad at cards?”

he responded, earning a growl from the teen.

“You have to be cheating! You have to have been!” Catra growled, slamming a hand onto the table.

Before she even knew what was going on, the sounds of C’yra and Raiona's laughter caused her to glance down, only to see her fur had been tinged pink.

“What the hell? Tora! Change me back!” she demanded, blushing as she turned toward the tiger-like man, who was trying hard not to laugh.

“You might want to watch your tone toward me because maybe you will end up covered in polka-dots.” Tora retorted, dodging a plastic cup that was being tossed toward him by the temperamental teen.
“Try it and I'll roll you down a hill.” she threatened, earning an even wider smirk.

“You sure you wanna try it, little girl? Because remember, I am a mage and while I will never hurt you, I could easily turn you into a frog or something less threatening.” he responded, trying to sound threatening although he was obviously trying not to laugh.

Catra rolled her eyes with a huff.

“You're the worst, now change me back or I swear I will find a way to permanently dye your fur the worst shade of green imaginable!”
The Three Pillars.

Not with so many questions running through her head about the craziness that was the Royal family of Half-Moon.

Tora, for example, used his magic for tricks but they didn't cause harm and even if Cyra healed her without asking even that magic was used in the least painful ways.

Then there was how lighthearted they had been.

Cyra had playfully knocked her back onto a sofa the previous night, her paws velveted even though she was in beast form.

Was this natural or was this just a princess thing?

She couldn't help but wonder as she watched the clock tick on the far side of the wall.

Would she be able to become as strong as Adora if she stayed here? Why did the sword power-up for her? Was it a good idea for her to use magic after magic had screwed up so much of her life already?

She really didn't want to deal with that problem at the moment.

But in one way she knew she had to.
"Ugh...Why does the universe hate me?" She mumbled, turning to bury her face into the pillow, just as a knock came at her door.

"Oi! Renegade! C'yra told me to get you up!"

A strange voice said, earning a hiss from the tan girl

"I have a name and tell Queen furball it's too early to function!" Catra called back only to hear a scoff from behind the door.

"Fine, you're funeral."

The next thing Catra heard was booming laughter followed by

"Furball huh? Well isn't that the pot calling the kettle black?"

Catra half expected C'yra to come into the room and yell at her—but she didn't.

Not for another few minutes and when she finally came in, she looked anything but angry.
"Alright, I gave you five extra minutes...Now you probably should get up before your sister comes in here and demands you to get off your ass." Catra commented, pulling the covers off Catra and earning a hiss.

"Why do I have to go again? Just take your fancy sword with you and you should be fine."

Catra retorted sarcastically, lobbing a pillow at the woman who just deflected it right back into Catra's face.

"That's not why I wanted you to come. You obviously have never experienced anything outside the Horde and if your reaction to a healing spell was any indication, you could use a vacation." the queen retorted, smug as the teen glared at her.

"Fine but you have to teach me how to fight against magic....Even sparkly magical goddesses."

Catra retorted before noticing C'yra's confused look.

"Never mind, it's just everyone has always seen me as the weak link and I know I'm anything but...I mean I could hold you off for the multiverse's sake! I want to be able to wipe the stupid smirk off their dumb faces." Catra explained, hating how weak she felt for telling the woman this.

She didn't need help, she could do it on her own and she knew it.

But she also knew that if she wanted to be able to stand up against Shadow Weaver and maybe even Hordak, she would need to be prepared for everything.

"I can teach you...it won't be easy but if you think you can handle it then I'll teach you every everything I know. All I ask is that you do not betray my trust."

The Queen's words took her by surprise as she hadn't expected C'yra to agree at all.
After all, why trust a horde soldier?

"I won't disappoint you."

Catra responded with a smirk.

*Next time I'm in the Fright Zone, I'll be calling the shots*

she thought as she slowly got off the bed.

To say that she felt like a fish out of water was a understatement.

After all why was she invited to come along when she was nothing more than an outsider—even if they did believe that she had connections to them. She knew nothing about whatever *this* even was and she also wasn't dumb enough to believe she was being taken along as extra muscle.

C'yra had her sword *and* a guard that was armed just as well so she could imagine that C'yra *had* lied to her about wanting extra help.

So why was she there?

Catra felt as though this should be a Raiona and C'yra thing since it was obvious to her that Raiona craved the extra attention from her mother and even if C'yra was—by whatever chance that the universe had thrown at her—her mother, Catra wasn't sure what *that* even entitled.
Was it like being the ward of a commanding officer?

Something about the way that C’yra had acted the previous night made her doubt that because Shadow Weaver had never acted in such a way toward anyone, even Adora—who had been her obvious favorite.

“Sooo...How did you end up here anyway?” The guard's voice cut her from her thoughts although Catra only could only shrug.

“I literally fell....and the hunting party found me.” Catra responded after a while, glancing over at the aforementioned queen who was currently explaining something to Raiona.

“Yeah, she's been known to just take in whatever troublemaker or renegade that needs her help.” the guard began, however no sooner than she did she found herself being shoved back against a tree by the shorter female.

“What does that supposed to mean?”

Catra found herself being pulled away from the other girl, a low growl coming from behind her.

“Watch yourself kitten...If she were to lay you out for a stunt like that I wouldn't have any choice but just to watch.” C’yra said, teeth slightly bared as she glanced at the guard and asked “Praelia, are you alright?”

Coughing a bit the guard nodded.

“Yes Ma'am...But perhaps you should explain what I meant to Catra since it seems like nothing I say sounds right to the girl.”
C'yra sighed at this but then nodded, letting go of the back of Catra's shirt.

“Go entertain Raiona for a few minutes...It won't take us long. Walk with me Catra.” she said with a sigh, glancing over at Catra who suddenly seemed to have lost all the fight in her.

Once they were a good distance away from the other two, C'yra turned toward the teenager, who flinched back slightly.

“She wasn't insulting you...She was only saying that this wasn't the first time that I had opened my home to someone that people thought was risky.” she began in a low, calm tone as she reached out to place a hand on the girl's shoulder.

“You see, Praelia was a orphan after the war and in all the chaos....The older orphans tended to fall through the cracks. She was treated poorly by her makeshift guardian and had to result to thievery. She was brought before me as a teenager for judgment...However against the wishes of Nahuel and Cian, I refused to make an example of her and only looked deeper into her living conditions.”

“So what am I, some kind of charity case?” Catra retorted, pulling away only to earn a light flick to the back of the ear by the woman.

“Not at all. If I wanted to impress people I would have claimed to have captured you and held you captive. Not treat your wounds and give you a place to stay. I don't like seeing people hurt, especially kids because I can sympathize with how it feels.”

Catra scoffed at that and glared up at her.
“Oh yeah, sure. The prissy, glittery princess knows how it feels to be shit on!”

The teenager's words earned a sigh from the queen.

“The royal family has—Had—A separate set of rules and my mother was very relentless when enforcing them. While the pillars of being a ruler are Compassion, wisdom, and strength my mother seemed to forget that Compassion also extended to her own daughter so yes Catra, know how it feels to be shit on as you put it.”

Catra was at a loss for words at this before she finally spoke, turning toward her.

“I guess that it's not only Horde commanders that can be fucked up huh?” she said, voice barely above a whisper.

*Way to shove your foot in your mouth Catra.*

She told herself although she didn't have time to form a coherent sentence before C'yra lightly nudged her.

“Let's not dwell on the past too much, okay? It's tough sometimes but let's try to at least enjoy ourselves today.”

Catra followed her back to the others, although she wasn't sure if she could even enjoy the day out since there was just too much going on in her mind.
However as the day went on Catra found her curiosity getting the best of her—especially her *supposedly* brat of a sister was constantly jeering at her for one thing or another.

*Is that normal behavior? Is this what all kids act like? Did I act like that when I was younger? Is that why Shadow Weaver hated me? What if this C’yra starts to hate me too when she starts training me? What if I’m not good enough? What if I just screw things up again?*

She felt sick at those thoughts, especially as she watched Raiona spar with the older magi-cat, both laughing all the while.

*No, that sword reacted with me...that sword **had** to sense something inside me. I have to be stronger than anyone has told me before...I have got to be, there is no other explanation for it! I can get stronger on my own and not even Lord Hordak will be able to stop me!*
I wish that there was some way I could get that girl to relax...Plus she is slower and seems to be dragging herself about. Did she get any sleep last night?

C'ryra wondered as she watched Catra and Raiona clash once again.

*Hell, has she slept at all these past few days?*

“What's wrong? *Scared*?” Raiona was jeering “I thought someone from the Horde wouldn't be such a chicken!”

“Shut the hell up you little shit!”

The sudden sound of arguing broke C'ryra from her thoughts as their blows seemed to increase in vigor and strength, although the woman couldn't help but fear that it was also nearing a real fight and *that* C'ryra knew she couldn't tolerate.

Not unless she wanted to deal with it constantly—and over the dumbest things.

Yet she didn't do anything but watch for several minutes until Raiona aimed a cheap shot at Catra's face and that is when C'ryra leaped in the middle, her sword drawn and catching both the wooden blades, cutting through the rods as if they were made of butter.

“Okay *that* is enough. I think you both need to cool out before you do something you'll regret. Rai, go see what your dad is doing and Catra, go take a nap. You look like you need it.” She ordered, sending each girl a glare as if to challenge them to argue.
“She started it!”

“Well you cussed me!”

C'yra really had to resist the urge of banging their heads together at that point.

“Girls! Stop it. Both of you obviously are too high strung but if either of you can manage to best me in battle I'll hear you out.” she announced with a smirk, knowing that this should be easy.

“You're on!”

Both said at once, earning a chuckle.

“Alright, you two better work together or both of you will get your butts kicked.”

C'yra had to keep from laughing as she dodged both girl's attacks—although it was slightly worrying that Catra seemed far slower than she had been before and upon closer inspection, her eyes seemed bloodshot.

*She definitely is either sick or sleep deprived.* C'yra noted, although she humored them until she finally managed to get an opening to shape-shift and easily pounced, pinning both of them under her.

“You two really need to focus....and guess what? I win so you two have to actually obey me for once.” C'yra growled low and playful.

“Mom! Get off! I'll go help Dad with his stupid medical stuff.” Raiona growled, although Catra just hissed.
“If I wanted walked on I’d just stayed in the fright zone!”

C’yra’s response was to let Raiona up first, taking that time to nuzzle the moody teenager who was still trapped under her.

“Ugh! What the hell is wrong with everyone and being all touchy? Besides, I don't want to smell fish breath!” Catra snarled as she tried—and failed—to pull herself out from under the massive paw that was laying across her.

However this just seemed to amuse C’yra even more.

“If you keep insisting on being rude, I can keep insisting that I stay here.” the golden furred magi-cat retorted, earning a huff.

“You know, for a queen you are the biggest asshole ever.” the teen growled again, although she gave up fighting against the lion-like creature.

“Sure I am, kitten. Sure I am.”

Catra couldn't help but groan in disgust when she felt a lick run across her cheek.

“C’yra come on! Stop being gross and weird and let me up! I didn't mean to insult your kid!” She said, only to feel the massive creature sigh.

“Catra, this isn't about you and Raiona bickering like toddlers. Not really. I just want you two to start to learn how to work together and I want to know why you look like you haven't slept a wink in days.” the queen retorted, earning a quizzical look.
“Why do you care if I sleep or not?”

Catra couldn't keep herself from asking although she wasn't expecting a real answer—Or a nose to the face.

“because you are obviously not in top form and you're more irritable than usual and I know how I get when I can't sleep.” C'ryra said, her voice still holding it's teasing even though Catra could also hear the concern in there.

“Fine, I can't sleep okay? Now can you let me up?”

C'ryra complied and un-transformed, extending a hand to help the girl up once she had righted herself.

“Why is that? If there is anything I can do....”

Catra cut her off before she could continue.

“There isn't. I mean, you may be biologically my mom or whatever but that doesn't mean that you can help me with shit. It's my job to deal with my crap, okay?”

She winced at how harsh her own voice sounded, although C'ryra just nodded.

“Catra, no matter what you where taught. Asking for help or needing others doesn't make you weak or stupid. Even I need support sometimes and that's okay. But I won't make you tell me anything but I do want you to at least try to get some sleep, alright?”
Catra could only nod at that before silently excusing herself from the training chambers.

C'yra woke up later that night to a strange sound coming from the air vent that lead into her room, prompting her to slowly walk over to the offending object and sniffing at it, only to arch a brow when she noticed the familiar scent.

However besides saying anything she slowly lifted the vent only to snicker when she saw what—or who—was responsible.

*Why on earth would anyone sleep in a vent...and how is she not freezing? The air is blowing cold.* She wondered, debating rather or not to reach out and waking the girl—or at least giving her a blanket.

But how would she react to this?

Should she do anything?

C'yra pondered on that for a moment before she finally decided just to grab her cloak off a chair where she had dis-guarded it earlier, tossing it into the vent so that if the teenager got cold, she could use it as a makeshift blanket—after all, Catra was managing to sleep.

C'yra noticed that the sudden motion earned what could only be called a mew from Catra, who instantly seemed to grab onto the warm fabric and curled up around it.

*Okay, maybe I should help her just this once. Worse thing I'm going to get is clawed in the hand if she wakes up.* She thought, reaching into the vent and gingerly pulling the fabric around the slender frame, only to earn a light head butt to the hand from the sleeping, purring teen who seemed to curl up even tighter now that she was completely protected from the cold.
“what was it?” Tora groggily asked once his wife came back to bed, earning a light chuckle.

“Catra hasn't been sleeping well....and now she's in the vents. I would wake her but I don't want a fight at this hour.”

Her answer caused him to let out a short bark of laughter.

“Well I remember that time you ran away from home and found yourself sleeping in that...What was it? Pig troth?” he whispered, earning a halfhearted slap to the arm.

“Well I remember that time you ran away from home and found yourself sleeping in that...What was it? Pig troth?” he whispered, earning a halfhearted slap to the arm.

“Shut up you and go back to sleep before you wake the poor girl up.”

Catra awoke with a start, nearly falling out of the vent she had been using as a bed when she realized she was covered by the dark blue cloak that was her mother's.

Great...Just great...out of all the people who could have found me it had to be C'yra! She is never going to let me live it down and she probably is going to think I was going to try to assassinate her or something! She thought, just as she heard the door open on the bathroom that was located off one side of the room.

“Oh you're awake...You know if you have trouble sleeping you could always come in here and sleep with us...Or ask someone to bunk in your room until you get more familiar with the place.” the queen stated and Catra could feel the heat crawling into her face at the words.
“Psh. Who says I need someone to coddle me like some infant? I just saw a mouse in the vents and...” Catra began, trailing off when C’yra started laughing.

“A mouse Catra? Really, you expect me to believe that? I’m not going to judge you or anything. I just want you to be able to feel safe sleeping somewhere more comfortable beside the vents...Just seeing you in there hurt my back.” She responded and Catra could feel her face grow redder.

“Fine I’m not used to sleeping alone okay? I’m used to sleeping in a room full of other people and before she fucking left me....I used to share a bunk with my best friend and ever since she left...Well I can't really sleep because everything just seems so loud without her heart beat there next to me.” Catra spoke before she thought, only to hiss in embarrassment once she realized what she had said.

However to her surprise C'yra didn't laugh or ridicule her but instead just ran a hand through her hair.

“I know it's not the same but maybe I can help with that...At least with the used to hearing other's breathing and heart beat thing. I mean, if you ignore the snoring my beast form probably isn't the most quiet of things.”

Catra wanted to argue but the offer was so forigne that the words died in her throat.

“You don't have to...I mean...I can deal with it. I'm not some kid and I am not weak.” she retorted instead, earning a snort and eye roll from the queen.

“Who cares about that if it helps you sleep? I don't want you to end up passing out or something because you don't get enough rest....now come on. Miv has breakfast ready and I'm pretty sure he would nag for a month if we let it get cold.”
C'yla's growled as she slammed open the door to the throne room, eyes narrowing as soon as they landed on Praelia and Raiona who were discussing sparring techniques.

"Have either of you seen my sword?" She practically growled in a tone that caused both the younger Magi-Cats to stiffen.

"Why would we have your sword? Neither of us can use it! Ask Catra, Maybe she hear something since she's been in the vents all week!" Raiona retorted with her own growl, earning a look from her mother.

"Unless you want to see the inside of your chambers for the next month, I would advise that you watch your mouth." Catra hissed before turning and heading back out the door.

Catra

She hadn't thought about her being a possibility or what that could mean for any of them.

*Had Catra betrayed them after having stayed there for two weeks, healing and training under them? Had Nahuel been right all along?*

The monarch couldn't help how her stomach clenched at the thought.

There was no way they could survive another attack.
Following the teenager's scent, C'yra traced the aforementioned girl to the training compound, only to have a hard time not to laugh at what she saw.

"Come on you dumb-ass piece of metal! Work!"

Deciding it best not to say anything, C'yra teleported herself unto the rafters, watching as the girl swung the blade wildly around without so much as a single arc of energy. This went on for some time with Catra muttering curses with every failed attempt to summon the ancient power.

so she wanted to train with it? If that was the case why break into my room instead of asking like a normal person? C'yra wondered as she stifled a snicker as the girl let out a snarl of frustration and stabbed the sword into the wall.

no wonder it won't work! She wields it like a ball bat!

"Perhaps you're trying too hard or perhaps the sword does not respond well to thieves." C'yra stated emotionlessly as she leaped down from her hiding spot and pulling the blade from the wall, watching in amusement when she could easily summon a large amount of electricity around the blade.

She didn't even pretend not to notice how the girl flinched.

"C'yra I..."

Catra began but the queen cut her off, arching a brow as she leaned on the blade.

"I'm sure you can explain how and why you broke into my room and stole one of the sacred treasures of our people. But I'm more curious about why you didn't just ask like a normal person." she said, trying not to show her irritation.

After all, if she became nervous or afraid then she was more likely to lie than if not.
"As if you would let me do something with this without breathing down my neck and I have yet figured out how to do anything!" Catra retorted, earning a scoff.

"Not my fault you zapped yourself twice and dropped it multiple times. You're trying too hard but if that's what you want...Well, train until you get it right I guess...need anything or want help you know where to find me...Just next time tell me what you're doing with my stuff besides breaking into my room." Cyra retorted, handing the sword back to her before leaving the room.

Once outside the woman sighed and shook her head.

well that girl is most definitely stubborn...but perhaps if she learns a bit on her own it will mean more to her. she thought, snickering as she glanced back toward the door where she heard a loud curse come from inside.

"You okay?" Cyra called, unable to hold back her amusement.

"Shut up! I got this!"

C'ya had to bite her lip to keep from laughing aloud at the grunted response.

Sure it is kid, sure it is.
As soon as she walked back into the palace, Cyra turned toward Anu—who was playing chess with Tora—and smirked.

"You may want to go make sure that Catra doesn't blow something...or herself...up."

For a looked up at that "so I take it you found the culprit." he chuckled, earning a sigh.

"Yes and I swear with the way Raiona and that girl both behave I'm going to be gray before my time!" She responded with a groan before sinking onto the over stuffed sofa.

“Hey, they wouldn't be your kids if they didn't pull stunts like this.” Tora laughed as Anu got to his feet.

“I'm getting too old for dealing with temperamental cubs. I already had to deal with you, the Cleric cadets and Amur. I think you should be the one to train Catra since you were the one who brought her here.”

“Me? Teach anyone? Ha! I'd end up just bowling her across the room Anu and you know it. I can't teach a kid combat skills...Look how I was taught. I wouldn't wish that on anyone, let alone a child!” C'yra retorted, earning a sigh.

“yes well...You don't have to always think of the past either.” the elderly man responded simply as he looked square into her eyes “even though it is said that if you leave the past you will find no way forward, it does not mean that you must linger on it. Learn from what happened but do not let it consume you, you will do well to remember that.”

With that Anu left the room, his cloak billowing behind him.
“Come on! Work already! You worked yesterday you stupid piece of...Ow!”

Anu snickered when he walked in to find the sword laying on the floor and Catra nursing a sore hand.

“Zapped you?” he guessed, earning a glare as the teenager kicked the discarded weapon toward him.

“Yeah well you prissy royals can keep your damn magical weapons and their sparkly powers. They only mean trouble anyway.” Catra retorted, her mind flashing back to the events in Thaymor that had resulted in her getting even further on her guardian's bad side.

“I don't know how a weapon could mean trouble...after all they are useless without a wielder.” Anu retorted, picking up the sword before adding “unless you know something that we do not.”

Catra just scoffed and sent a sideways glare at him.

“The only things I know is that if I don't get this right my so-called mother is going to kill me and that if stupid magic didn't exist I wouldn't have lost everything I had!”

As soon as she had said these words, her ears flattened.

Everything she had...

Everything that she didn't have....

Thanks to the magic that had turned Adora into She-Ra, she had lost everything and now she was lost...Lost and stuck in a place where everything was confusing.

“it was because of magic that I ended up half-dead in middle of spirits know where this place even is located because this is nothing but a waste land!” she snarled, not even noticing that her eyes were changing or that every inch of her fur was bristling in her anger.
“How is magic responsible for that?” Anu asked, arching a brow as he tried to make sense of what Catra was saying.

“Because it was because of magic that she left me!”

That was not the response that he was expecting at all. However before he could say or do anything else there was a sudden aura of orange energy surrounding the former horde soldier.

C’yra sighed as she leaned back in the hot spring, closing her eyes as she tried not to let Nahuel’s constant complaints get to her. After all, despite her role requiring her to put her people first—she also wasn’t going to let that cloud her judgment about letting Catra stay.

After all, if the Horde thought even for a moment that she had deserted them she would be killed if they found her and C’yra was in no way going to be responsible for the death of a child.

Even if she herself did not do the killing.

However no sooner had she laid back into the water, the door to her private chambers burst open.

“Your majesty, I beg forgiveness for the intrusion but something happened with the one that you call Catra.” a young servant said, almost tripping as she moved to bow.

“Spirits...That girl...” C’yra muttered as she stood up and grabbed a towel “What happened Kefira and stop just dropping to the floor like that before you hurt yourself. I swear I am not going to bite
The younger magicat blushed at that and stammered out what C'ryra assumed would have been an apology if it was comprehensible before she answered:

“She has changed my lady...Master Anu sent me to get you since he did not trust her to be alone since she kind of...Panicked.”

C'ryra let out a groan at that and grabbed her clothes.

“First Naheul calls me into a meeting at the ass crack of dawn, then she breaks into my room and burrows my sword and now this....Am I ever going to get a break today?” the queen muttered, paying no mind to the teenager who shifted awkwardly by the door.

“Do you want me to go tell him you're coming?” Kefira asked, earning a smirk.

“Yeah...Do that before you hurt yourself...and stop being so formal all the time.” C'ryra answered before heading toward the door, shifting into her own cat state and bolting out of the palace.

When she got to the training room however she froze at what she saw before shifting back to her human-like form.

Anu had a force shield up around Catra who was looking around the room with wide eyes and pinned ears. She was rushing around, barely able to walk on her new quartet of legs—let alone run—which she was trying to do.

“Catra! You need to calm down before you hurt yourself! You just need to calm down, focus and picture yourself in your regular state.” C'ryra called, causing Catra to whirl around to face her—only to lose balance and fall.

Sighing C'ryra walked over and forced Anu and his shield aside before laying a hand on Catra's muzzle, feeling the painting breaths coming from the large cat.

“What happened?” she asked, taking notice of how wet that C'ryra face was and then glancing over
at Anu who sighed.

“She was talking about something then it just changed...I have never seen someone just...transform on her own without being taught how.” he answered, earning a ghost of a smile from the queen.

“It is very rare but is has happened in the past now how did she get hurt?” she questioned, earning a sigh from him.

“she ran into the wall when she realized that she was more Cat than Catra....Pretty sure she dislocated something.” Anu answered, earning a chuckle from the queen who nodded.

“Of course she did...Go get some Nepeta and I'll try to get her to calm down enough to change back.”

Once they were left alone, C'ryra sighed and lightly flicked Catra on the nose, earning a growl.

“Oh zip it...You can barely stand and I would easily be able to knock you on your ass....Now focus okay? Imagine how your regular body felt, the weight of your hair.” She instructed, laughing softly when Catra tried to bat at her hand—only to fall over.

“Keep doing that and you're going to end up hurting yourself far worse...Now focus okay? You transformed without help so changing back should be easy.”

It took several minutes before Catra finally changed back, groaning and grabbing hold of her left shoulder when she did so.

“I hate fricken magic.”
C'ya just chuckled as she knelt down in front of the girl, left hand glowing a pale yellow as she reached toward her—earning a flinch.

“Easy, I just want to make sure it’s not broken. It won't hurt and as soon as I get my answer, I'll stop.”

“Fine, but if you don't I will hurt you. It was your dumb magic that caused this anyway.”
Cyra wasn't sure how the pain-killing herb would effect Catra since it seemed to either make people of their species either very docile, very goofy or just all out in a world of their own. However, what she didn't expect was the random crying fit that had hit Catra about ten minutes after the medicine had finally kicked in.

And C'yla was clueless as to what to do.

After all, since when did Catra have an emotion besides pissed off or just out and out grumpy?

“Catra, what’s wrong?” she asked, hoping to whatever gods were out there that she didn't sound as stupid as she felt in that moment as she moved over to take a seat at the foot of the cot, only for the girl to flinch back as if expecting to be struck.

“Sorry...I didn't mean to show weakness it's just....”

*what the hell is she talking about? What did they put her through out there?* C’rya wondered, having to bite back the growl she felt forming in her chest at that implication of those words.

“You're not weak...Hell, you managed to transform without proper training and you obviously are a well-trained warrior if you could keep up with me. Crying doesn't make you weak, Catra.” she began, earning a hiss.

“Yes, it does! Why else would everyone say so?” Catra shouted in response, beginning to shake as she tried—and failed—to keep the tears at bay.

“Because they were either misinformed and wrong.” C’rya said as she reached over and began to gingerly stroke the teen's hair and ears, trying not to frighten her anymore as she added: “Who told you that Catra?”

“Shadow Weaver......Everyone...But Adora.”
Now that piqued her interest a bit because that was a name that C'yra hadn't heard in the weeks prior.

“Adora? Was she a friend of yours?” she asked, not expecting to hear the increase of sobs at the question.

“She was the only person I had and she just left me. She didn't care what Shadow Weaver did to me! She wouldn't listen to me! She wouldn't even let me come that night and all for a stupid, magical, damn sword!”

Catra answered, glaring up at her mother who was taken aback by that.

*Left her because of a sword? Really? Why? What was so special about the sword?* C'yra had to wonder as she moved farther onto the bed and timidly put an arm around Catra's shoulders, only for the girl to lean against her.

“What made a sword of all things so special? I mean I wouldn't abandon people I cared about because of my sword...as magical as it may be.” she eventually pressed, hoping to understand something more than what she was being told.

“It turned her into some kind of sparkly, eight foot, princess.” Catra muttered, her voice muffled from where she was nuzzling into the soft fabric of C'yra's cape.

*Turned into a princess? Sparkly? Either she is really tripping or this is some kind of beyond nature shit.* C'yra thought, brow furrowing as she glanced down at the distraught teen—who was obviously acting much more like a kitten than the mask of a battle trained soldier that Catra usually wore.

“Is that why you were so dead set on learning to use my sword? To keep up with this Adora?” C'yra questioned after just silently comforting her for a while.

“She was always better than me at everything! No matter what! I just want to....I want to be good at something! I am tired of being second best at everything!”
That answers a lot of questions I had since she came here and started training under Tora and I. C’yra thought as an idea hit her.

If her attitude is caused by self-esteem problems...I can probably help ease some of that.

“Catra, you are a talented fighter and you did something that no one in over fifty years has done...You transformed without training and that is very impressive.” she said honestly, allowing her words to come out as a purr as she nuzzled against the girl, who seemed to be falling even more under the influence of the tea that she had been given.

“Really?” Catra sniffled and it broke the queen’s heart to see the rather harsh-spoken, egotistical teenager so upset and seemingly broken.

“Yes, Catra...I would never lie to you about anything.”

A heavy silence fell over the room then with C’yra wondering if there was anything she could do or say to actually make the girl feel any better—or how much Catra would remember of this conversation once the drug had worn off.

“So you aren’t going to punish me for being weak?”

The question that broke the silence caught C’yra off guard. After all, why would she punish anyone for crying when they obviously had been hurt?

“Of course not...Why do you ask that?” the queen really didn’t want to know the answer but she knew that she had to ask.

After all the only way she would understand Catra was to get some backstory.

“Shadow Weaver would have.”
“How is she?” Tora asked as he wheeled into the room, only to stop at the door when he saw that C'ya was curled up on the bed, tail flickering around as Catra—who was wide-eyed and obviously not feeling much at the moment—tried to catch it.

“She was cold...I offered to use my fur to keep her warm but I ended up entertaining an overgrown kitten.” C'ya retorted, letting out a huff as she allowed her tail to hit the teen in the face.

“And how much Nepeta did they give her? This can't be the same girl who threatened to pour her juice over Raiona's head this morning.” he joked as he watched them play.

“They gave her a full cup and it was strong so...Yeah. I think they should have measured her weight better.” C'ya retorted, chuckling a bit as Catra let out a yawn.

“Go to sleep girl...Maybe your arm won't hurt if you sleep it off....Besides, if we break the bed I swear Maye is going to kill both of us.”

Once the teen was sleeping, C'ya sighed and glanced over at Tora before letting out a breath.

“Tora, send Anuk to Bright-Moon and ask about this Princess called Adora. What Catra has told me is almost unbelievable and until she is willing to talk about her willingly while sober...I don't think we'll get any of the answers. But a magical sword turning a horde soldier into a golden warrior princess? In all your studies, did you ever hear of such a thing?” she said, earning an arched brow from her husband.

“Only one story is about a sword-wielding warrior Princess who was cloaked in a golden light and was gifted with a power beyond what anyone had known. It is said that she would return when the people of Etheria truly needed to be healed but it was only a legend. I'm surprised you haven't
heard it.” Tora answered earning a scoff.

“I was never the one for fairy tails so what was this Golden warrior who could heal people?” C’yra retorted as she stretched, careful as to not jostle Catra awake.

“She was called She-Ra, the princess of power.....and if Catra isn't just talking gibberish....Then perhaps we can have some hope about this tyrant to finally be put down.”
“It is too damn early to be doing anything.” Catra groaned as she sank onto the mat in front of Tora, who looked far too energetic—in Catra's opinion anyway—for six in the morning.

“Yes, I am sure that C'yra would agree with you. Now have you seen Raiona? She usually isn't late.” he asked, earning a growl from the teen.

“What am I? Her Babysitter? I heard her leave her room this morning but that is it.” Catra responded, noticing how her father rolled his eyes at that.

“No, but I would like for you to go try to find her. The girl tries to be responsible but there is only so much responsibility you can ask of a kid without them feeling bogged down.” he answered, earning a huff.

“Fine, I'll go find her...But you owe me! I don't want to deal with her spoiled ego at this hour!”

Catra really didn't know why she was even doing this, after all, she didn't owe Tora anything. But still, the man was likable and for whatever reason—she assumed it was because he didn't try to force her to do anything she didn't want to—she didn't want to upset him.

But that didn't mean that she liked them! There was no way.

Glancing down at her arm—which was still in a sling—Catra remembered waking up curled up against the giant golden cat although she didn't know why C'yra had stayed with her, after all, it wasn't as if she was going to die or something.

But still, she couldn't deny that it felt nice to finally have someone to care enough to stay with her—even if she really didn't need it.
Sighing she lowered herself to the ground, sniffing at the pathway in hopes of picking up Raiona's scent only to end up having a sneezing fit as something that smelled overly sweet

“Oh wow, the stray sniffing for scraps now?” A male voice said, causing her to nearly trip as she stood up and whirled around, only to see Amur standing there, smug.

“What do you want?” Catra retorted, ears pinning back as she crossed her arms over her chest only to earn a snicker.

“I'm teasing but in all seriousness, what are you doing? Besides snorting pollen.” he retorted, earning a hiss.

“I was trying to find C'yras brat. Tora is supposed to teach us some shit this morning and I'm early for once.” Catra retorted, turning away from him although Amur just started to laugh.

“You really know nothing about kids, do you? Raiona's probably hidden away on top of something, sulking. She saw how close you were with C'yras yesterday and she's not used to sharing what little time she gets with your mom with anyone.” he retorted, earning a groan.

“Why is everyone talking about that? I was high on...Whatever the hell that stuff was. Besides, I don't want nor need C'yras or anyone else for that matter. I'm fine on my own.”

She didn't notice the look that the older boy sent her when she said that, having already began to walk away.

“Do you really believe that? Everyone needs to have people they can trust and I swear C'yras and Tora aren't bad people and that's not just because they are my aunt and uncle.” Amur said, running to keep up with Catra, who hissed lightly.

“So what if I do? Don't even pretend that I wouldn't be in a cage somewhere or dead if I wasn't
assumed to be the queen's kid!”

Catra was not in the mood for this, however, to her surprise Amur touched her shoulder.

“Catra, C'yra isn't like that. Here we have a saying: People make mistakes, but after all is said and done they also should be given a chance. I'm pretty sure you found your penance already...I mean you haven't turned us in to Hordak yet.” he said, smiling slightly when she shrugged away from him.

“Who says I won't?”

“Would you really condemn innocent people and children to death?”

The question made her pause as she thought about the implications of that.

*Had she actually taken the lives of innocents?*

She knew the Horde was bad but she had never really thought about *that*. At least not in the black and white way that Hordak taught.

“I already have...I attacked a village before I ended up here. I probably already have blood on my hands.” she admitted, earning a sigh.

“Good people can do bad things and bad people can do good. It's the terrible people who never experience sympathy, understanding or compassion.”
Amur's words seemed to echo in her thoughts as she continued on her way to search for the other girl.

“Why don't you go become a shrink?” she muttered before bolting off.

C'yra sighed as she sat in front of a desk—only half listening to what her adviser was saying about putting up new wards—when the door to the throne room burst open and Anuk—a cheetah-like Magi-cat burst in, panting.

“Back already?” she asked, arching a brow since he looked ready to be sick from running so hard.

“Had to Ma'am. I can confirm...what the girl said is true.....and not only that.....But it seems that the Horde is becoming more active lately.” he said, causing a dull roar of voices to fill the room.

But one stood out more than the others

“Where is that girl? Don't tell me you left her unguarded again, it's only a matter of time before she runs back to the Fright Zone like some kind of scalded dog.”

C'yra growled before turning toward Cain, the chief of police there.

'that girl' happens to be attending lessons with Tora this morning now unless you wish to be dismissed, stop trying to fear monger.” she responded, trying to keep herself from breaking the air of professionalism that she adopted inside that particular room.

“I still say that you should have dispatched of her. She isn't anyone after all of the brainwashing that the Horde put her through.”
This time it was Nahuel who had spoken, earning a hiss from the elderly woman across the table from C'yra.

“She is a child! I don’t care if she was part monkey or part ape, there is no excuse for the murder of a mere girl.”

“She's a murderer!”

“So was your son!”

C'yra could feel a headache coming on as she listened to the arguing.

_This is going to be a long day....I sure as hell hope that Tora is having an easier time with the girls than I am here._

Tora watched as the younger magi-cats sparred, Catra moving almost like fluid as she dodged the blasts that Raiona sent her way.

“Good but you need to remember that fighting is about more than offensive maneuvers Raiona...Start countering Catra's attacks besides just dodging them.” he instructed, trying to hide his amusement at the strangled sound that came from his youngest daughter's throat.

“To be fair...I didn't expect the kid to be this good....She's actually on the same level as someone her age would be in the Fright Zone.” Catra stated, smirking a bit as she deflected a punch, using that moment to send the younger girl hurling into the padding along the wall.
“But I'm a long way ahead of that.”

Tora just rolled his eyes at the showboating and just nodded.

“yes, I am sure you are. Seeing how you managed to stab through the floor yesterday.” he quipped just as Raiona sent a blast toward Catra—One that struck it's target and caused her fur to stand on end.

“I am going to fricking kill you!” Catra yelled, only for Raiona to seemingly teleport out of the way and reappearing halfway across the room.

“Gotta catch me first!”

*Vanishing spell? When did she learn to do that?* Tora couldn't help but wonder as he watched the pair—making sure that they didn't get too rough.

“What's wrong Catra? Can't keep up? What kind of Magi-cat can't do actual magic?”

Tora watched as Catra's ears folded back at Raiona's words.

“One who doesn't need fancy powers in order to do anything productive!” Catra responded, voice low and dangerous—but not quite a growl.

The game of cat and mouse went on for some time—Catra growing even more irritated with every jeer that the younger girl sent her way.

Then to Tora's surprise, Catra suddenly pounced—her body shifting and growing within mid-air—knocking Raiona to the floor and sitting on her.

“Okay....Let her up and let me walk you through how to change back. Raiona has other lessons to get to and I would like to give you some private ones, Catra. That is if you want.”
This will be interesting, to say the least...she wants power but not magic....and if she is training in order to surpass She-Ra herself....Then she has her work cut out for her. Tora thought although he didn't say anything as he wheeled toward them, blue eyes narrowed slightly as he noticed the limp that Catra still had.

“You know your mother is going to kill both of us because you were overdoing it....It's best if we don't tell her.”
“So what exactly do you want me to do old man? I am not learning magic if that is what you want.” Catra asked as she followed him deeper into the underground compound beneath the city although he just smirked.

“I want to teach you the opposite actually. Magic may be a good boost but it is no way a sure fire win against an enemy if that enemy knows what they are doing. You have been hurt by magic so I am going to teach you how never to fall prey to it again...That is if you trust me to help you.”

Catra was at a loss for words for a few minutes as she ran Tora’s words through her mind. Could she trust him? Would he hurt her? From experience with all forms of magic she wanted to believe that she couldn't, however from her experiences with him she felt as though if anyone could help her, it was him.

Even if she hated to admit that, even to herself.

“What's in it for you?” she asked instead of answering his question, trying to appear much more intimidating that she really felt in that moment alone with the mage.

“Don't use your strength on innocents...That is my only request.”

His answer surprised her as she had assumed that he was about to request her to accept her position as heir or something along those lines.

Yet she couldn't sense deceit coming from him.

“that's it?” she couldn't keep the words from falling from her mouth, although he just laughed.
Catra, not *everyone* out there is going to do things for selfish reasons.”

Catra watched as he wheeled himself off toward where ever their destination was, smirking slightly as she muttered:

“why do I want to believe that?”

Tora was careful about how much power he put behind the static blasts that he hurled toward the girl who—smirking—dodged them with relative ease.

“Is that the only thing you can do old man?” She jeered while back-flipping away from one blast, earning equally cocky grin from the tiger-striped Magi-cat.

“You're going to regret saying that, kitten.” he retorted before summoning a large amount of energy balls around the girl, trying to hit her although she was nearly as quick as he was.

However he did manage to hit her, causing her fur to stand on end from the static.

“Shouldn't that hurt?” Catra questioned, growling in slight annoyance as she licked at her fur, trying to get it to lay back down.

“No. It's training not a real fight. Maybe we will spar for real one day but not right now...Not until I am sure you can keep up with me.” Tora answered simply, chuckling a bit as he watched her crouch down and continue to try—and fail—to get her hair and fur to lay flat once again.

“I don’t see how looking like a puffed up bird is any better!” Catra countered, glancing up at him when she heard him chuckle at her. “What?”
Tora just grinned wider and said “Oh nothing...Just the fact that you look adorable like that.”

“Oh shut up! Can't you de-static me?” Catra groaned, much to his amusement.

“Oh I can but do you trust me enough to let me that close to you with magic?”

Catra laughed aloud as she leaped up onto a small ledge of crystal that jutted from the wall of the training room, tail lashing as she glared down at Tora.

“Come on old man! We don't have all day!”

She knew that she shouldn't be enjoying this or so trusting of Tora but she just couldn't help it. Not now that she had not only saw him getting irritated—and how harmless his response to *that* was—and now that she had been actually touched by his magic, she knew that he wouldn't hit her to actually hurt her.

And that just made her want to throw herself into the training even more.

Especially since Tora wasn't jeering or making demands.

“Oh zip it already and focus on your training!” Tora retorted in a similar tone, sending a volley of energy balls toward her.

Catra managed to dodge for the most part, grabbing a shield off of one wall in order to block some
of them.

“Good! Use your surroundings! If you have to, get creative!” her father instructed.

*Get creative huh? Well luckily that I know how to do.*

Catra took note how even the training felt like a game as it continued, both laughing a bit as they played their part. Catra hadn't expected some of the training to be agility based besides some kind of pseudo magic.

However before they were done, the door opened just as Catra dodged, ending with a yelp as the person struck staggered back against the door.

“I came in here to cool off, not get blasted in the face by a bunch of heathens!”

C'yras voice caused Catra to freeze, her mind whirling with the thoughts of what the older magi-cat could possibly do to her in reatalliation.

However Tora just started to laugh.

“Sweetheart, I don't mean to be that guy but you may want to take a look at yourself!” he stated and it was only then that Catra dared to turn around, only to find herself biting back laughter as well because C'yra—who was very keen on keeping herself well groomed and hair cut short and out of her face—looked more like some kind of monkey than cat as every bit of her fur fluffed out.

“Ha ha, very funny you jerk....what are you two doing in here anyway? Catra should be resting.” C'yras retorted, ignoring her rather comical appearance as she walked over to the teenager in question, eyes narrowing a little as she glanced her over.

“How is your arm? If it hurts tell someone and you can stop, Tora and I will not become angry with you.” She said simply, a hand lightly brushing over the girl's ears as she walked past.

“No, I'm fine. I've been avoiding using it.' Catra answered, unsure to how to respond to the queen who just nodded.
“Good. Now while I de-fluff you can tell me how your training is going.”

Catra just stood there as C'yra took a seat on the floor, transforming so that she could do a better job of smoothing the fur down. However C'yra's expectant look told her that she needed to at least say something.

“Well...I only managed to get hit like five times. I mean, Tora isn't freezing me in place before he attacks and I can dodge if I have the time to think about it.” Catra answered, earning a nod from the large cat.

“It'll get harder as you train more with either of our training. You are obviously talented with agility so perhaps it would be best to focus on that at first.” C'yra stated with what Catra knew was a grin as she glanced between the teen and Tora.

“She is indeed a talented girl....Cunning as heck as well since she used the crystals to deflect some of the blasts at me.” Tora said and Catra couldn't help but wonder if she was hearing things.

*Was he really praising her?*

She asked herself as he rolled over to them.

“Yes...I've noticed as well in our own training sessions.” C'yra replied as she shifted back and placed a hand on Catra's shoulder—earning a slight squeak from the teen who still half-expected some form of punishment, especially when the queen continued:

“However I do want her to start taking days off because there is more to life than getting stronger. It isn't good to hang up on the past like this.”

Catra half expected this to be accompanied by a tightening grip or a cuff, not by a light bump from the taller, more muscular female.
“Tomorrow I want you to get to know the city, make some friends or something. Just get out of the house and stop working yourself into exhaustion.”

Catra could only nod although the fear was only being replaced by confusion.

Wasn't C'yra angry with her for not taking it easy like she was directed? Wasn't she angry about being hit with an attack?

She half wanted to ask the woman about it, however before she could she suddenly felt the queen nuzzle against her lightly—which caused her to stiffen and leap away.

“Ugh! Was that necessary?” she growled, blushing although both the adults just laughed.

“Yes because you looked like I was about to eat you or something. Had to break that tension somehow.”
Why me?

That was the first thought that had entered Catra's mind the next morning when C'yla had ordered Raiona—who looked just as irritated by the suggestion—to take her around the city and introduce her to some people her own age.

And when Catra tried to argue, the scar-ridden queen sent her a look that put Shadow Weaver to shame.

“You need to focus on other things besides fighting all the time. This isn't like in the Fright Zone.” She had said and for the first time since being brought to Half-Moon, Catra wondered if maybe that wasn't true.

After all, Shadow Weaver and Hordak forced people to do stuff they didn't want to all of the time and that was exactly what C'yla was doing.

“There's a game today down in the cavern. She may enjoy that.” Raiona suggested, earning a thoughtful look from C'yla and a Scoff from Catra.

“Alright but I swear if I end up getting hit in the face or something, I will be on the hunt for all three of you!” Catra retorted, crossing her arms over her chest as she leveled the three of them with a look.

“Hey leave me out of this, if you wanted to help me work today I would let you but C'yla….” Tora began, holding both hands up as if in surrender.

“a slave driver? Yeah, I know. But I guess I'll let the runt show me around.”

“So what did you guys do in the Fright Zone for fun?” Raiona questioned as they walked towards
the area outside of the underground city.

“horse around, obstacle courses, pranks…Normal kid stuff. We didn't have much so we made due.” Catra’s answer actually took the younger Magi-cat by surprise.

“I figured you were stuck in like shooting camp or something.” Raiona retorted, earning a laugh.

“Kid, we couldn't even *look* at a blaster until we were thirteen and even then the ones we used was so powered down the only thing it could kill was a rat. Hordak wasn't *that* bad.” Catra answered before adding “how about you? Did you get stuck in etiquette classes?”

This time Raiona snickered.

“Etiquette classes, Really? Have you met our mother?”

Catra chuckled and shook her head.

“*Your* mother.”

She corrected, earning a scoff.

“Whatever you say renegade. Come on, last one to the mouth of the cavern is a blowfish!”

Arching a brow at the remark, Catra thought to ask but instead shook her head and took off after the younger girl.

“Oh, you are totally on!”
Catra was not going to get shown up by a kid, so she pushed off with all fours as to start at full speed.

*Hmm...so I don't have to worry about judgement here if I act on instinct for once. Let's see just what I can do.* She thought, leaping over a stalagmite that Raiona dodged around.

“Gotta do better than that kid.” Catra jeered as she caught up “or do you want me to sit on you again?”

This got an rather amusing growl from the younger girl who casted a sideways glare toward the teen.

“Hey! You can transform, I can't! I can't help it you cheated!”

Catra just scoffed as she shouted “yeah yeah, whatever helps you sleep at night!”

It didn't take them long to reach the wider area of the tunnel where a group of Magi-cat of different ages had gathered.

“Oh so you convinced her to come. Good…We need another player for our team. I *really* don't want Mace back on my team any time soon. They are so annoying.” A tall female with a spotted pattern on her fur said, smirking toward Catra who bristled slightly.

“You only find Mace annoying because of your stupid crush on them.” Raiona retorted before adding “Catra, this is Shenya and the two guys are Kis and Orion. They are the three closest to your age so you're on their team.”

It didn't take Catra long to figure out how to play as the game was simple and unlike what she thought a game like that would be like, she didn't have to hold much back because everything about the game was rough and she found herself actually enjoying herself.

“Rai! Come on! Get the ball!” One of the kittens yelled, causing Catra to scoff.
“You runts honestly think you can take me on? Really?” She jeered in response as she rushed toward the goal, only to be tackled by her sister.

“You think you can pin me?” Catra laughed, glaring up at the girl in question before using her tail to bat the ball toward Shenya before flipping their positions so that she had pinned the eleven year old.

“Nope, looks like you fail again.”

Raiona growled as she tried to push the teenager off of her although she just deflated when she realized that Catra was heavier than she looked.

“Okay, point made….Now get your ass off me.”

Catra only laughed as she leaned in closer, tail flicking playfully as she responded:

“Aw, is that any way for a princess to talk? Can't you get out from under me?”

What happened next happened so fast that none of them would have seen it coming because suddenly Catra's whole body felt as though that fire was pouring through her veins instead of blood and she couldn't move.

What is happened? Has Shadow Weaver found me?

She felt like she couldn't breathe and her eyes instantly filled with water due to the pain.

“Uncle Cain! What the hell!” she heard Shenya snarl but with the feel of blood spurting into her nose, everything went black.
She woke up surrounded by warmth although she could hear the sound of magic blasts crackling around her and she really expected to see Shadow Weaver somewhere in the room when she looked up, although she only found C’yra sitting over her, a radiant blood orange glow surrounding both the Queen and her.

*What is happening?* She wondered but she didn't dare ask in fear of being sick as her stomach churned painfully.

“Oh thank the spirits you're okay! What did he do to you?” Raiona demanded and for the first time Catra noticed that she was surrounded by the other Magi-Cats as Tora was sending and deflecting blasts from a dark colored Magi-cat she didn't recognize.

“I...I don't know but...Everything hurts.” Catra confessed, coughing a little and to her horror she could taste blood.

“I know kitten...Rest. Let us worry about this mess for right now.” Cyra said, the glow around them becoming brighter as a drowsiness began to wash over her and the last thing that Catra heard before the darkness took her again was her mother's voice saying:

“I'll kill the bastard for this.”
Catra awoke to find herself feeling the tingle of magic surrounding her, which caused her heart to jump into her throat.

That we until she managed to open her aching eyes to see that it was Tora leaned over her, a glowing hand passing over her body as sweat cloaked his short fur.

“You're awake? How are you feeling?” he panted and Catra could see that the man had been crying.

But why? Why had he been crying?

“Sore but….it doesn't hurt. What happened?” Catra asked, leaning into his hand when it passed over one of her ears.

“Blood magic...Magic that can control blood...usually the user's own.” He answered, his tone almost a snarl as he practically spit the name of the magic.

And this confused Catra even more.

Why was he angry?

But she wouldn't ask.

“I saw you fight...before I passed back out. I didn't think you were that strong.” She confessed, suddenly feeling tired again as he continued the healing spell.

“I may not be able to feel my legs Catra but that doesn't mean I won't fight hell and high water for the people I care about. Now relax and try to get some rest, I've healed most of the damage but you need time to get your strength back.”
Catra wanted to protest.

As a matter of fact everything inside her screamed for her to argue, to tell him not to use any more magic on her but something about his sweat soaked skin and red-rimmed eyes caused her to keep her mouth closed.

He had been worried about her and that realization hit her like a ton of bricks when it dawned on her. But why? She had only known him for a few weeks! He couldn't care about her.

Could he?

“Where's Cyra?” She asked instead, not wanting to linger on all the questions that was running through her head, but she instantly knew this was probably the wrong thing to ask because Tora flinched.

“She and Anu are currently speaking with the council and the generals. Cain will be put on trial for not only attacking a minor unprovoked and using forbidden magic but also with high treason. After you were stable no one could stop Cyra from going at him….although he was pretty much harmless after I got done with him.” Tora answered bluntly and Catra understood instantly why he had winced.

“She beat him….That isn't normal is it? For Magi-Cats at least?” Catra asked as she settled on the pillows and tried to relax under his touch.

“No, it's not. Not for your mother at least. No, this is the first time something has ever happened like this under your mother's rule. Your grandmother however ruled with an iron paw. Something your mother hated, even as a girl.”

Tora watched the girl flinch every time he moved the magic toward her face or head. He understood the fear, especially after the events of that day.

“Did you at least enjoy meeting others your age?” He dared ask after a few minutes of complete silence, only to earn a shrug.
“I guess. I mean it was okay up until the point that I couldn't move.” Catra answered before her eyes widened with sudden realization. “Where's Raiona? Is she alright?”

“Yes, Amur and Praelia took her and her friends to the elders to act as witnesses and as a means for them not to witness any more violence. Cain tried to make the claim you attacked Raiona….Although everyone else there said you were playing.” Tora said in a tone he hoped would reassure her, although by the way her ears flattened he had said the wrong thing.

“I had just pinned her. We were teasing each other and I decided to pounce on her. Next thing I knew, I couldn't move and could smell my own blood. Maybe it looked like I was going to hurt her or something but I swear I…..” Catra answered, earning a growl from Tora who pressed his nose against her temple.

“I believe you Catra. I notice how you act around her, even when she drives you crazy. You make sure not to be too rough. Magi-Cat Cubs play rough, mock fighting and all. It hasn't changed that much since I was a child and surely Cain remembers those games but he chose to be a liar and a coward today.”

Another heavy silence passed over them, neither sure what to say or do at that.

Then Catra spoke.

“What was the Magi-Cats like originally? Before C'yra's rule?”

He understood that he wanted to know–needed too, almost. But that wasn't his story to tell because the one affected by it most hadn't been him but Cyra herself.

“I think your mother is the best to ask about that. The Royal Bloodlines were treated a lot harsher than mine.”

“Mom? Is Catra going to be okay? I mean I've never seen that much blood just come out of someone.” Raiona asked as she followed Cyra back toward their home, earning a sigh as the Queen moved to put an arm around her.
“Your father is a great healer and magician right? He'll make sure she's okay.” Cyra answered before sighing and adding “Rai, I know you saw what I did back there and I want you to know that I'll never…”

She was cut off by her youngest daughter squeezing her hand.

“I know Mom. You'll never hurt me, I know that.” Raiona assured with a purr as she leaned against her mother's side. That guy deserved getting beaten after doing that too her!”

C'yla sighed then and reached over and ruffled the girls hair.

“Understand this, I hate using such violence however there are times it's necessary. Now come on, who knows how Catra reacted if she woke up during the healing spell.”

“Go slow, you probably still have some internal bruising although I healed the worst of it.”

Catra was surprised when Tora came into the room next handed her a cup of something that smelled like meat and herbs.

“What is it?” She asked, nose wrinkling as she sniffed cautiously at liquid.

“Stew. You haven't eaten since breakfast and your body needs all the energy.” Tora replied smirking a bit before adding “I'm not going to poison you.”

Catra glared up at him at that before she stuck out her tongue.

“I know that you asshole. I literally have no idea what half the food you guys eat even is.” She retorted, earning a laugh.
“Asshole? Really? I'm so offended!” he retorted, gripping his chest dramatically only to earn a snicker from Catra.

“Correction, you're a dramatic asshole.”

Cyra was ready for bed but she was too worked up over everything that had happened that day to be able to relax, at least until she knew that Catra was okay.

“Why don't you go on to bed? It's late.” She suggested to Raiona, only to earn a look.

“Not until I know Catra is okay, it's my fault she was even attacked in the first place. If I hadn't suggested she come with me…” the preteen began, only for the Queen to let out a soft growl.

“Stop. Rai, you weren't the one using blood magic and none of you kids knew that would happen. I'm sure that Catra understands that too.” Cyra stated her tone taking on a slightly harder tone as she forced the girl to look at her.

“Rai, I know you. You may have shot her with saline but I know you would never do anything to endanger someone's life. Stop blaming yourself for what a grown ass man has done.” The Queen said before leaning down and licking the girl “now come on, let's go see how your sister is doing.”
Catra growled softly as she felt C'yra's magic scanning her, prompting her to lightly push the woman away.

“C'yra, chill. I'm fine! I swear, Tora checked and double checked me over!” Catra complained, only to earn a hint of a hiss from the woman.

“You are not fine you! I watched you almost die!” Cyra said but then paused and sighed “sorry...It's just.”

Catra arched a brow at the woman before letting out a sigh.

“Fine, just don't mess up my fur.”

The teen relented, earning a chuckle from Tora.

“You may as well so let your mother have her way because after how worried she was, she isn't gonna take no for an answer.” He said, watching as Catra deflated.

“Yeah, I figured. Even if she is being annoying!”

However Catra couldn't help but smile slightly as she listened to her parents bicker. This was the strangest feeling in the world for her but she didn't feel like commenting on it. After all, even Catra herself was tired and she couldn't imagine how Tora must have felt.

“Cyra, back there when Tora was fighting….What was it you was doing to me? I...I was in too much pain to care but I know it was magic but it didn't hurt.” Catra asked after things turned quiet.

“I had a protection spell over you….I didn't want that bastard to be able to try to use you to get to us. I lost you once, I was terrified to lose you again.” Cyra answered, her voice breaking a bit as she
And then it dawned on Catra why both Tora and Cyra had been so upset by what happened and for the first time since she had arrived, it put things into perspective for her.

If she had been devastated at losing a friend how much worse was it for them? They had lost a child.

“I should thank you for that...I was terrified….until I saw you.” She confessed lowly as she not only began to understand not only them but recalled how afraid she had actually been.

“Oh Catra, I am so sorry we didn't get there sooner….that you had to endure such a thing.” Cyra's voice murmured close to her ear and Catra suddenly felt a light lick.

But she didn't pull away

I guess it wouldn't hurt to let them be all gross and mushy tonight. I mean I don't feel like fighting and they must have been just as scared as I was. She thought as she leaned back once more, closing her eyes as she tried to keep her mind from recalling everything that had happened that day.

How her whole body had burned.

How she had thought she was going to die. That Shadow Weaver had finally found her and was going to make due on her threats.

“Catra?”

Riaona's voice jarred her from her thoughts and caused her to crack open one eye just slightly.
“What do you want kid? Shouldn't you be in bed?”

Catra responded, sitting up slightly although one look at the younger girl told Catra all she needed to know and when Raiona lowered her gaze and didn't answer, Catra continued.

“Oh don't tell me you were worried too! I am fine, now it's late and I'm pretty sure that your mom is worrying enough about me that she doesn't need the extra worry about you collapsing from exhaustion.”

She instantly regretted those word however when she saw everything about the eleven year old droop.

_Jeez, what is up with this kid?_

“You know what? Since Queen pain in the ass obviously isn't moving from here you may as Wells sleep in here for the night too.”

C'yla awoke to the sound of sniffling and was surprised by the sight of Catra curled into a tight ball, quivering and whimpering and C'yla wasn't sure how to go about helping her because on one hand she didn't want the girl to be trapped in whatever hell that she was in but she also didn't want to risk startling her if she woke her either.

“Please stop...I'm sorry.”

The whispered pleas broke C'yla's heart and made her wonder just what had been done to Catra inside the Fright Zone for all those years and that was when C'yla made the decision to risk having the girl freak out.

“Catra, sweetheart wake up. You're just having a nightmare.”
In any other circumstance C'yr would have never thought to call Catra anything that the girl deemed too mushy—she barely tolerated being called kitten—but this was different and even if it did get her an ear full, C'yr didn't care.

Catra awoke with a start, claws out and ready to attack however instead of finding Hordak and Shadow Weaver standing near her, she found herself on the large, round bed next to a concerned looking C'yr.

“You okay? Want to talk about it?” C'yr questioned as she ran a hand through Catra's mane, making sure to scratch at the backs of her ears in order to try to help her calm down.

“Yes and no. It was just a dream.” Catra replied, moving to pull away however the feel of something putting gentle pressure on her back stopped her and caused her to look around to see a large tailless, tiger like cat laying there.

“Tora? I didn't know he could still…” she began, earning a light smile from the Queen.

“He can't walk Catra but that doesn't mean he lost any of his powers. He didn't want to leave you alone tonight either.”

Now that was unexpected to Catra since Tora had already did so much.

“Why? I mean you were in here and Rai…” Catra began only to feel a large tongue run across her head, causing her to groan aloud.

“Tora! Ew! What the hell is up with that anyway?” She demanded, glaring a the large cat who seemed to be laughing now.

“It's just a sign of affection Catra. Just like this.” C'yr responded, as she reached over and rubbed one of her ears “Now you wanna tell us what that dream was about or should I go fix some tea?”
Catra knew there was no getting out of this so with one last glare toward Tora and a clawless swipe at C'yra's hand, she let out a huff.

“Fine I'll tell you what it was about. I was back in the Fright Zone facing down Shadow Weaver, okay?”

Her tail wrapped around her waist at that as she drew her knees to her chest.

“Unlike you two I didn't have anyone to look up to who actually gave a damn. Closest thing I had was Shadow Weaver and she hated me, no matter what I did. She was the one who sent me running from the Horde, the one who blamed me for Adora's mistakes, the one who told me I was nothing.”

Catra felt tears fill her eyes as she said this and hid her face in her arms before anyone could notice.

“You are not nothing Catra. You are strong, agile, smart...a lot of things.” Tora began and she could feel C'yra shift close to her on the bed.

“And you are wrong Catra, I do know how that feels. But I think that is a conversation for us to have in private….I don't want Raiona to learn the truth about her grandmother just yet.”
Catra glanced down at the cup that C’yra put on the table in front of her. Just what we it that the Queen could be wanting to tell her? What was this about the former queen that C’yra wanted to keep from Raiona?

Her mind was a whirl of possibilities as she turned her attention toward the Queen who seemed to be lost in thought.

“What did you want to tell me?” She prompted after some silence, earning a sigh.

“You said that we wouldn’t understand what happened to you but that can’t be farther from the truth.” The Queen began, her fist clenching where it was resting on the table as she averted her eyes.

“You know I lost my sense of control after Cain was subdued and that was something I hoped to never show either you nor Raiona, although I think you understand it a bit more than Rai would. After all, I think we got the lion’s share of traits from my mother’s side.”

Catra watched as her mother stood, tail lashing around in unease as she began to pace about the room. Never before had she seen the strong, intimidating woman look so distressed and agitated.

“Catra, how much have you learned in your classes about our history?”

C’yra began after a few minutes, glancing toward Catra who just shrugged.

“Only that Queen C’yra the first was the one who brought the elite families together under her strength and wisdom.” Catra replied, watching as a humorless smirk came over the Queen's face.

“And have you learned the three pillars yet?”

What is she getting at with this? We never talk about my lessons because she knows Anu is teaching me. Catra wondered before answering a bit unsurely “that’s the things that make a good
ruler right? Strength, Wisdom and Compassion?”

She hoped she was right.

“Yes and take a notice that only the traits Strength and Wisdom are associated with the reign of my mother. That is because while having good intentions, she lacked the compassion needed to guide anyone through hardship…..Even her own offspring.”

Catra wasn’t sure what to say at that. What could she say? That she was sorry that C’ryra had went through that? What help would that do?

“I guess it's not only The Horde that produces assholes huh?” She responded, earning a dry chuckle.

“I guess no matter what side you're on there are good and bad parts to everyone.” C’ryra responded as she returned to her seat before sighing “She was distant, cold. The Royal family was expected to not only be the pillar of strength and knowledge but also to make sure that only their strongest would become next in line.”

C’ryra became quiet for a few minutes then, eyes squeezing shut as if she was trying hard to forget something—or to muster up the courage to continue.

“I was always second best, seemingly twenty steps behind my older brother. When he….died….She turned all of the bitterness toward me. I joined the military just to get away from her...and then I met Tora.”

Catra saw the slight gleam in her mother's eye when she mentioned Tora and allowed a ghost of a smile to come over her face—even if she hid it behind her tea glass.

“How did you two meet?” Catra asked after a few minutes, earning a light smile.

“Would you believe it if I said he turned my fur purple when he tried to aim the spell at his brother?” C’ryra retorted, earning a snicker.
“I bet you were pissed.” Catra said, earning a nod.

“Oh yes, I totally was. Back then I was quite the hothead. But when his asshole brother Taki started laughing I may or may not have swept his feet from under him and made him land his fancy ass into a mud puddle.” C’yra laughed before turning somber again.

“My mother was furious that I wouldn’t marry the man she had picked for me…the man from the lesser clan of Linea. A warrior. She challenged me to a duel to prove my worth and no matter what she had did to me, I didn't want to draw blood. She was my mother but in the end, I had to….for the sake of my freedom.”

“Your freedom?” Catra repeated, earning a sigh.

“Catra, I was the third in line for the throne. I had an older sister who died from some kind of illness and then a brother who died from…..from suicide. All my life I had to prove that I was worthy of my noble blood. I had to work so hard just to get her attention and I vowed I would never make any kids I had feel the way I did. I couldn't make friends, I could only train and study and if I dared disobey my mother had rather….harsh punishments. I had to fight for everything I ever had.”

Catra couldn't believe what she was hearing. How could a princess face so much? How could C’yra—who never had lost her temper on either Catra or Raiona—have been from such a harsh environment?

“Your mom did all that? You don't act like you had it that hard.” Catra asked only to earn a sigh from her mother who stood again and walked over to her and gently patted the girl's shoulder.

“Yes Catra, she did but I made a promise to myself that I would never treat anyone the way my mother treated me and that I would be better than she was. A better ruler, a better friend, a better everything. Just because the past is shit doesn't mean your future has to be too.”
Raiona knew something was wrong when she woke up to find Catra and C’yra missing. Had something happened during the night? Was Catra sick? Lightly nudging Tora awake.

“Daddy, wake up. Mom and Catra are gone.”

Tora let out a huff before he lifted himself up and transformed back into his humanoid form.

“Go check the kitchen, I'll be out soon.” He yawned, reaching over and ruffling her hair a bit before adding “I'm sure your Mama and Catra are fine.”

Raiona couldn't believe what she saw when she came downstairs only to find Catra and C’yra curled up together on the sofa, a single blanket draped around them.

“Dad? I think we should leave them alone….Evidently they had a rough night.”

Tora chuckled as he levitated himself down the stairs, landing beside of her.

“Yeah, let's go see if Miv has breakfast ready….Pretty sure if we wake either of them we'll get our heads bitten off.”

Catra awoke to something practically pinning her to the couch, causing her to panic briefly until she smelled the familiar musky floral scent that she came to associate with the Magi-cat queen.

“ugh...do you mind? You're squishing me.” she grumbled, feeling heat crawl into her face although the hefty built woman just seemed to draw her closer.

“Really? Am I?” C’yra asked sleepily, headbutting the girl who growled and tried to push her away, only to end up letting out a grunt of frustration since she couldn't get the woman to budge.
“Yes! Now move! You're going to end up killing me! You are so annoying!” Catra grumbled, feeling C'yla practically vibrating with laughter as her tail also wrapped around her.

“Make me, kitten.”

Catra growled again, batting at the tail that had came dangerously close to her face.

“Ugh, stop calling me that! I'm not a little kid!” she snarled, earning a flick to the nose from the furry appendage.

“Again, Make me.”

Catra snarled at that and batted at her mother's tail again.

“Ugh! How can I make you? You're built like a literal tank! Like seriously I can barely budge you!”

C'yla laughed aloud at the response and lightly pinned the girl, a purr rumbling deep in chest as she leaned over and licked her.

“You know what I think? That you really don't hate this as much as you act like you do.”

Catra felt her face grow red at that statement and shoved the woman away the best she could.

“Yeah well you're crazy too! Who would like being pinned down, slobbered on and annoyed by someone they can't possibly fight back!” Catra responded before finally giving up and going limp “ugh...Can you please let me up? This is ridiculous.”

Adora sighed as she walked into the dining hall, freezing in place when she saw a strange figure standing near Queen Angela. This figure had a tawny golden fur that covered his body and strange tear like markings around his eyes.
But other than that he looked oddly similar to Catra.

“Adora? Are you okay?” Glimmer asked, causing the blonde to jerk from her thoughts.

“Uh yeah, of course. But who is he? I mean he….well he looks like someone I know and…” Adora began, only to be cut off by Netossa who seemed almost as confused as Adora felt.

“He's a Magi-cat…a part of a nearly extinct warrior race that hide themselves by magic after their kingdom fell to the Horde. Though why one is here, I don't know.”

a nearly extinct warrior race.

their kingdom fell to the Horde.

The older girl's words seemed to echo in Adora's mind.

Catra would love to know this….she always wondered why she was the only one like herself in the Fright Zone. I just wish things didn't go south like they did.

She thought, only to jerk from her thoughts when Glimmer touched her arm.

“Adora is? are you okay?”

“Uh yeah….I'm fine. Just got lost in thought. Let's get some breakfast...We have that meeting today don't we?’

Adora is one that Glimmer wouldn't buy it but she didn't want to tell her she was thinking about the very person they had been fighting a few days ago. Glimmer just wouldn't understand why even after that, Adora was still worried about the half-feline.
Raiona laughed aloud as she pounced on her mother from behind as they stepped into the large canyon, the sunlight overhead beating down warmly on her fur.

“Besides the runt here being hyper, why are we even out here?” Catra asked as she followed along, trying to avoid being pulled into any of their roughhousing after her mother had practically pushed her off the couch that morning.

“We need to relax after the day we had yesterday and the hot springs are the best for that and if you don't want to get wet the sand stone around here hold heat and the sun is bright today.” C’yra explained with a yawn before adding “just don't start squabbling like two roosters okay? It's too early in the day for that.”

“I make no promises _but_ while you enjoy the hot springs, I'm finding me a sunny spot.” Catra retorted with a smirk.

“Oh don't tell me you're afraid of water!” Raiona snickered, earning a swipe across the face with the older girl's tail, a playful gesture as the teenager walked away.

“What’s it to you? Don't you have anything else to do besides being an asshole?” Catra retorted nonchalantly with a crooked smile.

“girls, don't start. We're supposed to relax not bicker.” C’yra said, the same amusement in her tone as she bumped into Raiona.

“Who's starting anything? I'm looking forward to a nap!” Catra responded, earning a snicker from Raiona.

“You are so lazy!”

“Shut up welp.”
Catra curled up atop the jacket she had been given, tail flicking every once in a while as she dozed inside the warmth of the sun rays while she listened to Raiona and C’yra roughhousing in the springs beneath the ledge she had settled on.

“Are you still sure you don't want to join us?”

Raiona asked, earning a snort from Catra who only glanced their way.

“Positive. I don't wanna get wet and then turn into fluffy abomination.” the teen responded before laying back down, pausing only to lick at the back of her wrist and using the damp fur to scrub at the backs of her ears.

She didn't know how long she had been there, going in and out of consciousness when she suddenly felt something shaking her, causing her to groan and sit up.

“The hell?” She grumbled, rubbing sleep from her eyes.

“Sorry, we just was wondering if you wanted to come exploring the old mines with us. Your mom said it was okay with her.”

Catra sighed as she tried to remember this girl's name, debating rather or not she could trust her. After all, hadn't it been her uncle that had attacked her the previous day.

“why should I trust you?” Catra found herself demanding, o ky to see the other girl deflate slightly before shrugging.

“Because I didn't know my uncle was a psychopath? Because I don't even speak to my dad or his family because he hit my mom? Look, I know Cain is an ass but not everyone is going to be like that. I can't even do magic!” Shenya retorted, catching Catra off guard.
“Wait what?”

Catra asked, earning a sigh.

“I'll explain everything if you'll just come along okay? I really just want to have another girl my age to talk.”
"wow, this was a mine? really?"

Catra asked as she followed Shenya into the caverns, taking notice of the multitude of crystals shimmering on the walls that seemed to glow in a pulsating, multicolored light.

"yeah. your dad actually was one of the ones who was over the safety team operating here. this whole place is enchanted." Shenya responded and Catra could practically smell the nervousness coming from the other girl.

"Okay so we're in an enchanted mine, where magical crystals grow and you are sure you don't have magic?" Catra questioned, earning a sigh.

"I'm sure. I can make a ball of light but that is it. Nothing like the people on my dad's side of the family." Shenya answered, tail coiling around her waist as they walked.

"Who needs magic? I mean seriously all it is really is a crutch. People use magic when they don't have the body strength to do anything." Catra retorted, shoving her hands into her jacket pockets.

"So you think Tora is weak? Because he is a mage?" Shenya countered, ears pierced Ning back slightly however Catra rolled her eyes.

"Not the same thing. Tora is smart, that is his true strength really and if he infiltrated a Horde slave camp then he had to be a strong soldier. I mean people like Cain and Shadow Weaver who are always using magic like a coward."

she responded, earning a arched brow.

"do I even want to ask who or what a Shadow Weaver is?"

"not really."

They walked along in silence for some time before Shenya spoke again.

“I'm sorry about my uncle. If I had known about…” she had began, only to trail off when Catra shot her a look.

“Stop apologizing for shit you can't help. Like seriously, I've been here long enough to know that not all Magi-Cats like me but it's not like anyone except Cain has tried anything more than throw rotten vegetables at my head either.”
Catra retorted, earning a scoff.

“And that's awful enough! Why don't you tell your mom?”

Shenya responded, turning her full attention on Catra now.

“You think she doesn't worry enough? Besides she's busy and I've had much, much worst done to me.”

“Yeah well that still doesn't make it right.”

“Hey dad! Think you can teach me that thing today?” Raiona asked as she and C'yra entered their house, earning a quizzical look from the queen.

“Do i even want to ask what you want to teach her this time? Last time I ended up with glowing fur for a week.” C'yra retorted, trying to hide her amusement at the pair before she sighed and glanced at the clock.

“Well Catra's actually being social for once and you two are going to get up to some kind mischief I guess I better get that paperwork done.” she said, stretching however Raiona grabbed her arm.

“Mom, come on you said you were taking a break today. Why don't you join me and Dad?” The eleven year old suggested in a half whine, earning a sigh from her mother.

“Rai, you and Tora love playing around with magic which I am not very good at and I've spent nearly all day with you. Tell you what, give me a half hour to finish some stuff up and then I'll join you. Alright?” C'yra said, leaning down and ruffling the girl's hair, only to have her hand batted away.

“You always say that and you never do.” Raiona's voice wavered as she spoke.

C'yra knelt down then in front of the preteen, a hand coming to rest on the girl's shoulder.
“Rai. I'm sorry if it seems like that but I swear that is never my intentions at all. I…”

“Save it.” Raiona cut her off before bolting off.

“Am I really as bad as she says?” Cyra asked Tora after Raiona had left, earning a sigh from her husband.

“Let’s see you take time out of your day to try to spend time with her, you always take meals with us despite being busy and you spent all morning playing around with her in the springs. You're not your mother C'yla. Give her time to calm down then go talk to her.” Tora answered, taking her hand.

“I know but I remember how I felt at that age and I wouldn't want anyone to feel like I did. Let alone our daughters.” the queen's voice shook slightly as she said this and she felt her stomach turn a the thought.

She remembered what it was like sitting alone in the dining hall with only the bravest servants for company. She remembered how it felt to try to make friends only to have her rank threw up in her face.

But Raiona had friends didn't she? She didn't feel so lonely right?

“Sweetheart, your parents shouldn't have had kids. You on the other hand actually take notice of what is going on with your kids. Stop over thinking things before you give yourself a migraine.” Tora tried to reassure her but Cyra wasn't sure if that was quite true.

“Tora, you remember what it was like in the palace! You always got the worst end of my mom's crap because…What if I....”Cyra began only to be stopped by a squeeze of the hand.

“Cyra. I thought we agreed not to dwell on the past after we finally got together. Besides that want your fault. The elders in those days saw rank not people and you know that.”
“Mace you fucking idiot! I'm going to kill you!”

Catra tried not to laugh, she really did but seeing the puma like Magi-Cat chasing after the other almost black cat was almost too much.

Especially since Shenya was covered in some kind of sticky green mud.

“Gotta catch me first slowpoke!”

The way they bantered reminded her far too much of the trouble she and Adora would go at each other in the Fright Zone and no matter what she told herself, Catra couldn't deny that she missed that.

Missed the simple naivety of those days when there wasn't any Magi-Cats or She-ra.

When there wasn't any lies that had came into light.

No it was just them against the world.

“Etheria to Catra, are you alive in there?”

A tail tapping against her head called her from her thoughts—and to a concerned looking Orion.

“Huh, yeah sorry. Must have been an out of body experience.” Catra answered, quickly trying to school her features although the boy just snorted.

“Sure it was. Anyway while the love birds are doing their thing why don't we go climbing?”
“How was your day?” C'yra asked when Catra walked in, fur slightly poofy and ears dropping.

“How fine until I fell into a freaking underground lake! Ugh...Can I borrow your sword? I need to blow off some steam and since I have nothing to hit that is the best option.” The teenager answered, earning a laugh from the queen.

“You know where it is.. Just don't zap yourself again.” C'yra retorted, earning a growl.

“Oh shut up.”

Catra was half way out of the room when she stopped, a thought entering her mind.

“And I'll be going to the surface... don't worry I'll take a guard with me.”

C'yra was about to argue but sighed and retorted “take Praelia with you. She could use a break from Raiona and she could probably spar with you if you want.”

Raiona growled as she threw another rock into the still surface of the lake before wiping at her eyes yet again.

“My stupid mom can be so clueless….Wisdom my ass!” She wanted aloud to no one, thankful to finally be outside and away from the guards and other Magi-Cats.

How can she act like she doesn't play favorites? She never trains with me or let's me even look in her study! Stupid Catra! Why is she so special? She was a Horde soldier for crying out loud!

“Whoa Shit! Okay I did not know it could do that!”
The sudden sound of Catra's voice caused Raiona to freeze before she let out an irritated growl.

“Great mom not only lets her get off with taking the sword but she let her bring the flipping thing outside!” She muttered to herself, however she had to admit that even she was curious about what Catra had done with the sword.

_I can’t let her know I’m out here. She’ll just go rat em other to Mom for brownie points._ she thought as she lowered herself onto her hands as well in order to sneak through the underbrush and toward the area where she could hear the familiar sizzle of the swords magic.

Snap!

Catra felt her ears turn toward the sound in the bushes, just outside of her range of sight by she could smell it...the salty scent of tears dried on fur mixed with the citrus like scent that seemed to cling to only one Magi-Cat she knew of.

Raiona.

But if the kid was out here at dusk and crying no less Catra would leave her alone. After all, she didn't know her that well and besides what help could she be? The Horde taught not to show any weaknesses, not how to comfort a crying brat.

She tried to focus on her training as Praelia sat nearby, watching and sometimes giving pointers.

But the more she listened to the small sounds coming from the girl's hiding spot, the worst she felt for just ignoring her.

After all, she knew how screwed up being ignored when she was sick or hurt. Did she really want that for Raiona?

“Hey kid, you might wanna come out from back there before I accidentally send another lightning bolt over there.” She finally called out, only to be ignored–or so Catra thought but what happened next was so fast that Catra had a hard time registering what had happened.
Because in the next minute or so Raiona had leaped at her, knocking her to the ground however that wasn't the worst part.

No, that would be the sword reacting to Catra's shock...which is exactly what it did as a bolt of yellow electrical energy shot from the blade and hit Raiona, knocking her a good ten meters back.

Blinking away the daze that consumed her, Catra got to her feet and shook herself off.

*Okay so the kid is pretty tough.*

She thought as she turned toward where the girl lay, groaning.

"Geez, You okay kid?" She asked as she walked over and held out a hand to help her up only to earn a hiss from her sister who sat up and glared at her.

"Why would I need your help? So Mom can say how good you are at taking care of me? So you don't get yelled at for zapping me?" Raiona responded angrily before adding in a softer tone “as if she'd care anyway.” which caused Catra to let out a scoff.

"What? you think I...Look, C'yra is cool and everything but let me tell you something, if you think she doesn't give a damn about you then you're stupider than I thought." Catra responded with a sigh as she grabbed the girl by the shoulder and pulled her to her feet, eyes scanning her over for any injuries.

"what would you know? you're nothing but a Horde soldier!" Raiona snarled her response but got no reaction.

"maybe but I know damn well that how C'yra treats you isn't that of a second rate anything and don't even start about her letting me train with her...She is a soldier and I was raised as a soldier...If I was in the Horde I would be going on missions to kill people Raiona. Unlike you I didn't have the luxury of having people pull punches until I was ready. It was either learn to block and dodge or get a mouthful of your own blood."

Catra stated instead although everything was starting to make a lot more sense now?

*Spirits, is this what has been going on in this girl's head? Here I thought she hated me because I was from the Horde*

She thought as she added
"Have you even talked to your mom about it?"

"what would that do? she'd just give me that talk about how she is busy with being a queen and..." Raiona began, only to be cut off by the teenager once again.

"Yeah she's busy but that doesn't mean she won't take the time to talk to you. Hell, if she took in a half dead horde soldier I know she'll listen to her daughter."

Raiona let out a hiss as she stood up and began to walk away only to find herself being grabbed by the tail and pulled back.

"hold up, We're not done here."

Catra felt pain in her arm as her sister sank he claws into her.

"Yeah because you were the Heir!"

Catra froze then.

oh she totally knew that feeling.

"Yeah and did she know this at first? No. She just saw someone covered in blood and wanted to help. That isn't what the Horde taught about royals at all and I honestly didn't know what to do. Your mom cares kid and if she can have sympathy for someone who could have stabbed her in the back, then I know she cares about something she helped make."

Raiona grew quiet at that as tears stung at her eyes.

"sometimes I doubt that. She doesn't want to even train with me." Raiona said, tail curling around her legs as she said this.

She wants to impress her mom...yet she feels like C'ya won't care. Jeez, when the hell did I turn into Kyle? I mean this is not any of my business so why do I want to help her? Catra thought before finally speaking

"because she is probably afraid she'll hurt you. C'ya is wicked strong and you're still just a kid. She plays around with you whenever possible and she tries to make time for you....The other night she and I talked for a long time and let me tell you something...She is terrified at the thought of hurting you in any way. Now if you want to train....I'll train with you but if you start whining because I hit you too hard it's done."

Catra couldn't help but snicker at the wide eyes surprise that wrote itself across Raiona's face.
"really? you will?"

"yes but only if you never make that face again. I mean I can't take you seriously when you do that...Cutsie crap."

“I'm going to go find Rai and try to get her to open up. I mean if I have been neglecting her I want to know how so I can make more time.” C'ya told Tora before leaving their home and easily following the scent of the girl to one of the hidden exits.

_That girl knows she's not supposed to be out here._ She thought however whatever lecture she planned on giving the girl about dangerous decisions flew out the window when she heard laughing and saw that Praelia had been tackled face first into the shallow lake by Raiona.

“Good job kid, you'll learn how to move stealthily in no time!”

Catra's praise caught C'yra's attention.

_Wait is Catra training with Rai?_

She couldn't help but wonder as she watched the soldier stand, knocking Raiona backward onto the ground with an oof.

“Well you definitely got me that time. But was the mud necessary?” Praelia questioned only to fuel the other girls laughter once again.

Deciding it was best to just watch them, C'yra quickly moved herself to a tree overlooking them and there she sat, crouched as if stalking prey.

She didn't know how long she had sat there but she knew it was getting close time for dinner when the trio finally took a break and Catra leaned up against the very tree C'yra was hidden in.
“You know Raiona, you're not too bad for a princess.” Catra said as she leaned back and closed her eyes.

“Thanks. I think. You know...I didn't want to like you. I mean not only were you a part of the group that nearly killed my mom and dad….” Raiona began in response but a flick of Catra's tail against her nose shut her up.

“Don't. I get it. The Horde is terrible and I intruded on your family.” Catra quipped, not even bothering to open her eyes as she curled her tail around the girl's lower back.

Everything was quiet for some time, the only sound being Praelia silently washing the mud out of her fur in the lake while the two sisters caught their breath.

However suddenly a twig snapped, causing Catra's eyes to shoot open only for her to find something odd looking sitting next to her.

Catra didn't even think as she leaped up, fur standing on end as a loud hiss ripped from her throat. Sending the creature hopping to the brush.

Then there was the brush of laughter coming from overhead.

“Catra, relax. It was just a rabbit!” Raiona said, trying and failing to hold back her own laughter at the scene.

“A what? Ugh stop laughing I wasn't scared I just didn't expect that.....thing to be there!” Catra snarled although this did little to do anything to stop the laughing.

Damn weird ass Etheria creatures! She thought, glaring up at what was obviously their mother in the leaves somewhere up above them.

Picking up a small pebble to through at the queen, Catra froze when she saw they not only did the rock leave her hand but a flickering, dimly glowing or did as well.
Almost

Chapter Summary

Short chapter is short but the next will be longer.

C’yra arched a brow as she landed in front of the now Frozen in place teenager.

“Holy shit was that? When did I? What the heck was that? How did I even do that?” Catra stammered although the queen just rolled her eyes at that.

“Catra take a breath. It seems like your emotions and magic is connected.” The queen stated although she wasn’t quite sure that Catra heard her.

“Mom? I think she's finally snapped.” Raiona snickered, earning a smirk.

*Okay so either I deal with….whatever this is or I can use instinct to snap her out of it.* C’yra thought, forming a small ball of light in one hand?

“I’ll see if she has.”

She could see Raiona want to protest but before either Catra could realize what was going on or Raiona could say anything else she sent the orb just inside Catra's line of vision, causing the teen to stop mumbling and fluff up, watching it.

The queen had to bite her lip to keep from laughing—and snapping Catra out of it—as the teen eventfully pounced at it.

“Nope not lost it completely yet.” Raiona said, breaking the proverbial spell that the moving light had put on the teen, causing her to fluff up even more.

“Ugh I hate you both!”
C'ya laugh at that and ruffled the teen's mane, earning a hiss snarl as Catra ducked away from the gesture.

“I thought I hurt you asshole!” She snapped, earning a smirk.

“Takes more than a instinctual, half-assed blast to hurt me kid. Now come on I'm sure Miv has dinner almost ready.”

Tora knew something was wrong when Catra came into his study unannounced and sat crouched in one of the chairs farthest from him, tail wrapped around her legs tightly and her face buried in her arms.

“Wanna talk about it?” He asked, earning a muffled groan followed by a “no.”

“Okay, whatever you say cub. Did you and your mom get into a fight or something?” He asked earning another, sharper no in response.

Tora just shook his head then before returning his attention to his reading, giving her time to tell him on her own.

“I need you to teach me magic.”

The words were so muffled and so rushed that he was sure he was hearing things.

“Excuse me?”

The king couldn't help but say as he looked up from his book, after all he must have misunderstood Catra because she was afraid of magic and for good reason.
“I need you to teach me magic okay? M…C'yra was fooling around and made me mad and I...something happened and I thought I had hurt her. I need you to teach me magic so I can control it and not nearly blast people!”

Catra's answer caught him almost as off guard as the near slip did.

_Did she manage to use magic without trying? I mean it would make sense because my brother and I both come from a very strong bloodline of magic wielders but still…_ he thought, but instead of saying anything he only wheeled his way over to her, placing a hand on her forearm.

“Okay. We'll start tomorrow okay? It's late and your mom would kill us if we skipped dinner. Wanna talk about what happened?” Tora kept his voice low as he reached up and gently tugged at one of the paler parts of the girl's hair, earning a ghost of a grin.

“No. C'yra and I talked about it on the way home. I didn't even hit her but I'm terrified that I'll become power crazy like Shadow Weaver. I mean magic basically corrupted her...I mean it had to since she acted like it was some kind of gift from the gods.” Catra answered with a sigh as her ears folded back

“I just know how bad it hurts to be hit with a full force magic blast. I don't want to do that to anyone, especially accidentally to someone that I....That I care about.”
The crackling of energy was all around her, threatening to burn her as she glanced around the darkness, trying to figure out where she was.

“Aadora!”

A voice echoed, causing Adora’s heart to race.

This can’t be! I was in Bright Moon! She wondered as she looked around, only to instantly grow sick at her stomach at what she saw. Because there, halfway across the dark room, hung Catra.

Her arms tied to a bean overhead and blood pooling on the green metal tile beneath her.

“Catra!”

She couldn’t keep herself from exclaiming as she ran over to the other girl only to be met with a half dead stare.

“I told you this would happen if you didn’t come back….I told you and yet you didn’t listen….Why didn’t you listen? Why did you leave me? Why won’t you come back?

Adora is wanted to say something but found herself unable to.

Not before another current of red electricity jolted through the smaller built girl’s body, causing her to spasm violently.

“You can still come back…You can end this. Please….Aadora.”
Adora awoke to find that she was crying and that a strange mist was all about the room.

*Shadow Weaver.*

Was the first thought that she grabbed the sword of power from where it was propped up at the side of her bed.

“For the honor of grayskull!” She shouted, panic gripping her as her mind not only played back the images from the dream but the implications of what they could mean.

“Do you think that will stop me? Would you really choose these people you barely know over the life of your former best friend?”

Adora had to suppress a shudder at the sound of the woman's voice that came from the strange mist.

“Will you really let her fall for where *you* had failed?”

Adora opened her mouth to respond however before she could even get out a sound the door burst open and the fog dispatched.

“Adora! What happened? Is everything alright?” Glimmer demanded, teleporting over to the blonde who instantly untransformed and allowed the sword to drop from her grip.

“Shadow Weaver was here and I...I think she has done something to Catra.” Adora is answered, sinking back onto the bed as soon as tried not to break into sobs.

“Whoa, hold up. Who's Shadow Weaver and how could she get in? We have guards all over the place?” Glimmer asked, brow furrowing as she put a hand on Adora's shoulder.

“Shadow Weaver....was my commander...the one who practically raised me. I...have to make sure
that Catra is okay. I mean….What if something terrible happens to her because of me? I couldn't forgive myself!"

Adora began, earning a sigh from Glimmer.

“Adora, I'm sure she's fine. I mean you probably just had a…” Glimmer began, earning a glare from the blonde.

“It wasn't Glimmer! That's a part of Shadow Weaver's power! She can get inside your head and manifest anywhere!” Adora said before sighing and getting to her feet.

“I need to get some air.”

“Come on old man! If I am going to be of any use against Shadow Weaver then I'm going to have to learn this! I mean I already read that book you lent me!” Catra complained as she followed her father out of his study.

“When you master the other defensive maneuvers then we'll talk about it. Putting up a mental shield is too advanced for you.” Tora replied, trying not to be too amused by the teen and her whining.

“Ugh come on! I can handle anything I mean I handled Shadow Weaver's punishments!” Catra argued, ears pinning back as she leered over at him, only to earn a light snort.

“And I'm not Shadow Weaver and I refuse to let a kid face that kind of mental torture without the proper preparation.” He answered just as C'yla walked in, seeing their conversation.

“Uh do I wanna know what you guys are bickering about?” She asked, earning a sigh from Tora.
“The kitten thinks she can do advanced magic after one lesson in control….Plus she supposedly read the book I gave her—which I doubt.” he retorted, earning a hiss from Catra.

“I did read it!”

“Then what is astral projection?”

“Uhh….isn't that….”

Rolling her eyes at them C’yra walked toward her room, really hoping the girls’ lies wouldn't earn her a smack upside the head by Tora.

“You two can fight that battle! I'm going to bed!”

“Adora?”

The sudden voice caused her to nearly jump out of her skin and she stumbled to bow to the monarch who just touched her shoulder.

“Adora, I thought I told you that you didn't have to be so formal all the time. Now what are you doing awake at this hour? Aren't you three going to head to Salineas tomorrow?” She asked, earning a sigh.

Adora is bit at her lip at the question before she sighed and glanced down.

“Shadow Weaver if following me….somehow…by magic. She was in my room tonight and made me see images of my best...my former best friend paying for my mistakes and….I just don't know what to do anymore Queen Angella. I mean, if I go back she'll be released but I'm not even sure if Shadow Weaver would do that.”
That's because you are weak.

Adora's mind spit at her however to her surprise Angella just sighed and placed a hand on her shoulder.

“If you were to try to rescue her you would only be leading yourself into their trap like an animal to the slaughter. If she is using this girl to get to you then there is still time to rally a rescue party if you must.” Angella explained before adding in an almost was tone “now, you need to get to bed before you end up falling overboard tomorrow.”

“If you think you can learn that advanced form of magic this quickly then you can come with me to Mysticor. It's where the original mages trained but it's a long way from here and the quickest way to get even near Mysticor drom is by boat. So gather up your things and go tell your mother were we're going. We leave tonight.” Tora said after a half hour of arguing with the stubborn teen, however before anyone could say—or do—anything C'yla spoke up.

“If you go, we will all go. I'm tired of these assholes here anyway and could use a vacation and I don't trust you lot not to blow something up on the ship”
“Ugh are we to the port yet? I swear if I hurl I am going to do so on you!”

Tora smirked as he glanced over at C'yla who was laying in a hammock, seemingly asleep accept the knowing smile that ghosted her face.

“Shouldn't have been in such a rush to learn magic, Cub.” C'yla retorted before adding with a yawn and a stretch “but I'm glad you did. I missed the feeling of the sun on my fur.”

“Oh shut up! Why are you even here anyway? Don't you have a kingdom to run?” Catra snapped back, only to help as some sea water splashed her in the face.

“Anu has it covered and Amur has been wanting to learn how to pilot a boat since that is what his father did and I don't trust you, Raiona and Amur in an enclosed space for any amount of time.” C'yla responded before yawning again and opening one eye.

“Any reason you didn't want me to come?”

“Yeah, because you're a smart ass!”

Tora couldn't help but snicker at the exchange. Both he and C'yla knew that Catra wasn't ready and this just proved it.

“Well I think Felicity caught some fresh fish for lunch and there is nothing I love more than fresh sea caught tuna, don't you agree Catra?” C'yla said, ignoring the girl's barely suppressed gag at the comment.

“Yeah, I'm going to really need you to shut up.”
“Oh I'll shut up. I'm going to go down into the kitchens and get some fried tuna, and maybe some eel soup if she caught any. Are you sure you don't want to join me, Catra?” C'yra could barely keep the laughter from painting her voice as she saw the teenager lurched once again.

“Okay, you've made your point now shut up!”

Tora waited to see what C'yra would say to that since it was obvious that his wife was only baiting the girl due to her disrespectful tone.

*Should I step in before she makes the poor girl puke?* He thought although he made no move to say anything as C'yra moved to put a hand on the girl's shoulder.

“Try that again and I might stop. Unless you want me to bring my lunch up here to eat it.” C'yra said, earning a growl as Catra shrugged away.

“Fine. Will you *please* stop talking about food?”

C'yra just chuckled and rubbed her back a bit.

“Better. Now why don't you go lie down for a while? I'll go make you some tea that will help your stomach.”

Catra just groaned and retorted

“Help with what? Make me expel my whole intestines?” She retorted, earning a sigh from C'yra who just nuzzled her lightly.

“Certain herbs help motion sickness. Do you think I would honestly torture you like that?” The queen asked earning a groan.
“Ugh no. You are just annoying as hell.” Catra responded, resting her head against her arms as she tried not to focus on the waves beneath them.

“Just a few more hours and we'll be there.” C'yra assured calmly and gentle.

Tora watched the exchange and couldn't help but smile slightly, seeing Catra come to trust C'yra enough to let the woman touch her was something he had expected to take longer than a few weeks.

_I am so glad that she is getting comfortable with us now._

Adora is tried to hold back the sounds that threatened to come from her as her whole body ached from an electrical like energy that was shooting through her sword and into her. She could barely concentrate but she knew she had to, even though she could feel the ground shaking with the explosions that was happening all around her.

But she couldn't help them–no matter how much she wanted to.

No, she knew that she needed to focus in the task at hand however she almost dropped her sword when she heard a voice saying:

“wait, that's She-Ra? You're the one who killed a cadet sent to retrieve Adora!”

The next blast nearly hit her–although it was followed by an explosion and a loud curse from Lonnie.

“We got this, you just focus on the gate!”

_I didn't kill Catra! I didn't do anything to Catra! She chose not to stay with me! I mean I know I shouldn't have left her there that night....I know that now but I didn't want her to get blamed for anything I had done._

She thought as the images from the visions the previous night replayed in her mind.
Focus Adora! You'll end up screwing up and She-Ra's power isn't something to lose focus with!

She thought as she closed her eyes, trying to will away the tears that now pooled in her eyes.

Catra? Did I really fail you? Did I do the very thing I have always tried not to do? She allowed herself to wonder as images of her—no, their—childhood flash through her mind.

What if Shadow Weaver did kill her? I'll never be able to forgive myself!

“Wake up sleeping ugly, we're here!”

Catra growled at Raiona before tossing a pillow at her before sitting up, the magic book that he had been reading—before falling asleep anyway—falling to the floor in the process.

“You're just jealous that you're not as cool as I am.” Catra retorted, groaning a bit as her stomach lurched “ugh...Please tell me that the rest of the way is by land.”

Raiona chuckled and shrugged “I think so? I mean I've never been to Mysticor either! Grandmother and Great Grandmother had ties with the sorcerers though and maybe Mom will finally teach me how to use some of the magic the royals can use!”

The eleven year old rambled, earning a sigh.

“Yeah, I doubt that. Anyways, let's get off this watery death trap.”
"she made her choice Adora. You said it yourself you asked her to stay." Glimmer said. earning a
sigh from the blonde who pulled her knees up to her chest.

"But I should have brought her with me that night, Glimmer! she was my best friend and I just left
her!" Adora is said bitterly as she wiped away the tears that we running down her face.

"do you know what it is like to have someone connected to you at the hip? to have someone you
trusted with your life? that's how Catra and I were. Ever since I moved into the barracks with the
other kids in my unit...We were together."

As she said this, Adora is couldn't help but think back to that first day in the barracks.

'okay calm down. This is the first step in becoming Force Captain. Ignore how nervous you are.’

Adora thought as she was ushered into the room by Shadow Weaver, only to suddenly find
herself flat on her back on the floor with something heavy sitting on her chest.

“Hey Adora! So you finally got out from under her thumb huh? We have training in like an
hour and a half! I can't wait to show you how strong I am now!”

She instantly recognized the voice to be that of Shadow Weaver's other student and just seeing
that they were in the same unit caused her to smile.

“Catra! I didn't know you were in this unit! At least there is someone here I know!”

The half feline with ears that she would most definitely have to grow into just laughed, hopping off
her hand extending a hand.

“We have to stick together, right? Now come on, I'll help you fix your bunk....You can have the
one under mine. I would offer you the top but....Well I like to climb.”

“How would you feel if Bow suddenly seemed to care more about someone else rather than you?”
Adora is asked suddenly, earning a wide eyed look from the pink haired girl.

“Okay, yeah. When you put it like that I guess I’d be pretty mad too.” The princess of Brightmoon answered, earning a nod as Arora fell backward onto the bed, her body still aching slightly from the days events.

“In the Horde, kids who were brought there as infants were assigned a commander to instruct them and make them into warriors that the Horde needed. Catra and I were assigned Shadow Weaver.” Adora tried to explain.

“So like sisters?” Bow suggested only for the blonde to shake her head.

“No...There wasn't family structures in the Fright Zone. I mean some kids had parents but after a certain age they were expected to train like the rest of us. We were more like you and Bow, best friends but we also were kinda rivals. Especially as we got older.”

It hurt to talk about this. It hurt to think that her best friend of so many years could have been dead.

“One time she and I caught Shadow Weaver in the showers and ripped the bottom of her dress to shreds. She was so mad….but luckily for us Lonnie had been yelled at all day during training so Shadow Weaver blamed her and not Catra.” Adora recalled, a ghost of a smile coming over her face as she sat up, glancing out the window at the visible moon in the sky.

“I just can’t help but be worried about her. I mean…Deep down I know she is a good person, no matter what she does. She just….she runs on her own emotions; reacts first and thinks later and if something has happened to her because of me…."

She trailed off, unable to continue without losing control of the tears that was suddenly in her eyes once again.

“Blah, Blah, fire manipulation blah.” Catra mumumbled, flipping through the book she had been
told to read in order to find something that would prove to C’yra and Tora that she had read it and was ready to try her hand on—what she deemed—the only magic that would ever be useful.

Letting out a groan she glared out the window at the sound of laughter coming from outside where a group of children—including Raiona—were playing.

“Ugh, I wonder if there is a silencing spell or something in here so I can shut them the…. Catra trailed off as her eyes landed on something that made her ears stand on end.

“Now this is interesting….An ability to absorb energy directed at you. Too bad the horde didn't have classes on *that*. This is useful!”

She flicked her tail slightly as she turned the page, smirking as she read the section before smirking and closing her eyes.

“Tora said I needed to learn how to properly meditate and how to visualize my energy...Magic...Whatever the hell. Maybe if I learn how to actually manipulate some of that energy then I'll prove to him that I am ready. Who needs reading an dusty old book to learn how to fight?”

She muttered aloud, smirking as she snapped the book shut and slid off the overstuffed bed that would be hers for the next week or so.

*Now I just need to figure out where a safe place to train is. If this place brought out my Grandmother's powers and my Dad even trained here with Anu then surely it will help me get strong too.*

She thought as she headed down the hall, smirking slightly as another—darker—thought came to her mind.

*Strong enough to finally show Adora that I am not some kind of second rate warrior! Just because she's some kind of glowing, Princess goddess or whatever doesn't mean she is better than me!*
“Okay, hold up. You two did *what* for fun? Do you know how dangerous that was?” Bow practically squeaked although Adora just laughed and waved him off.

“Everyone did stuff like that in the Fright Zone. It was also a part of our training so it wasn't that big of a deal. Besides, the view from the top of the towers were so worth it. I mean we could see all the way to the Whispering Wood.” Adora said before sighing and closing her eyes.

She could remember sneaking out with Catra on warm, clear nights to watch the strange glowing particles from the trees of the wood float around on the air and make up stories about how she and Catra would both become force captains and see the whole world.

The memory now felt like poison in her veins.

“I still don't understand why they let kids use weapons like that, without supervision especially! I mean you could have shot that grappling hook through someone's leg or something!”

She could hear Bow saying but chose to ignore it.

“I'll tell you what. You help us recruit Princess Entrapta and I'll try to convince my mom to let us help your friend.” Glimmer suddenly spoke up, causing Adora to sit up, wide eyed.

“You really would do that for me? I mean, your mom will never agree!”

“You just let me worry about that. Now come on, we better get some sleep.”

Catra felt as though the fur on the palms of her hands was burning off as she tried to aim another blast of pure energy off of the floating isle, only for it to flicker out before it got there.
“Aw dang it!” She snarled, kicking a stone as far as she could send it.

“What's wrong kitten? Having trouble meeting your father's requirements?”

Turning around she glared at the woman who was sitting at the main top of the pillar overhead.

“Ugh. Don't you have anything better to do than spy on me? Or is that what mother's do?” Catra demanded, earning a laugh from the lion like cat who just dropped to the ground beside of her.

“Some do.” C'ya retorted with a crooked grin “and some are willing to help their kids train.”

As she added on the last part, the queen took a stance before sending a wave of energy into the sky.

Catra just stood, dumbstruck as what looked like snow began to fall from the cloud she had blasted.

“Okay...What the heck was that and How the hell did you change the weather?” Catra demanded, earning a light flick to the chest with her mother's tail.

“How about we start with the basics before going straight into a freeze fire?” C'ya suggested, earning a scoff.

“Freeze fire? Seriously? That is the dumbest name I have ever heard!” Catra retorted earning a snicker in response.

“Yes well….take that up with your great grandmother's ghost. I wouldn't have called it freeze fire either.”

“Guess what Dad! I learned how to make a solar blast today! A solar blast! Just like Uncle Taki!”
Do you think Amur would want to see?”

Tora chuckled as his youngest daughter asked that, leaning her head onto his shoulder from behind.

“Perhaps. Ask him. I bet you'll be just as good of a mage as he was.” Tora replied with a smile, just as a disheveled looking Catra walked into the room.

“She isn't the only person who's ready to go to the next level. You told me if I actually read your book and I learned enough control to use Freeze Fire then you would teach me whatever I wanted.” Catra announced as she barged into her parents bedroom, earning an arched brow from Tora.

“Really then what is the six subgroups of energy manipulation?” He responded earning a scoff.

“Light, dark, Fire, Water, Earth and Air. It can be broken down even farther too so that it covers wood, metal or even blood.” Catra said, forming a slightly flickery ball of energy in the palm of one hand.

Tora glanced over at C'yra who shrugged.

“Don't look at me. You're the one training her. Do whatever you want.” C'yra retorted, although she narrowed her eyes at Catra before adding “Although I think learning mind blocking is far too difficult for a teenager. Especially one like Catra.”

Tora was about to say something however Catra had whirled to face C'yra at that ears completely pinned.

“And what's that supposed to mean?” She snarled, claws extending however suddenly C'yra was right there in front of her, silently daring her to strike as she whispered

“I don't have Tora's powers but even I can see the sadness under there Catra. Do you really want to risk those skeletons falling out of the closet?”
Tora saw Catra flinch and although he knew C'yra would never hurt her, he wanted to step in.

However he also knew that would only set Catra off even farther.

“Yes I'm sure! I don't need anyone telling me what I can or can't do! I don't care what it takes as long as I get stronger!”
“Remember Catra, we're here to support you. If it gets too much for you just tell me to stop and I will. Okay?” Tora asked as Catra took a seat in front of him.

He had given Catra four days to change her mind and yet she hadn't and even he couldn't be sure what he would dig up if she were to fail at blocking him.

“Catra, You know this could hurt you right? Mentally, emotionally, and physically.” C'yla said from the doorway, earning a scoff.

“You're just afraid I'll become just as powerful as you.” Catra sneered in response, earning a sigh.

“Think what you want but we're only worried about you.” C'yla responded, an rare edge to her tone as she leaned against the wall and crossed her arms.

“Whatever. Now are we going to do this or not?”

Catra retorted, causing Tora to sigh.

“Fine. But I want you to know that I only agreed to this because you're being so pushy.”

Tora motioned toward the couch then, closing his eyes briefly before rolling his way toward her.
“One last time I will ask, are you sure you want to do this?”

He questioned, earning a snarl.

“If I wasn't don't you think I would have come all this way? By boat no less!”

Tora sighed then and closed his eyes, a green glow coming around him before Catra let out a hiss and clutched at her head.

“Worthless girl! You'll be killed before you even get to be a senior cadet! Either that or you'll be exiled before you ever graduate!”

Shadow Weaver snarled, shoving her back against the wall of the training room as she walked out.

“I seriously don't understand why someone as talented as Adora would care about you.”

This can't be right! I wasn't in the Fright Zone! I was in mysticor. Was that a mind game? Was I seeing things or imagining….No. this has to be fake. Catra thought as she glanced around, only to see Lonnie and some of the other Cadets laughing at her.

“What's wrong loser? Did you honestly think that you'd pass this time?”

Lonnie called as Catra brushed past.

Closing her eyes Catra tried to block out what she had been told.
This can't be real!

She thought, feeling more and more panicked by the minute, like she had as a child whenever something went wrong.

She knew what could happen to her if she made Shadow Weaver too angry.

That thought made her stomach lurch and when she opened her eyes she found herself inside a pitch black room.

Shit! How did I get here?

She wondered as she closed her eyes, trying to block out everything around her—or the lack thereof. However it seemed like in no time at all, sharp pain ran across her body, causing her to cry out.

“Scream all you want, girl. No one is going to save you! If you really didn't want to be punished then you would have tried a lot harder in training!”

More pain accompanied the voice, causing her to scream once again.

“You know I always thought Kyle was useless but you're even worse than he is! He at least can listen!”

The pain increased until it felt as though Catra's whole body was on fire and she could feel the tiles cutting into her knees as she collapsed to the floor.

“You know. This fits perfectly. On your knees, in the dirt like the animal you are! I would have casted you out as soon as Hordak had lost interest in the orphans we collected if Adora didn't take an interest in you. But who am I to deny the best of the class, her pet?”

Pet?
Adora is don't see me as a pet...did she?

She is my friend, isn't she?

Suddenly she felt a hand roughly grab her by the arm, yanking her to her feet and shoving her toward the light that was the door.

“Now, you're going to do that exercise again until you get it right. Even if it takes you all night!”

“Tora, you have to stop!” C'yra growled as she noticed that the teenager in front of them seemed to be in physical pain.

“I can't C'yra! If I stop now without her pushing me out it could cause a lot of problems for her and I don't want to do any more damage than that bitch in the Fright Zone did!” Tora said, snarling slightly as he squeezed his eyes shut.

“I am glad you can't see what her and I am. I could never treat a child like this.”

C'yra had been prepared to say something else however the words died on her lips because Tora rarely cursed and even when he did, it was never to insult someone else.

Just what are those two seeing? What is he seeing through her eyes?
She could feel blood soaking into her fur as she staggered into the barracks, finding Adora curled up in a tight ball on the bed.

Their bed.

One part of her wanted to wake Adora but another couldn't bare the thought of those concerned, blue eyes filling with tears.

No, she wouldn't worry the only person that gave a damn about her in this place. So with a hiss she leaped onto the top bunk, the sound causing the blonde to sit up.

“Catra! What happened? Oh Spirits! Catra you're bleeding!”

Catra tried to ignore the girl but as she curled up on her side, but the pain from her bruising ribs was too great.

“Ugh. I'm ten Adora, I can handle a bit of blood.” Catra retorted, earning a sigh.

“No one deserves this sort of thing Catra! No one deserves to be beat like a slave! I'm going to go talk to Shadow Weaver!”

With that Adora left, returning a half hour later and going to bed without a word.

Why didn't she say anything? She wasn't hurt….Shadow Weaver never punishes her.

C’yra growled as she listened to Catra whimper.
“This is as bad as what Cain did! Tradition be damned, this is why I didn't want either of our children learning magic! This isn't even fit for the treatment of war criminals!” She snarled at her husband, who was silently shaking.

“I know C’yla. It's almost over….I can feel it.” He responded, earning a sound that seemed like a muted roar.

“If you don't damn well kill her first!”

C’yla said, her ears pinning flat to her head as her tail lashed about behind her. Kneeling on the couch beside the teenager, C’yla put a hand on her knee before sighing and willing her tone to calm down.

“Catra, you need to fight this sweetheart. You need to find whatever willpower you have inside you to push all this negativity out.” She instructed, although she didn't have a clue if it would work or not.

“Come on you chicken! If you were a real soldier then you wouldn't give a damn! It's just a dare!”

Lonnie said, pushing her roughly toward Adora is, her looked more irritated than amused.

“Do you have to be so mean? I mean she said she didn't want to.” Adora retorted, earning a laugh.

“What are you a coward too now? I mean I know that hair-ball here was but you…” Lonnie began, only to freeze when—with a whispered apology—pressed her lips against Catra’s.

Catra could feel her heart pounding in her ears at that before she shoved the blonde away.
“What the hell, this game is pointless. I’m going to go do something productive!” She snarled before dashing off, trying not to die for embarrassment.

Stupid Lonnie! Stupid crush on my stupid best friend! There is no way that Adora would ever like me anyway! I'm not good enough for her! I'm just some kind of second rate idiot!

Thirty minutes.

The whole ordeal lasted for an half hour before Tora could let the spell fade and by then he was quivering, tears threatening to burn his own eyes as he looked over at his wife, who was running a hand through Catra's hair, whispering to her.

I am going to find a way to kill that bitch myself for hurting you. He thought as he wheeled his way over to Catra, reaching out to touch her, only to find claws sinking into his arm.

“What, easy kitten. It's me.” He said, using his magic to gently pull her hand away from him although this only earned a hiss from the teen and caused his eyes to narrow.

“She's still stuck in those memories. C'yr...she's going to need you more than ever when she wakes up. You're the one she let's closest to her and trust me, she is not going to want magic around her for a while.” Tora said before pressing his injured hand to Catra's forehead, muttering under his breath which caused Catra to go limp.

Catra awoke with a start, feeling as though her heart had been twisted and broken into a million pieces. She remembered everything, everything just as strong as the days that it happened.

I wanted her to be proud of me...I wanted to prove I was strong. I was never worth anything to Shadow Weaver or Adora is.....I can't even complete training with Tora without becoming as weak as a damn infant!
She berated herself, drawing her knees to her chest as sobs began to shake her whole body.

*I am useless! No wonder Adora is never noticed! No wonder Shadow Weaver….*

The sound of the door opening with a snap caused her to nearly jump out of her skin.

“C'yra I…” she began, trying to straighten up, only to earn a concerned look.

“Catra! Oh Spirits, are you're alright?”

Catra was caught off guard by a pair of strong arms wrapping around her suddenly.

*What the….isn't she mad? I failed!*

“Your Majesty? What…” She began, although she found it really hard to concentrate suddenly because the urge to cry returned tenfold was she heard her mother suddenly purring.

“I'm sorry I was too weak! I'm sorry I failed!” Catra began only to hear a light growl from the woman.

“Listen to me cub, you're not weak nor did you fail. You put yourself through a literal hell tonight even though everyone was sure that you weren't ready. Right now you are hurting so much and I am sorry that I let you go through with that!”

C'yra said, her lips pressing against the top of the teens hair as she added softly

“There is nothing for you to be sorry for.”

Catra had expected to be scolded or punished for being weak or for lying but C'yra didn't seem to even care about any of that.
And that was new for her.

Any commanding officer would have, so why wasn't the magi-cat queen?

“‘You're not mad? I mean I….’”

She couldn't bring herself to confess to anything else but a deep chuckle called her attention back to C’yra.

“Catra, I know you didn't learn anything you were told to. But you were too stubborn to listen and we had to let you learn on your own, even if we both were just a hurt just watching you in so much pain.”

The queen replied softly then sighed again and whispered

“You look confused. Want to tell me why?”

Catra bit her lip as she debated that. She didn't want to risk appearing weak and getting on anyone's bad side but she had no idea how she should feel or think now—or even if she could feel anything beside the weighing sadness that threatened to crush her—but C’yra deserved some kind of answer.

“Why aren't you mad? I mean any commander would have been furious!”

She asked only to feel C’yra sigh.

“Because I'm your mother, not a commander. Catra a commander is there to make you tough and strong for battle. A parent is there to teach you how to survive in the world and if that means letting you make mistakes and helping you through the consequences then so be it. Besides, why should I be angry and punish you when you obviously have been through hell tonight?”
“Where's Catra? Shouldn't she be down here by now?”

Tora sighed and glanced over at Raiona before stabbing a fork into his sausage.

“She had a hard evening yesterday. She wants to eat in her room...Which is why your mother is not here either. I need to ask Castaspella some questions or else I would have stayed with them.” Tora replied before glancing across the room at Amur who was showing off some flashy spell that he had no name for.

“Why don't you convince your cousin to show you around the island today? I know you haven't seen everything and if you're lucky he may teach you something...Heaven knows he likes showing off for those girls.” He added, earning a snicker from his youngest.

“You just want me to keep him from getting into a fight with some guy over a girl right?” She retorted, earning a smirk.

“Bingo. I can't have him ruining the peaceful atmosphere of Mysticor because he can't control himself. Just promise me that you won't have a drama filled love life. I have a feeling both your sister and your cousin are going to need a kick in the right direction to even get in a stable relationship.”

Catra sat staring down at the plate in front of her. Her mind was still a whirl of thoughts from the previous night—both from the training exercise that she had forced and from the immense kindness that she had felt from both C'ya and Tora.

_He stayed the night as well....Like when Cain attacked me. I wasn't even hurt this time and I failed his training.... Everything in Etheria is so weird._

She thought as her ears flicked toward the other end of the room where C'ya was rummaging through her bags for some reason.
“Do you think he would understand if I didn't want to continue training with him?”

Catra asked, hating how frail her own voice sounded and knowing the answer would probably be no.

After all, this was her own damn fault and she knew it.

“To be honest, I'd be surprised if he didn't make you take a break in training after last night. I never seen him so angry or worried. Whatever Shadow Weaver did to you...Whatever he saw...It hurt him too Catra.”

C'ya's response caught her by surprise—and confused her even more.

“Uh...What do ya mean it hurt him?” She asked, earning a sigh.

“He may be less affectionate with you than he is with Raiona but that is because he knows you don't exactly trust us. He loves you just as much as he does her and frankly no one messes with our family and gets away with it.”

Love...

It was a word she didn't really understand. In the Fright Zone she had heard it.

“Loved to climb.”

“Loved to fight.”

“Loved to win.”
But what did the word mean? What did it mean to love someone? Had anyone ever loved her? Had she ever loved anyone?

It made her head and—toma fuller extent—her heart hurt to just think about that.

“I've been with you for what? A month now? Maybe a month and a half? How can you love me? I mean…I'm basically nothing to you.” She couldn't keep the words at bay and almost instantly she felt the bed sink under C'yra's weight.

“Catra. I don't know who or what has hurt you so much in the past that makes you feel like you are never enough for anyone but I assure you that despite the circumstances, you found your way into our hearts. I can't explain what love is or what makes you love someone but I can say this: Love, in all its forms is an exercise.” C'yla began, chuckling a little when Catra scoffed at that.

“Oh yeah, you build it up by doing crunches….Sure.”

Rolling her eyes the queen put a hand on the girl's shoulder.

“What I mean is that no matter if it is unconditional, sometimes showing or knowing how to show someone that you care about them is hard. Like some parents come across as overbearing because they worry their child is going to be hurt and couldn't bear that thought. Others show it through gifts because they don't know how to let themselves be soft.”

She began, pausing for a moment before adding

“And just like Tora and I. We argue and disagree but we have had to learn how to compromise our different views on things and talk things through. That's how any relationship works, no matter what kind.”

“What was that girl thinking! She is lucky that nightmares was all that happens to her!”
Tora winced, ears pinning down at the exclamation from the sorceress.

“I know, Castaspella... We tried to talk her out of it but that girl is too damn stubborn. She has been hurt so much that she is terrified it will happen again and we're powerless in helping her! She acts so hard and confident but underneath it all is just a scared little girl trying to figure out why the world sees her as a monster.”

Tora replied, watching as the woman's expression darkened.

“That's awful but how will learning about dark magic help her?” she asked, earning a sigh.

“I need to know just what in the seven layers of hell those bastards did to her. I need to know the effects it would have on her... How I can help.”
Plans Or Mistakes?

She had to be hearing things.

She had to be because there was no way that Adora would be even near the floating, hidden island.

Was there?

Her tail lashed about as she strained to listen to the muffled voices.

What is she doing here?

She wondered as she tried to gain any little bit of insight that she could on what was going on. However a hand touching her arm called her attention away from what was going on behind the wall—and caused her to nearly jump off her perch.

“Shit! Don't sneak up on me like that! What do you want?” She demanded in a hushed voice as she turned to see Tora sitting behind her.

“Sorry, I just wanted to see how you were doing and ask why in the multiverse were you spying on someone?” He asked, the corner of his lips quirking upward as he said this.

“Ugh...You are so annoying! It's none of your business!”

Tora just chuckled at that and shook his head.

“Castaspella told me she was expecting her niece today….and I'm going out on the like here and assuming the blonde with her is Adora?” He said, causing the younger cat's ears to perk up and slightly bristle.

“How did you know know?” She demanded—before it dawned on her “How much did you see?”
Tora couldn't help but burst into laughter at that.

“Relax, bristle brush. My lips are sealed...Although i get the feeling that this Lonnie was your competition?”

Catra felt her face grow hot at that and hissed in her father's direction.

“Ugh! Shut up old man!”

“I just can't stop thinking about Shadow Weaver, Catra and what that scorpion chick said! Not to mention these nightmares are getting worse by the day!”

Adora ranted as she leaned back onto the sand, earning a sigh from Glimmer, who looked as if she wanted to say something but didn't.

But there was nothing she could have said that would have made Adora feel any better.

“Maybe they are playing mind games. I mean this is the Horde we're talking about.” Bow said earning a sigh from Adora who flopped back onto the blanket.

“I hope that's all it is.”

Catra felt her ears twitch as she lay on the palace roof, sun soaking into her fur.

*So little miss perfect actually can feel guilt.*

Catra thought, tail flicking slightly as she closed her eyes.
Good, she let me take the brunt end of the deal every time she made a mistake! She should feel guilty.

She thought as she continued to listen in on her former best friend’s conversation.

Great she not only replaced me but she replaced me with someone who looks like a literal cupcake! I mean seriously, Princess Light Show looks like she styled her hair after a cloud!

Catra was so lost in thought that she didn’t hear anyone approach her, that was until she felt the dull static that was associated with magic—which caused her to sit bolt upright.

Only to see Raiona fall backward onto the tin with a Yelp.

“What the hell are you doing? Are you trying to get yourself killed?” Catra demanded, fur bristled and claws extended although she quickly lowered her hand.

“No I was just….”

Catra didn’t let her finish, having seen a strange glowing orb had fallen into the younger girl’s lap when she had fell.

“What is this?” She demanded, using her tail to flick the object in question, which was obviously magical but to what extent, she wasn’t sure.

“It’s a smoke ball….Amur taught me how to make them so I would leave him alone.”

Catra sat back down. Tail wrapping around her waist as she thought about everything that was going on.

“That’s one of those things that create fog when broken right? What would it take for me to
convinced you to lob that thing over near Princess Sparkler, the tall loser and crop top?” she asked. Corners of her mouth twitching inst what could have been called a sinister grin.

“So….Why would you want me to do that?” Raiona asked, earning a smirk.

“You know how to make illusions right? Tell ya what, when we get back to half moon I'll sneak some gems to the nearest village and get you anything you want. Just help me with something okay?”

Catra watched as Raiona slowly got up, eyes never leaving Catra as if afraid of what the older girl might do.

“And if I refuse?” She asked, earning a scoff as the older girl rolled her eyes.

“If you refuse then that's up to you. I'm forcing you to do anything. I just wanted to get those three idiots back and I need magic to do it. It's not like it'll hurt them.” Catra replied, expression melting into a more mischievous one as she playfully flicked her tail at the eleven year old.

“If you just wanted to play a prank on them….Then why don't you use your own magic?” Raiona asked, batting the appendage out of her personal space although the disgust that wrote itself across the sixteen-year-old's face answered that question for her.

“Before I say yes or no….What do you want me to do because I refuse to hurt anyone!”
Catra wasn't sure what to do—or why she was feeling the way she was upon seeing Adora's face. After all, she had expected Fright, or maybe getting ready for a fight.

Not this.

No, she had expected Adora to draw her sword, transform into She-Ra or something. Anything but what happened when Adora saw her—or rather the illusion that Raiona cast of her—but all she saw was fear.

Fear and the salty smell of tears.

“Shadow Weaver! Whatever this is, stop! I won't come back! I know she's dead! Stop messing with my head!”

Dead? Had Shadow Weaver reached out to Adora? Using her to lure the blonde powerhouse back? No, there was no way. Adora was Shadow Weaver's favorite, there was no way she would actually do anything to hurt Adora!

Catra thought, a familiar feeling raising into her chest as she thought about how many times Adora had let her—and their friendship—down.

How many times Adora refused to stand up for her.

“How? You did when you left!” Catra found herself sneering, leaping into the fog, just out of reach of the blonde who's eyes widened.

“How?” Adora yelped as she staggered back, only to fall.

Catra ignored the question and took a single step forward.
“Don't you remember our promise, Adora? About always being there? Don't you remember watching as I was hauled out of the room by Shadow Weaver after **you** were the one who took that gun from the armory? You let her punish me in your place!”

Catra was almost screaming now—thankful that Raiona had convinced their cousin into keeping Adora's new friends out of the way and out of earshot.

However when Catra saw the wide eyes look that had planted itself across Adora's—now pale—face, she knew something was wrong.

“I would have never stood for that! If I screwed up I wouldn't have let you take the blame! Ever! I...I don't even remember her being harder on you than she was the rest of us...I mean any of us would be punished for disrespect!” Adora replied her eyes spilling over and the fear being replaced by an emotion Catra had never heard in Adora's voice.

“I came into the barracks covered in bruises! You left to talk to her but wouldn't even speak to me the next day! You never had magic shot into you! You never had an electrically charged whip take to you!”

Catra was close to tears herself as she recalled all those days when she had punished for what was—in retrospect—a simple beginner's mistake.

Why hadn't Shadow Weaver loved her?

Why wasn't she good enough?

Shadow Weaver had loved Adora and Catra knew she was just as strong—if not stronger.

A soft sob called her from her thoughts and she was surprised to see the usually perfect—and strong—girl in front of her struggling to control her tears.
“I didn't know okay? I didn't know! If I had I would have…..” Adora began Only for Catra to cut her off.

“What would you have done? You were the Horde's golden girl! Would you have stood up to Shadow Weaver? To force captain Octavia? No! you wouldn't and guess what Adora? at some point you would have been forced to treat me the same way they did! And you would! Hell, I bet you would have barely flinched if it was you laying the stripes across my back!”

Suddenly the illusions around them seemed to flicker and die out, leaving only Catra and Adora standing there on the beach, the distant sound of Bow and Glimmer fighting Amur's conjuring.

“Didn't you even think about me at all when you left? Didn't you think Shadow Weaver would have made me receive punishment in your place if I failed to bring you back?”

Catra couldn't help it, she had started to cry as well as her arms wrapped tightly around herself.

Adora froze when she heard these words come from her former friend's mouth.

"Did they....Did Shadow Weaver really beat you like that?" she asked although she was afraid to know the answer.

Catra glared but didn't respond, choosing instead to turn her back to Adora.

"Yeah, more than once. The worst one being the one i took after Thymor, because of you. I could barely stand, Adora. Shadow Weaver probably would have killed me if Hordak wouldn't have been breathing down her neck for the unexplained death of a cadet."

Adora went silent then, unable to keep her tears at bay as she regarded the feline. She wanted to apologise, to swear to Catra that she hadn't meant to get her in so much trouble however the words just would not come out.

She could barely think and then a hand pressed to her shoulder, causing her to look up only to find Catra standing over her, her expression emotionless except her ears which laid flat.

“‘You really didn't know any of this, huh?’"
again—after fearing she never would—caused her to do the complete opposite and hug the other girl.

“I’m so sorry! If I had known I would have let you come with me, I just didn't want to see you get hurt again.” She confessed, feeling a sigh come from the—now bristling—feline.

“Ugh…you've gone soft.”

Catra could sense something strange coming from inside the palace of Mysticor and instantly recognized the feeling.

“Amur!” She called loudly “take Rai inside and stay there! Use the roof so you aren't detected! Something's coming and it's not good! You'll need Tora's protection crystals!”

She called, pulling away from Arora who sent her a look that was a mixture of hurt and confused.

“Who's Amur and Rai?”

Sighing Catra shook her head before sniffing the air as the fog lifted.

“No time to catch up! Shadow Weaver must have sent a Shadow spy after you, I smell her here!”

Catra was surprised when Adora finally drew the sword.

“Catra if this is a trick from the Horde…. Adora began, earning a sigh from Catra who hated the doubt that she heard in Adora's voice.

_She never really trusted me not to let her get hurt....always playing hero and having to shine in the limelight._ She thought although she turned toward her.
“Look, I left the horde to find my own way and I'll be damned if I ever work under Shadow Weaver again, let alone a murderer like Hordak! Right now, I just need you to have faith in me for once, okay?”
“You go meet her….Trust me when I say I'll be there….I just need to do something first!”

Adora hoped that Cares wasn't lying to her about any of this, that Catra wouldn't turn on her in the last minute. However if what she said had been true, Adora knew she deserved it of Catra did.

She had gotten her into even worse trouble than she would have if she he let her sneak out with her—even if they had been caught—but Catra had been punished in her place anyway and Adora couldn't help but wonder if she had ever been as close to the feline as she had thought.

Catra sighed as she slid through the window and into the room she had been given. Every part of her mind kept setting off an alarm, the familiar feeling of fear nearly freezing her in place but she had to do this.

She needed answers and something about Adora not remembering certain things didn't add up.

But Adora sucked at lying so there was no way *that* was possible—besides Adora wasn't the type.

Sighing Catra slowly made her way through the rooms her family was occupying, making careful movements as she whispered under her breath, being met with the sudden stop of voices a few minutes later.

*I'll deal with the fallout later. Right how I just can't risk the horde knowing anything about the magi-cats.*

She thought with a sigh before darting into the room where the—now sleeping Magi-Cats lay.

It didn't take her long to find what she was looking for, which was the ring her father wore.

*I'd rather have them pissed than dead….besides they should know by now there isn't too much that*
She thought as she grabbed the object, sliding it on before closing her eyes.

*This is it….this is your chance to prove Shadow Weaver, Adora and everyone else you are strong!* She mentally told herself before bolting out of the room, trying to shove her fear out of her mind for the time being.

Catra stayed in the shadows watching as Adora backed up and tried to transform only for the jewel on the sword to flash before going out.

*Hmm... Seems like miss perfect isn't so perfect. Even her friends are useless against Shadow Weaver.....no surprise there.*

She thought, brow furrowing as she watched the tentacles of shadow wrapped around the blonde.

“She waited for you, you know. She hoped that you would come….But I guess in the end she found out that you thought she was nothing but trash—just like everyone else did.”

Shadow Weaver's voice seemed to echo in the room and loop inside Catra's brain.

“You're right, I did hope she would come but I'm not some useless idiot who needs protecting!” she called, catching the magician off guard for long enough that Adora broke free.

“How did you get here?”

Catra just smirked, the anger and bitterness that had been inside her since she was young once again brushing beneath the surface and without thought, she found herself charging toward her former teacher, claws cutting through the shadows and directly at the illusion of Shadow Weaver.
“Wouldn't you like to know? Well guess what? You may have thought you were punishing me but all you were doing was training me to beat you!”

She snarled, claws making contact just as she was knocked back into the wall.

Adora felt sick as she watched the healers press a spell into Catra's head, earning a hiss from the feline who was glaring at them, fur bristling all over her body.

“It's a scratch for spirits sakes! She didn't even knock me out! I mean it would be hard to do anything with a scratch going over half your face.” Catra retorted, only to be ignored.

Adora wasn't sure what to say—especially since she wasn't so sure she knew Catra as well as she had previously thought.

“Thanks for the help back there.” She finally said although Catra just scoffed.

“Don't mention it….I couldn't just leave you hanging like that….speaking of which….here...That bitch can't follow you now. Shadow spies or not.”

Adora was surprised when Catra flicked a strange looking ring in her direction—one that looked as though it was carved from stone, not metal.

“Are you sure? Where did you even get this?”

She found herself asking, earning a sigh.

“Never mind, just put it on. It protects against any dark crap and I can tell you haven't had much sleep.” Catra responded, tail flicking in a random pattern just as someone else walked into the room.
“What is this I heard about a fight?”

Adora almost froze in shock when she saw a golden furred magi-cat standing in the doorway, her expression a mix of half-asleep and annoyed.

“Shit….That spell wasn't strong enough.” Catra muttered, causing Adora to wonder just what the hell was going on.

However the older magi-cat just snorted.

“No, it wasn't. although I have an idea to your reasons. However, I think we have a few things to...discuss...later.”

Catra groaned aloud at the silent threat in her mother's tone.

Oh great...she's going to tell me off right here in front of Adora. She thought as C'yra walked into the room.

“Wait...don't be mad at her, she...”

Adora began, only to earn a glance from the queen who just rolled her eyes and glanced toward Catra, who just sighed.

“Adora, don't. She won't hurt me.” Catra butted in, not wanting to hear her ex-best friend and mother arguing and even though Adora wanted to say something, the blonde kept her mouth shut and instead looked ready to intervene if things got bad.

“Queen C'yra...This is Adora, the girl I told you and Tora about. Shadow Weaver evidently followed her here and in order to protect everyone I had to make a decision and I don't care what you do to me.”
Catra continued, turning her attention to her mother although she was careful to keep her tone formal so that Adora couldn't see how relaxed she as with this woman, after all there was no need for any weird questions. She just hoped that C'yra would play along.

C'yra arched a brow and crossed her arms.

“Really now? You don't? So I guess I can do this without you flinching.” C'yra retorted, forming a ball of energy in one hand and approaching her.

Catra couldn't help but brace herself for whatever C'yra was planning although the woman let out a small grunt of satisfaction when she was close enough, causing Catra to look up.

“I see you're still afraid of magic yet could use it...and face it....in dire circumstance. I'm proud of you...Shoving your own thoughts aside like that.” Cyra surprised her by whispering, the glowing orb changing shape and floating over a few of the still unhealed bruises before the queen spoke again

“Your friend here is brave as well...Standing up for you in such a way. I am surprised that you two are from the Horde. Now if you'll excuse me, I have some Royal business to take care of now that I see that you didn't end up badly hurt.”

And with that, C'yra yawned and left the room, leaving Catra sitting on the bed, shaking her head.

“More like going to go take a nap....melodramatic pain in the ass.” Catra commented ss she got off the bed, knowing full well that C'yra could still hear her. Then she turned toward Adora and arched a brow.

“Okay, you look ready to attack...which would have been a bad idea because she would have probably taken that sword away from you and smacked you with it...Come on...Let's get out of here before that woman decides she isn't done showing off.”

“Evidently Catra gave the ring to Adora as a way to ward off Shadow Weaver. I wanted to mention her stealing but the little blonde looked ready to attack if I so much as raised my voice.” C'yra chuckled as she walked back into the rooms that Tora and she shared.
“Don’t be too harsh on her, after all I remember a few cases where you did the same thing.” Tora responded, earning a confused look before his wife’s eyes widened.

“Wait, are you talking about the seal I forged to free you?” She asked, earning a laugh.

“Bingo.”

C’yra’s brow furrowed at that before she asked.

“Are you implying that...Catra and this girl...Adora...?” She began slowly, which only added to her husband’s amusement.

“I am implying that Catra likes the girl, then yes. Don’t tell me you actually care?” Tora responded, through his laughter only for C’yra to glare at him.

“Do I look like I give a damn if she likes a girl? I’m just surprised she even knows what that was...The horde screwed kids over and from the looks I was getting from Adora, no one was completely exempt. She actually expected me to harm Catra for fighting of all things...and Catra was hurt….who punishes a child when they are already hurting?”

C’yra retorted, tail lashing about as she thought of what such behaviors could mean.

“Shadow Weaver didn't care C’yra...and to be honest...the punishments even small children got was brutal. I mean your mother used physical punishments but they never bruised...at least not until you were a teen. She never brought blood out of you though. Imagine being eight and being beaten until blood came? Imagine how scared you would be.” Tora said. His ears pinning back and his voice coming out a near growl.

“Guys this is Catra. Catra, this is Bow and Glimmer.”
Catra tried not to roll her eyes at the awkward, wide eyes, looks she was getting from Adora's friends.

“Yeah the walking Sparkler and the Archer. We've met.” Catra retorted, earning a look from Adora which caused her to shrug.

“What? The walking cupcake over there blasted me in the face with glitter and gave me a headache.” She added, only to hear Adora mutter

“You are a headache. Just try to be nice.”

Catra couldn't help herself as she wrapped her tail around Adora's waist and leaned over a bit closer to say “You know me, I'm never nice.”
“Are you sure that it's okay? I mean she seemed kinda…” Adora began after sitting in the pools for a while, earning a scoff from Catra who managed to open one eye, cutting her off.

“Kinda scary? Annoyed? Yeah, that's just C'yra when she first wakes up…and I did put a sleeping spell on her and her family to keep them away from the battle so of course she's annoyed.” Catra retorted, yawning as she glanced over at the other two in the tub.

“I think fairy floss and arrow has passed out on us.”

Adora—who had been about to say something else—paused mid sentence and glanced over at where Glimmer was laying against her, obviously asleep.

“Uh yeah...looks like it. Then again they stayed up with me these past few nights.”

Adora hated confessing this, especially since she had been a Horde soldier. But instead of poking Fun, Catra just sighed.

“I guess Shadow Weaver screwed with your head too, huh?”

Catra knew something was wrong when Adora didn't answer.

“What? I thought it was normal outside the Horde to talk about feelings?” She asked, trying to lighten the mood however it just caused Adora to sigh.

“She said you were dead Catra….I saw you trapped there... bleeding and I couldn't do anything about it.”

Catra groaned, leaning back into the water before glancing over at Adora.
“Honestly, I probably would have been if C’yra and her hunters hadn’t found me and insisted I stay until I was well.” Catra confessed, chuckling slightly as she remember her near freak out at the sight of the large cats.

She wasn't even the least bit shocked when Adora spoke again, voice trembling.

“I should have came back when you asked...I should have…”

Catra was at a loss for words at that but shook her head.

“No. The horde was horrible and frankly if I hadn't had you, I would have tried to escape as a kid, even death would have been better than how I was treated every day. Hell, seems like you had it bad too...Besides it's better this way. You doing your thing, Me doing mine. This is better for us, although I still want to kick your ass.”

C’yra was surprised when she walked into the springs to find Catra with the other three teenagers. However, after what Tora had told her she really shouldn't be surprised.

“Oh great, who let you out of your cage?” Catra muttered as soon as she saw her, earning an elbow to the ribs from Adora but C’yra just rolled her eyes.

“Watch your attitude...unless you want to look like a drowned rat.” C’yra responded with a yawn before muttering “you’re lucky that unlike Tora, this place bores me to insanity….had you said that to him, you'd probably been green for a month.”

It didn’t take a genius to see that Adora was ready to jump in as support—or that Catra was doing her best to not die laughing at the look on the blonde’s face.

*Great…. She’s basically showing off and nearly giving Blondie a panic attack in the process. Is this girl really the legendary Princess of power because right now, she acts more like Catra did.*
She had to wonder, although she didn't even respond to that, sitting down in one of the pools with her back toward the teenagers.

only to feel something wet hit her a minute later, followed by Adora yelling at Catra.

“You just didn't.” She growled, trying to keep her body language or voice from giving away her own amusement at the teen's antics.

“What are you going to do about it? Old woman?”

Catra's response earned a light growl from C'yla who hurled the towel back into Catra's face, knocking her backward into the water and waking up the other two in the process.

“What the hell?”

C'yla recognized the girl who had teleported out of the way as soon as she saw her, causing her to smirk.

Catra staggered up and glared over at her then, as if challenging her for embarrassing her. C'yla just smirked and crossed her arms.

“what? Got something to say Cub?”

C'yla couldn't help but play along, after all this was a vacation for her.

She watched Catra fluff up, looking for something to say that wouldn't end with her falling back into the water—which was why she was irritated to begin with.

“Ugh...I hate you...You know that?”

“Sure you do.”
C'yla was about to start laughing when she heard the sound of wheels on tile, causing her to glance over to see Tora sitting in the doorway.

“Do you always bully teenagers C'yla?” He asked and that's when she let the laughter escape in a pair of huffs.

“Me bully her? Never. What are you doing down here?” She asked, earning a sigh.

“I had a projection sent to me by Anu. We need to head back tomorrow….I'll fill you in later.”

Catra wanted to ask, her irritation with her mother vanishing.

“What happened?” She asked, earning a sigh from Tora who shook his head.

“This is between C'yla and I...Just enjoy the rest of your break and leave the hard stuff up to us.” He answered before glancing toward C'yla once again.

“Oh come on! I can handle something besides clean up!” Catra complained, earning a shocked look from Adora who whispered

“What are you doing? You're going to get yourself in trouble!”

“Don't you try to play hero! I don't need you to protect me!” Catra found herself barking out, causing the rest of the room to go silent.

“I just don't want you to get hurt!”
Catra was about to say something else when a sudden splash of water hit her full in the face.

“Cool off before your mouth gets you into trouble.”

C’yra advised, her tone commanding but not anywhere near harsh as she glanced over at the obviously confused trip of teenagers.

“Oh shut up!”

Catra instantly froze when she felt the hand on her shoulder—even though deep down she knew that C’yra wasn't going to hit her—but she couldn't help but feel the familiar panic set in.

The next thing Catra knew was that Adora was glaring at C’yra—who was smirking.

“You think you can protect her? Last time I checked you didn't have your sword in here and I doubt you can take me on your own.”

Catra knew that C’yra was just being a jerk at this point and was challenging—or trying to intimidate—Adora.

“Adora, stop….C’yra lay off I….” She began, earning a soggy tail against her mouth in response.

“Stop. I'm not going to kill her...Heavens knows if I can deal with your attitude on a daily basis I can handle another former horde soldier....However I have to see this She-Ra transformation to truly believe it.”

Catra was about to say something about not lying about it when C’yra glanced down at her and added
“I'm not saying you are lying, I am saying I want to see this much power in one human.”
“Rai! Cut it out! C’yra and your dad are counting on me to get all this crap put away before they get back from their meeting!” Catra growled, using her tail to lightly smack her younger sister in the face as she backed off the ladder.

“I'm bored! Ever since we got back from floating sky island you have been doing nothing but training with Mom or researching something with Dad! And when are you going to admit they are your parents too?”

The younger of the two retorted, earning a groan as Catra turned to her.

“Look, Tora decided I was going to help him organize this whole room because I stole that ring of his and gave it to Adora and I am almost done. Now besides that, he has been helping me figure some things out and since C’yra wants me to join the patrols, she is making sure I'm ready.” Catra answered, ignoring the last question completely.

“Okay, whatever. Just remember you promised you would train me!”

Catra snorted at that before turning and lightly flicking the preteen on the forehead.

“Yeah well no amount of training is gonna help if you don't practice. Now scoot and let me finish this.”

“We will not stoop to their level!”

C’yra practically roared as she stood up, slamming her hands onto the table in front of her.
“She’s a part of the Crimson Waste Clan! She is of the same blood that almost killed you and Tora!” Nahuel snarled in response, earning a growl from Tora.

“But it was not her who did it! The only thing this soldier is guilty of is being a high ranking official in the Horde! We are not to stoop to their level! We have not used such…Barbaric methods in fifty years!”

The king stated, teeth bared as he glared down the man who just snorted.

“You let that girl stay here…and now you wish to show mercy to something like that? You two idiots will be the death of us all! Your mother would…”

C’yra could taste blood filling her mouth as she bit her lip to keep from lashing out.

“My mother would have had your tongue for speaking to her in such a way now sit down and shut up! If you want her back so much then perhaps I should take a page out of her book!”

“Come back here you little rat! I swear if you get me in trouble i am going to tie your tail into a knot!” Catra threatened although she was trying to keep from laughing.

Well they did want me to spend more time with her….they never said we couldn't end up in a sparring match. She thought, however as they cut a corner near one of the buildings Catra's ears picked up because she could have sworn she heard a cry of pain.

“Whoa, Hey Raiona...Go get Peralia...I have a question.”

It didn't take long for her sister to return with the guard, who looked rather nervous suddenly.

“Okay, what the hell is this place and why is it that Queen Furball and Tora have been giving me a shit ton of busy work for the past two days? I know it's not because of that damned ring.” She
demanded, earning a sigh from the white tabby.

“Catra I don't think…”

Catra growled at that before forcing out the words

“As your princess I demand to know what everyone is hiding!”

She watched as Peralia's face changed from unsure to defiant to something akin to fear.

“Fine...We managed to find a Horde solder washed up half dead on our shores…. Your parents have been trying to figure out what to do with her since.”

C'yra felt what little that was left of her patience snap when the door to the council chambers slammed open to reveal a livid Catra who ignored everyone and marched right in front of her, growling.

“What the hell? What happened to all that talk about pity, compassion or whatever you called it? So you only show mercy on those it would suit? Like say….Someone of your own damned race!”

The whole room went silent then as the teen practically screamed into C'yra's face.

“What the hell are you talking about girl?”

C'yra said, struggling not to snap back at the girl who obviously had a reason to be there since she looked almost as angry as Cyra felt.

“The horde soldier you have captive! I thought you said you were different form the Horde! Well what I saw was no different than what Shadow Weaver did to me!”
C’ryra felt her mouth go dry at that—and at the emotion she could see shining in the girls eyes.

“What? Take me to see the captive….and Nahuel if I don't find you here when I get back…..You will wish my mother's line ended with her.”

Following Catra into the prison area caused C’ryra to want to puke. More so due to technical smell of stale blood clinging to the air than anything. But then she froze by what she saw.

*She is definitely from the Royal house of The Crimson Kingdom.* She thought as the girl in front of her moved her arms the best she could in the shackles in an attempt to protect her head.

“I don't care what you do to me….I won't say anything!”

The voice was quivering and hoarse, obviously from crying and C’ryra felt her anger grow.

*She is terrified….Even my mother wouldn't have been this cruel! No, she would have used magic to extract information and then kept the girl locked away….not beaten. Not for Loyalty….*

She felt a lot of things then. Extraction was painful and cruel in and of itself but this….This was beyond anything she had ever saw.

Even her mother hadn't flogged anyone so hard they barely could breath without wincing.

“I see loyalty exists outside of expectation.” C’ryra muttered in what she hoped was a neutral tone before using her magic to unlock the cage and walk in.

“Your Majesty! She….” She heard a guard began, only for him to yelp behind her as Catra
growled.

“She's chained and bleeding you half wit! What do you think she can do?”

C'ya smirked then and shook her head.

*Seems like Catra still thinks with her feelings and not her head…that is going to be that girl's downfall.* The queen thought before sighing

“Catra, let go of him and go get Anu. I don't even want to know what those bastards did to her….and have Peralia and Amur place Captain Nahuel in a holding cell….I'll be wanting to have a word with him after I am done here.”

She waited until Catra had left until she turned to the prisoner once again.

“Stand up...I won't remove the mechanism from your tail but I'll do something about those chains.” C'ya ordered, trying to keep her voice soft because no faux bravery would hide the fact that the girl was trembling.

“Please don't.”

C'ya felt her heart break.

Just what had they said to the girl?

“I won't hurt you….This was never what I would have wanted. True Warriors do not stoop to the level of cruelty like those bastards did.”
C'yras Anger

Chapter Notes

Remember childhood trauma makes people think/expect the worst

“What? You going to let another criminal escape? You already let that half breed bastard live! I am telling you now, this is all a plan and you'll be the first to die!”

C'yras didn't think—could not think—as she turned toward the cell that Cain was standing in, his lips twisted into a smug grin as he glared at her and that is when her mind went blank and she found herself standing beside a Shocked Anu as Cain's body crumpled to the ground on the far side of the cell.

“Wow...That was quite the punch.” The prisoner—whose name she didn't know—muttered before rubbing at the deep cut along one of their claws.

“Get her to medical...Stat. I have more than one bastard to hit.”

C'yras growled and to her surprise even Anu didn't question her.

C'yras could only see the deep lacerations on the younger woman's skin and how she smelt of nothing but fear, sweat and blood.

*How can someone do that to a damned kid! I don't care if that was a horde soldier. Nahuel and everyone else on the council can kiss my ass for all I care.....I am tired of them treating me like I am some kind of inadequate.....*

Her train of thought halted however when she saw Nahuel being shoved in front of her.

“What the hell was that?” She demanded, unable to control herself as she closed the distance between them.
Her teeth was barred and she was struggling not to just kick the hell out of him.

“What do you mean, we interrogated her! Not that it matters, there’s more beast than human there anyway!” Nahuel responded, his expression remaining neutral as he stared up at her “no wonder your mother didn't want you to have the throne. You don't have the guts to do anything that would get your hands dirty.”

She felt something snap as her hand lashed out, leaving gashes across his face.

“Don't I? I know that my mother sure as hell would have never have tortured a child no matter what the reason! Interrogate yes but not with such force!” She snarled as she drew her hand back again, only for Amur to grab her arm.

“Aunt C, snap out of it. You'll kill him.” He said, earning a growl.

“Go to medical station and look what this bastard caused then tell me to snap out of it!” C'yra snapped as she turned her gaze back toward Nahuel and added:

“I am so tired of all of you coming into the council room, making demands and acting as though you own me! You, Cain and Pilli have always acted like I was some incompetent fool and I am tired of it. She may have had her input a few times but I damn sure don't need some sort of useless, Sniveling, washed up warrior trying to tell me how to run my own damn kingdom! I don't care if she is younger than I am! I sick of it!”

C'yra found herself ranting as she lowered her hand.

Amur is right...I can't kill him.

She thought as she closed her eyes, trying to relax a bit before she growled out

“Lock him up...I need to check on the bug soldier.”
Useless.

Sniveling.

Pathetic.

The words repeated in Catra's mind, causing her to freeze mid step.

_Is she… Is she talking about me?_ She couldn't help but wonder, after all wasn't that what Shadow Weaver had said? That she was useless? A Sniveling coward? A pathetic excuse of a warrior?

She didn't want to think about it or how she suddenly felt sick upon hearing those words coming from her mother's mouth.

_I knew it! I knew it was too good to be true! Nothing will ever change! I'll never change!_

She felt like she couldn't breath and she wasn't sure what she should do.

Should she confront C'yla? Should she leave Half-Moon?

Despite how she felt, she didn't have time to decide before she heard footsteps approaching from the direction of her mother's voice and the familiar chill of fear ran along her spine, causing her to look for any escape she could.

_I have to get out of sight before she comes out here…last thing I need is for to get even madder at me!_
She had managed to slide into a vent just before C’yra made her way around the corner.

_I should have knew not to fall for it….not to trust her….why did I let her get in my head like that? Why did I think this would be different? Why did I dare to even fucking hope….._

Catra berated herself angrily unable to keep from shaking as she drew her knees to her chest, the knot in her throat threatening to choke her as she tried not to break down.

_I guess I was the fool for thinking someone would actually want me._
Taking A Risk

Tora sighed as he glanced over at Catra, who hadn't so much as spoken since she had came home and had instead buried her attention into the spell books.

“You okay Kitten?”

He asked, noticing how she flinched at the nickname before sighing.

“I'm fine. I just have a lot of shit to do since you and C'yra has appointed me the babysitter for the Amazonian six foot freak.” Catra snapped, not even looking up from the book that she had been looking through.

“Catra…That isn't fair and you know it. You were the one who took C'yra to her and put a stop to whatever cruelty that Nahuel and his men had planned. How would being stuck alone in a strange place make you feel after you had been mistreated for days?”

He said, earning a glare from the teen who just snapped the book shut and stood up, heading toward the door.

“Fine, I'll go babysit the idiot! I mean how do you trip over nothing?”” Catra's retort caused the man to sigh before levitating a heavy ring over the girl's tail, causing her to staggered slightly.

“hey!”

Tora just smirked slightly and crossed his arms.

“The device locked around her stinger throws her balance…and it is much heavier than the ring I put on you and on second thought…I want to meet her, bring her here. Perhaps we can resolve this whole thing without endangering ourselves.” He stated, earning a scoff.

“As if the Horde wouldn't pick apart her mind to figure anything out.” Catra responded, removing
the offending ring and tossing it to the far side of the room.

“Perhaps however we do not know her intentions nor how dangerous she alone is.”

Catra wasn't surprised to find that the room was locked and full of windows, offering no privacy at all for the occupant inside but she couldn't help but feel another wave of disgust when she saw the multitude of bandages littering the taller girl’s body.

“Come on, the king wants to see you.” She said as she opened the door, only to see a flash of fear shoot through the other girl.

“Why? Haven't you done enough?” She asked bitterly, motioning to the bandages along her arms and body.

“Don't have me in middle of that! It was me who found you and risked serious trouble to get you out of there!” Catra snapped although she instantly regretted it when she saw the flinch it produces.

“Look,” she continued, pinching the bridge of her nose as if that would ward off the annoyance she felt “My….The king isn't like that. He wants to talk to you over lunch. Trust me when I say that whatever C’ya is going to do to the four people who hurt you isn't going to be mild. she was livid.”

“Uh yeah! Like she punched this one guy in one of the cells because he said she let 'the half breed’ live….Well he also had some insulting words in there but I'm not gonna go there because it's not fair, you know?oh, I'm Scorpia by the way!”

Catra really wished people came with a muted button at that moment.

“I'm Catra, now come on before Tora sends Peralia looking for me.”
Am I ready to see a reminder of the first war?

Tora tried to remain calm despite how nervous he was at meeting this person, this person who could have been the offspring of the very reasons he had both lost his daughter and had to learn to adapt to life without walking.

I shouldn't judge her....After all, C’yra said she wasn't too far from death . He reminded himself just as the door opened and in stumbled a platinum haired girl, who managed to knock a lamp over in the process.

“Oh shoot! Crap! Sorry! I will fix that!”

He had to keep a straight face as he saw the bulky female try—and fail—to catch the lamp, which shattered in her claws.

Well...She has to be the most...unique....of her bloodline. He thought as he waved his hand, levitating the pieces into a nearby trash bin.

“Don't worry about it. It was an old lamp. Sit….I'll have Miv bring some food up for us.” Tora said, arching a brow as he glanced over at Catra who had turned to walk off.

“Catra, you stay too. I know you haven't ate anything since breakfast.”

Tora listened to every answer he was given, every off hand comment that Scorpia gave him and couldn't help but begin to wonder what the best approach to this situation would be. After all, it was too dangerous just to let her go.
However he didn't want to have her locked back in the dark prisons either, especially not with what had happened.

“Scorpia, you said you got separated from your unit and while you do not know where you are we can not release you back to the Horde.” He began after a while, seeing the familiar look of fear wash over her.

“However you will stay here….under our watch and not as a prisoner. No one will dare hurt you….however Catra will be your warden. Might give her a reason to stay out of trouble besides fighting with Peralia or her sister at every turn.”

As soon as he said this he waited for the inevitable argument from the shorter teen who was currently sitting in one corner of the room, idly fiddling with a gemstone.

3….2….1

He listened mentally just as a sound that could only be called a choked squak came from Catra.

“What? You have got to be kidding me! I have patrols and I told Rai I would train her!” She finally exclaimed, earning a chuckle from Tora who only shrugged in response.

“Then take Scorpia with you when you train Rai. I'm pretty sure your mother wouldn't care if you started patrols or not right now.” He answered, only to be caught off guard when she snarled back at him.

“Stop calling her my Mom! She doesn't even want me here!”

Both Scorpia and Tora flinched when the girl bolted, slamming the door behind her so hard that a painting fell off the wall.

“Uh….I know it's not my business but what was that about?” Scorpia questioned, earning a sigh from the man who ran a hand over his face.
I guess I should just tell her the truth since if she does try to escape that device on her tail is just going to zap her and it's not like the Horde can reach her here...All Horde materials were confiscated when they found her.

“If I tell you, you can't tell Catra. After all, it does have to do with her childhood and her days in the Horde.” he said after a few minutes of sitting in silence mulling over the idea.

“Whoa, Hold up! She's the Horde's Catra? I thought She was dead! Shadow Weaver said that She-Ra killed her!”
She felt weird.

That was the first thing that Catra realized when she woke up inside the mine, her fur soaked with sweat and an odd sensation seeming to clog her mind.

_Must be some kind of gases in here or something. I better tell Tora when I get back._ She thought, sighing as she slowly headed out of the darkness.

She didn't want to go home and risk dealing with C'yra. Not after what she had heard.

_Why am I never good enough? I actually fucking tried! I thought she at least understood me but no, I guess she is just a liar just like Adora, Shadow Weaver and everyone else!_ She thought, feeling the rage she had grown accustomed to return, causing her to send her fist flying into the nearest gemstone, causing it to shatter into many glowing fragments across the ground.

_Stupid, Useless, dumb, retarded Catra fell for it again!_

She jeered at herself mentally as she roughly brushed the tears away with the back of her arm.

_Stop being so damned weak! No wonder no one but maybe Tora and Raiona likes you! C'yra is just as strong if not as strong as She-Ra! Who would want a weak, inconsiderate, person like you as a daughter?_

She couldn't stop herself from thinking, each word tearing deeper than the last.

Steeling herself, Catra tried to swallow down the emotion that she felt as she headed back toward the underground palace, not even stopping to answer Raiona who called out to her.

“I'm back….again. you may want to get the mine checked out, I think there may be a gas leak or whatever.” She called as she walked through the living room—and right past her parents and Scorpia.
“Hey, your parents said…” Scorpia began, earning a growl.

“I don't wanna hear it, Pointy. I am going to go get my training gear and beat the shit out of something.” Catra responded, trying to ignore the flash of hurt that went across the taller girl's face.

“Pointy? Well...That one is new.”

Tora sighed as he pinched the bridge of his nose.

“Excuse me for a moment….I need to go see if I can't get her to actually tell me what the world is going on in that head of hers.” Tora said before levitating a large serving plate across the table and setting in front of her.

“Eat as much as you want. I can imagine those bastards haven't fed you anything.”

It didn't take long for him to catch up with the teen, who growled at him as he approached.

“Easy. I'm just here to talk. You said that there was a gas leak in the mine. What made you think that?” He asked, deciding to try to ease into conversation so he didn't set the girl off.

“Yeah, the place made my head all fuzzy…..it still is.” Catra's answer caused Tora to narrow his eyes.

_Gases can cause dizziness but she is describing it as fuzzy….not dizzy and while gases could be a concern other things have to be ruled out. However, I have to make sure that she doesn't freak out_
when I use magic.

“I'll check it out….but can I run a scan on you as well? In case there is any negative effects?” he asked, earning a sigh.

“Yeah, but can you make it quick? I really need to hit something and there is too much breakable shit in here.”

She is too much like her uncle and mother for that matter. Tora thought before sighing and nodding.

“I'll try. Now tell me why you were in the mine anyway? Usually the kids around here only go there in groups because it can be a bit slippery.”

He knew that getting her to open up was going to be like pulling teeth but he also knew that if her bloodshot eyes were any indication, she definitely needed to talk to someone. He just hoped that perhaps, by some miracle she would eventually talk to him.

But he also knew he had to stick to the task at hand, so he turned his attention to sending his aura out around her only to be shocked when she finally answered him.

“Because everyone here is annoying as hell and I just want to be alone okay? I don't need people who are going to just backstab me!”

Who has hurt her so much here? She has been through so much.

He wondered, reaching over and gingerly rubbed a hand across the back of one of her ears.

“Not everyone is going to hurt you Catra, you know that by now right?”
He saw her eyes fill up again although she quickly pulled away and turned away.

“Can I go now?”

---

_ Stupid Tora, what does he know?_

Catra hated how she felt.

Hated that she wanted to trust him. But what if he was only using her like C’yra had?

She didn’t wait until she was inside the training rooms before she punched a wall.

“Whoa. I figured you had heard about C’yra’s outburst but I never thought you would react like that. I mean seriously you’ve never shown her how strong you are and that is _all_ that the royals care about. How strong, brave or smart an heir is.”

Catra froze as she heard the old man’s voice, causing her to turn and glare at him, only to see a smirk.

“She called you a sniveling fool didn't she? Why don't you challenge her to a conclave? Prove to her you aren't either. You may actually earn her respect.”

Catra opened her mouth to argue—or at least to tell him to mind his own damn business however before she got a word out he said something that nearly shattered her all over again

“You would hate to be all alone again, wouldn't you?”
Those words caused her mind to freeze as memories from both her childhood and the few days she had spent locked inside the Horde after Adora's departure.

She had always been alone.

No one had ever wanted her around except Adora and she had hated that feeling.

Hated how many nights she had cried herself to sleep wishing someone actually care.

She was not going to go back to that.

Not now that she was so close.

“What exactly is a conclave?”

“You can't be serious about this! They're your own men!”

“They Risked our safety by bringing her here! Not only that but law states that unauthorized force not be used on anyone and is prohibited against the use on a minor!” C'yla said with a growl as she stood up to address the rest of the council.

“I agreed to have new council after it was brought to my attention that Raiona felt as though I didn't spend enough time at home but if you fools are going to challenge me at every turn I am going to change how everything works here!”

She said just as Catra walked in.

“Queen C'yla the second of the royal house of D’riluth, I challenge you to a dueling Conclave.”
The whole room went silent then and C'yla could feel that all eyes on her.

“W-what?” She barely was able to speak, swallowing hard as her mouth became severely dry.

Catra only glared.

“I challenge you to a conclave right here, right now or are you afraid that you won't win?”

What the world...Has she gone insane?

The queen wondered as she closed her eyes, debating on what she should do. She remembered all too well her own mother throwing her to the ground, claws gripping painfully around each bicep as she snarled down at her all while she hissed insults at her for being weak.

She wasn't her mother. She wouldn't hurt her kids, not like that.

“I refuse...as you are just a child.”

What happened next was a blur but the next thing C'yla knew was that she was lying on the ground, blood dribbling from a set of scratches on her cheek.

“Fight me damn it! I know you don't really care! You think I'm just some kind of useless, sniveling idiot that just makes things harder for you!” Catra snarled as she crouched on the ground in front of her, ready to attack again.

“Catra, what the hell are you talking about? Who told you that?”

C'yla managed to say as she staggered to her feet, only for the teen to rush at her again, although this time C'yla caught the fist that was aimed at her.
“In the cell house! You….I heard everything! I don't even know what I did! I thought you loved me! I thought that I was good enough, for the first time in my whole existence and then….” Catra trailed off as she started to shake.

C'yra felt her grip lessen then, allowing the girl to slip out of her touch.

“Why aren't I ever enough? Tell me, What did I do? Why don't….why did you make me think that you actually loved me?”

C'yra didn't even have to think about it when she saw Catra sink to the floor into sobs, she instantly was there, wrapping her arms around her.

“Catra, what you heard wasn't about you….not at all. You are anything but a coward.” C'yra began, only to earn a hiss.

“Yeah right! You're just saying that to save face! You don't really care about me!”

C'yra sighed and went silent, knowing that the girl was hurting far worse than she was.

“Catra, what I was saying in the cell house was about certain adults in this room….adults that think that just because they were respected by my mother that they can dictate to me. Why did you think I meant you?”

She felt Catra stiffen then as she struggled—and failed—with more sobs.

“Because I'm….” The teen began, only to suddenly start to spasm.

“C'yra! Don't let go of her! Someone has her under a complete control spell!”
C'yra glanced down at the sleeping Catra as Tora's energy energy jumped between the crystals that surrounded the teenager on the bed, arching around her.

“Are you sure that this won't hurt her?” She asked finally, earning a sigh as her husband paused.

“I'm sure. Now why don't you go see what Scorpia has found to entertain herself while I figure out who I'm going to send Magnar after.” Tora retorted, ignoring how C'yra's ears stood straight at that.

“Okay, yeah…You're right. She has accidentally broken two vases, a cup and she almost broke the coffee table.” She said, gingerly squeezing Catra’s hand before leaving the room.

Come on C'rya, just let him take the reins on this. You saw what they did to her….she made herself sick from crying so much.

“Is she alright? I don't know much about magic but I've seen what Shadow Weaver can do with the black garnet and boy, it isn't pretty.”

She was caught off guard by the genuine concern in the half-Scorpion's tone.

Can the universe please give me a break? It's easier to judge someone when you see them as brutal….Not a Chitin covered marshmallow.

She thought as she sank into a chair, glancing over at the girl before sighing for what felt like the millionth time that evening.

“She'll be okay. Her father knows just as much as Anu and some of the elders about medical uses
of Magic.” C'yra answered, nearly jumping out if her skin when she felt a claw reach over and touch her arm.

“Hey, if she survived what Shadow Weaver did to her then she can survive anything!” Scorpia's words caught her by more of a surprise than the touch did.

“Tora told you didn't he?” C'yra guessed, offering the other girl a tired smile.

“Yeah. I mean I know the Horde can be brutal but I never thought it ever got that bad...But I saw the uniform and I couldn't imagine how bad that would have hurt. I mean….I'm made of pretty tough stuff and it still hurt when....” Scorpia began, her words trailing off as her expression clouded over.

C'yra lay a hand over the claw resting on her arm then.

“They won't get by with that. That is not how my kingdom works.” C'yra vowed before pausing, fighting her words carefully before adding “how did you get here anyway? I couldn't get it out of those morons that captured you.”

Scorpia winced a bit as if the memory hurt.

“I was trying to keep my unit together...you know, like any force captain. then out of nowhere this crazy electrical storm hit our wreckage and I must have hit my head or something because when I woke up, I was in chains.”

C'yra couldn't help but snarl at that although she quickly calmed down when she saw fear flash across the Scorpion's face.

“Everyone has strict orders not to engage anyone unless they are a direct threat! So those idiots didn't only go against two laws originally but three.” she muttered, earning a slightly sheepish look.

“Can I ask a question? Why aren't I still locked up? I mean. They made it clear that your race doesn't like mine very much.” Scorpia questioned, earning a sigh.
“A member of the Royal family was the reason I was taken to one of the many slave camps….and the reason that Tora can not walk. It isn't about race, Scorpia,. It's always been about the war. That is why we Magi-Cats wished to stay neutral but Hordak wouldn't have it and the Alliance was too late when they came to help.” C'yra responded, watching the teenager's expression grow grim.

“it doesn't seem right….I mean if you weren't posing a threat then why bother with an attack?” Scorpia’s question reminded C’yra of something Tora had mentioned Catra saying.

Not everyone in the Horde are bad, most are just trying to survive.

“It's not about threats with people like Hordak….It's about conquest and Power. Nothing is sacred to people like him. I understand that you were raised under his rule but see for yourself what the Horde does and make your own decisions. Don't just listen to people and their opinions, form your own.”

Tora sighed as he wheeled himself back down into the caverns that lead to Half-Moon. He knew he had to be strong for C’yra, who despite loathing some laws, had little to no choice but to enact them since the council would have never agreed on anything else. However, she had enough to worry about weighing on her mind and as co-ruler he could make a call.

So he had, even if he didn't like it.

He was met at the entrance by none other than Amur, who looked as tired as he felt.

“It's late….why aren't you in bed?” he asked his nephew who just offered a small smile in response.

“Because my mother is worrying herself sick about you going to the surface... especially after C’yra released that Crimson Kingdom freak.” Amur answered, flinching back when Tora growled at him.

“She isn't any different than us and you'd do good to remember it. Catra isn't evil and she is from the Horde so who is to say that Scorpia is? From what I've seen of her, she's more Clumsy than violent anyway.”
Amur blinked at that before letting out a laugh.

“Wait, so she's a part of a strong race known for their temper and she….isn't? Not to mention she was raised in the Horde! How does that work?”

Tora sighed at that and shook his head.

“The same reason Shenya thinks Cain was a fool. Not everyone thinks and feels the same way.”

Chapter End Notes

I promise Catra (and C'yla) will get a break.

The last chapter was the last of the really dark ones.
Cyra didn't know what had woke her up at first, her mind instantly jumping to conclusions and all of them pointed toward the soldier she had rescued from the cell block, however those suspicions ended when she felt something shift somewhere near her stomach.

Well this is new.

She couldn't help but think as she lay back down now that the mystery was solved, flipping her tail over her side, draping it over the teenager's Torso only to be shocked when her hand enclosed around it, pulling it tighter around her as if there was some subconscious need for intimacy.

Either that or Catra was so touch starved that as soon as her guard was down she was leaking it out, but C'ya really didn't want to think about that.

Sighing C'ya settled back onto the bed, one arm reaching out to wrap around Catra before she closed her eyes, ready to go back to sleep.

After all, if the prideful teen felt the need to share a bed for the night, she wasn't going to stop her.

Catra awoke in a warm cocoon of blanket and something else–something heavy and warm. It took her a few minutes to remember where she was and what the pressure on her side probably was.

Oh stars, please tell me that I didn't move up in my sleep.

She thought, although she couldn't help but stay where she was.
After all, why risk waking her mother when she was completely comfortable? Besides, it was better to get some sleep than none at all.

A flick of the tail by her side caused her to nearly jump out of her skin—when earned a chuckle to Vibrate the mass behind her.

“I see you're awake….How did you sleep?” Cyra asked, shifting slightly to stretch.

“Uh...okay. I didn't wake you did I? I kind of psyched myself out.” Catra responded, feeling the blood rush to her face as she admitted that, even to her mother.

She hadn't expected C’yra to just nuzzle against her at that.

“No, although I did have to adjust a half asleep tail. Relax, I told you before you could come to me at any time and I meant that.”

Catra hadn't expected that answer at all, not after what she had done the day before.

“Even after yesterday?” The teen asked, waiting for the inevitable lecture or banishment. After all challenging a monarch wasn't something to take lightly, she was sure—especially since in the Fright Zone it was a death sentence.

“Yesterday wasn't entirely your fault Catra. Nahuel was using a form of magic to manipulate you….He must have sensed your distress when you misunderstood what I was saying and used your emotions against you. I mean, Tora found out he even astrally projected to you in order to mess with your head.”

C’yra answered with a sigh and Catra could tell that something wrong.

“Mom? Is something wrong?”

Catra didn't even think about what she had said, until she had said it—which caused her to blush even more violently than waking up to find herself cuddled up with someone.
“And before you say anything don't be weird about it!” She added quickly, earning a laugh from C’yra who had stiffened with shock.

“No promises.....as soon as I convince my brain that you just said that.” The queen joked, her tail twitching up to poke Catra in the face, earning a light hiss.

“Ugh….Why are you such a pain?”

“I guess the apple doesn't fall far from the tree then does it?”

“Since Dad said you're not going to work today can we do something as a family that doesn't involve training?” Raiona asked as they were served breakfast that morning.

“What are we going to do about Scorpia? I mean we can't trust her here alone! She could try to contact the horde.” Catra responded, earning a chuckle.

“She agreed to go with Amur, Peralia and Anu on a scouting mission...and before either of you start judging us for the decision...We both spoke with her last night and she isn't a bad person.” C’yra stated, effectively shutting Raiona up with a look.

“I think you're both nuts but whatever.” Catra responded, stabbing a sausage on her plate before adding “So since pain in the ass wants to do something, what do you want to do?”

C’yra smirked a bit before answering

“How would you two like to go hunting with me? We could spend the night on the surface.”

Catra barely managed not to choke when Raiona leaped up from her seat, eyes growing wide.
“Really? You mean you'll actually let me do that?”

Rolling her eyes at the purring pretten, Catra grabbed the pitcher of juice from the middle of the table.

“If you make me get choked on something you're not going to live long enough to go hunting.” She mumbled, earning a slap to the side of the head from her sister's tail.

“Shut up, you've always got to do fun stuff! I never get to do anything fun! What are we hunting? Kowl? Boar?”

Catra could tell their mother was barely able to keep from laughing.

“You're not ready to hunt in the trees for one and for two, Kowl usually live in the whispering wood until winter migration, you know that. Second, I think you've still got a bit more growing to do before you hunt boar.” C'yra managed to reply without cracking a smile before adding with a laugh

“Anything else is free game, as long as it's not big enough to eat you.”

Catra just snickered as Raiona's expression dropped.

“Hey, maybe you can still manage to catch a giant jackrabbit.”

C'yra laughed silently as she lowered herself behind the underbrush, watching as Catra and Raiona both rushed after what seemed to be a clutch of rabbits that darted any which way to escape them.

Looks like Catra was right about that giant rabbit...I just wonder if either of them will actually catch something. She wondered, ears twitching as she heard a Yelp of pain from Raiona—who ran right into a branch—just as Catra pounced on something with a laugh.
“Finally got you, you furry little bastard!”

C’yra couldn’t help but laugh when she heard that, shifting back to her humanlike form and stretching.

“Rai, you okay?” She asked, earning a grunt from the younger girl.

“Ugh...Yeah.don't know how miss lived under a rock could catch something and I couldn't!” Raiona complained, standing up and brushing herself off, only to earn a cocky smirk from Catra who held the large, bleeding rabbit up by the ears.

“I was chasing rats through the Fright Zone when I was big enough to walk!”

C’yra rolled her eyes at that and shook her head at the pair.

“Let me clean that up and you two go farther into the forest to try to find some more things to hunt. I'll clean this out and go find a pot to make dinner in.” She stated earning an faux sigh from Catra.

“If I **have** to. I just **hope I don't have** to do all the dirty work.”

C’yra could hear them bickering even after they finally left the makeshift camp, leaving her to contemplate what had happened the previous night—which had obviously won her favor with the older cats who had lived under her mother's rule.

But at what cost?

Would her people—or her family—began to fear her now that her reign was tainted with the smell of blood? Was she turning into her mother?

Catra paused feltin middle of the underbrush, the scent of woodchuck forgotten as her fur began to feel as though it was standing on end, as if her anxiety had peaked since entering this part of the woods.
“Rai, get into the brush and stay there until I say otherwise….I have a bad feeling about going on ahead.” Catra said, earning a confused look from the younger girl who—despite opening her mouth to protest—just nodded.

“If I’m not back in ten minutes, go get mom.” Catra instructed before quickly leaping into a tree and rushing off.

The next thing she knew she smelled the irony, sweet smell of blood and smoke and it made her stomach turn.

_A Horde camp? This far out? What could they possibly find useful out here?_ She wondered as she slowed her pace and made her way toward the scent, winching at what she heard.

“This thing would make a good guard at beast island, that is if the dragons doesn't kill it first.” She heard one guard laugh, causing a growl to raise in her throat.

Especially with what she saw.

The blood was that of a great cat— as big as the beast form her mother took—that lay motionless on the grass but what really made her mad was the sight of a cub with bright pink fur trapped in a force cage.

_So this is how Hordak gets his monsters huh? I wouldn't care but….It's all too similar to how he gets soldiers as well._

She thought as she tried to figure out some way to foil this unit’s plan.

_I don't have a weapon on me and I can't take them all on at once.....But I can use magic....as bad s I hate that fact._ She thought, closing her eyes and inhaling deeply as if to brace herself.

_Please work._
She thought as she moved her hands back, sending a blast of crimson light toward the soldiers, watching as they were trapped behind a roaring inferno.

Mom said it made ice...Not fire. I guess I should ask her about that later. She thought before shifting into her beast form and rushing through the camp and toward the cage.

As she drew near the cub she noticed two very strange things:

That her anxiety seemed to be raising the closer she got to it and that she got slight flashes of what had happened before she had gotten there.

What the hell?

She thought, noticing that her mask was glowing slightly as she crushed the controls from the force field with a massive paw.

I'll deal with that later. Right now I need to get this beast out of here.

She thought, ears twitching toward the sounds of the horde soldiers as she—much like a house cat—picked up the cub with her mouth and bolted toward the trees.

I'll make a fake trail so the Magi-cats are safe....then I'll let mom figure out what to do with this little guy.
The Gift

“She's a Maned Mountain Cat although I don't want to know what it and it's mother was doing down this far.” C'ya said, watching in amusement as Catra tried—and failed—at shoving the pink creature away from her, only for the creature to pounce on her.

“Ugh….Well that's all find and good but why did I feel connected to the damned beast? I know it's not just because we're part cat!” The teenager grumbled, earning a laugh from both the queen and Raiona.

“That would be a power you evidently inherited from your grandmother. She could understand animals and control them...your father probably could tell you the actual name for the power.” C'ya answered before glancing up at the sky, brow furrowing.

So Catra inherited more of her powers than I did….I wonder what made it skip a generation like that?

C'ya wondered, however before she could think about it too much a yelp–followed by Raiona's laughter–called her attention back toward her kids only for her to start laughing herself when she saw Catra laying on her back, an scowl across her face as the pink creature licked her.

“Can one of you two morons get this thing off me besides laughing like some kind of maniac?”

“Can we keep her?”

Catra growled under her breath as she silently begged to whatever creator was out there that Tora would say no.

“I don't think this is a good idea Rai. I mean, she's little now but in a few months she's going to be big enough to ride.” Tora responded, earning a huff from C'ya who added:

“And we do not need the equivalent of a pony sized house cat in our house.”
“Aw come on! It already likes Catra so she can help and it's not like we have to keep it into the house!” Raiona responded, earning a growl from the older teen.

“Hey now. Hold up, who said anything about Catra helping? Do you know how many times that thing has bit my tail since yesterday?” She demanded just as Scorpia walked in with Amur, who arched a brow at the beast.

“Oh...Why is there a mutated ball of cotton candy chasing its own tail?” he asked, just as Scorpia rushed forward, running a smooth part of her claw over the fluffy creature which began to purr.

“I didn't know you had a pet! It's adorable, what's its name?” Scorpia's question earned a growl from both C'ya and Catra who glared down at her.

“I've been calling it fur ball.” Catra retorted “and it's no one's pet, I found it and it's mother in a horde camp....The mother was dead and I brought it here for those two to figure out what to do with it....Now Raiona wants to keep it.”

“You can't just turn it back into the wild, it's just a baby! Besides isn't it your responsibility since you found it Catra?”

Catra really wanted to throw her breakfast wrap at Scorpia, although she wouldn't.

“No! Why should I play babysitter to a giant kitten! I already have the job of keeping a giant spider out of trouble!”

Catra couldn't help but roll her eyes when her comment went over Scorpia's head.

*How did she ever become force captain?*

She couldn't help but wonder as she glanced over at her parents who had been whispering in some language that sounded like gibberish to her.

“Fine, the cat can stay but Catra...Since it seems to like Catra so much then it's her responsibility to
“Why do I have to be responsible for that damn thing?”

“Because if you have your grandmother's abilities it's best to train them so you don't end up going crazy because you hear a pair of peacocks doing the tango.” Tora retorted, the comment going over everyone's head—But Catra who shuddered at the thought.

“Okay, for one I did not need that mental image and for two...Fine but I am not going to like it!”

“So I identified the spell used on you as a Palindromic Action Inducing one, which means it was an advanced spell that used a blend of emotional and Mind control to enable the user to make you act anyway they wanted you to.”

Tora explained once Catra had finished breakfast and followed him out into the mine, which seemed to be aglow with magic.

“Okay, so...why did you bring me all the way out here? Pretty sure you could have told me that in the house.” Catra retorted, crossing her arms over her chest as she followed him to what looked like a shaft leading farther down into the mine.

“Because this place has a secret area I wanted to show you. It was once a servants quarters since we workers were dubbed too dirty to have decent housing but after C'yla Rose to power I turned it into a training room of sorts for my magic although I think it would make a good place for you to keep that Cat….and make your own little space.” Tora answered, using his magic to lift a large rock, revealing a seat of stone steps.

“Whoa, hold up you were a servant? I thought you were from like a powerful clan?” Catra asked, fur bristling slightly in her surprise although Tora just laughed and used his magic to ruffle her hair.
“After my father died from a fever, my brother and I took whatever jobs we could to help our mother. I ended up being a servant to her grace C’yra the first.” He answered simply, although he couldn't keep the venom out of his town when speaking of the former queen.

He knew Catra had questions but those could wait.

“Come on, I'll show you the room….and you can decide what you need for it.”
The first act

Chapter Summary

Catra decides to take a stand against the Horde while out exercising Clawdeen

“Scorpia! Tell my mom I'll be back before dinner, Clawdeen is getting restless and I don't want her taking her boredom out on my chair again!” Catra called as she lead the giant cat through the underground city, snickering when she saw that Scorpia was covered in glitter.

“Or better yet….I better go tell her because even though she didn't kill you three months ago, I think she would if you got glitter in her fur.” She stated before leading the large cat away from the mess.

“I still don't know what holiday this is….But the kids seem to enjoy the decorating.” Catra said aloud to the now five month old beast, which now stood at a high just as large as her own feline form.

“It's a celebration of life. Hasn't Uncle Tora taught you anything?”

Catra turned toward the guard on duty, sneering when she saw that it was none other than her cousin, Amur.

“Go hack up a hairball, asshole. You're still just mad that I figured out that spell before you did!”

Catra glanced down at the large feline beneath her as they picked up speed as they drew closer to the scent of smoke and blood.
“Clawdeen, try to keep out of sight….we need the element of surprise.” Catra whispered down to the large creature who just rumbled out a purr-like sound before picking up speed.

Mom and Dad are going to kill me if they find out I am out here doing this but I've heard the villagers near Half-Moon talking about how Hordak has cut off their supplies and people are starving. I remember all too well what it was like to go hungry for days when Shadow Weaver would lock me up in a cell. No one deserves that.

The thought as she leaned forward on the large feline, silently motioning for her pet to go faster as she pulled the gem encrusted sword from her back, smirking as she stabbed the blade into the force field generator.

It is odd that no one seems to be around but I smell blood.

She thought as she lightly tugged at the creature's short mane.

“Keep out of sight until I call you Clawdeen...something weird is happening here.”

The beast huffed before leaping into the nearest tree as Catra headed toward the direction she smelled the blood, only to find that there were people in cages and some of them had obviously fought back.

Damn it.

She muttered before whistling and in an instant her makeshift mount was beside her.

“Create a diversion...Like we practiced with Shenya and the guys. Just try not to get hurt.” She directed as she sheathed her sword and headed into the trees.

I need to think fast...I know Clawdeen can hide herself pretty well for something that looks like a mutated cloud of cotton candy but even she can't distract them forever.
She thought as she unclipped a pouch from her belt, grabbing a handful of brightly colored capsules out.

*Never thought Rai’s trick orbs would actually be useful but right now, I couldn't think of a better use for them!*  

She thought as she tossed the capsules into the camp and with a trio sharp cracks, the whole perimeter was covered in thick smoke.

She could hear the remaining guards coughing as they tried to figure out what it was that was on fire.

*They're dumber than Lonnie.*

Catra thought with a smirk before she walked over to the cages, drawing her sword.

“Keep quiet...I'll get you out.”

It surprised her that the sword made short work of the locks—and that people could actually keep their mouths shut if it was necessary—but she also knew that she had to work quickly in order to get herself and Clawdeen out of there before the smoke faded.

She was almost done when she heard the sound of fighting behind her and heard a familiar voice yell a particularly obscene word at the top of her lungs.

*Oh great....Adora and her band of half wits have arrived.*
“Hey Adora.”

Adora almost dropped her sword when she heard the voice come from behind her—although she quickly regained composer as she turned toward the half-feline who stood behind her, a sword of her own resting across her shoulder, which added to the cocky appearance.

“Catra, what are you doing here?”

She demanded, half expecting her former best friend to attack her or something however to her surprise, Catra just scoffed.

“I was out on a walk and stumbled across these idiots.” She answered, motioning toward the unconscious group of Horde soldiers, however before she could say anything else a ball of light was hurled toward them.

Adora had expected Catra to dodge it, not use her sword to deflect it.

“Nice to see you too Glitter Glue. Tell me, can you actually do anything besides put on a fireworks display?” Catra sneered, which only fueled Glimmer.

“Shut up! I bet you are still working for the Horde, aren't you?”

Adora had began to say something however Catra cut her off.

“Oh wow...Queen Firefly must have dropped you on your head when you were a kid because any genius would see I'm not wearing a Horde uniform.”

It was only then that Adora noticed that Catra was dressed differently than she had been on Mysticor. It wasn't a uniform in the slightest but consisted of dark green pants very similar to those she wore in the Horde and a navy colored, half sleeved shirt that seemed just thick enough to keep out the wind chill.
However what really surprised Adora was the fact that Catra now wore a short cape, which covered the sheath on her back.

“Can I ask what are you wearing? I mean a cape? Really?”

Catra tried not to be annoyed at all the questions as she glanced around the camp, trying to catch sight of the bubblegum pink creature that she called her pet.

“It’s cooler out here near the ocean so if I want to ride, I have to make sure I don’t get sick...else I’d never hear the end of it.” Catra responded before letting out a whistle.

“Ride? Ride what? A horse would be afraid to even look at you!” Glimmer responded and Catra tried not to smirk as she saw her pet bounding toward them.

“Who said anything about a horse?” Catra said before pointing toward Clawdeen, who had walked up to She-Ra, sniffing at her.

Catra mentally counted the seconds that it took Glimmer and Bow to react to the giant animal, grabbing onto each other and teleporting into a tree. However Adora just stood, motionless and with a look that Catra could only call start eyed.

“Oh my gosh! She's yours? What is she?”

The tone that Adora took prompted Catra to fold her ears down against her hair.

“She's a mountain cat and yes, she's mine...at least I'm the only person who bothers to bathe her anyway so I'm claiming her.” Catra responded, rolling her eyes as she walked over to the cat, who was radiating confusion.
“You can pet her if you want...She's ate like four times today.” She added, watching as Adora
turned to her normal self and reached out to put a hand on the giant feline's muzzle, only to nearly
get bowled over in the process.

“She acts kinda like you did when we were kids and I'd scratch behind your ears. She is as soft as
your coat!” Adora commented and Catra felt heat crawl into her face.

“What in the name of the first ones gave you that idea? I never reacted to anything like.....that! But
of course she has soft fur like mine! I'm literally a Magi-cat....Key word...Cat. seriously...You left
the Horde before I did, you should know what a freakin’ cat is!” Catra exclaimed before sighing
and glancing up at the moons positions in the sky.

“It's getting late and I'm needed back home. You three can come if you want. I wouldn't be
surprised if C'yra didn't bite my head off if I didn't invite you.”

“I still don't trust her, we could be getting lead into a trap.”

Glimmer half-whispered as they followed Catra down into the caverns, earning a sigh from the
aforementioned magi-cat who didn't even bother to look around at them.

“okay, well Princess Floof. You have She-Ra and besides that, why the seven layers of hell would I
take out a horde camp if I am working for the horde?”

Adora just sighed as she listened to the pair of them bicker, her eyes tracing over the strange statues
and symbols engraved into the stone.

“Hey Catra, what is this place anyway? Where do all these tunnels lead?” She finally asked,
earning a shrug.

“Outside? I have no idea really. The hunters use them when going out.” Catra answered as she
leaned down and patted on Clawdeen once more before dismounting “go ahead back home....and
don't let those little shrimp put you in any of that stupid get up.”
Adora was surprised by the tone that her childhood friend took toward the animal—which bolted off ahead of them.

“So how did you manage to tame….That?” Adora asked, earning a sigh.

“Long story but I found her as a three month old cub and brought her to C'yra because I figured she would know what to do with an orphaned creature but long story short, we ended up with a pony sized house cat.” Catra answered before pausing at a gate.

“We could go in through the main gate but I know the Hunter's entrance...Worst case scenario we end up seeing people skinning a deer for the feast tonight.”

Catra laughed when she saw Adora's expression light up at the sight of the lights and decorations.

*Spirits...She makes the same face Rai does when Rai gets excited by something!*

“Did I mention that today is some weird Magi-cat Holiday? The kids of the kingdom have had a lot of fun with decorating.” Catra explained as she dodged a streamer “you three are welcome to stay….Although I'm sure I could kick your ass at any of the competitions.”

She watched as Adora adopted a rather cocky grin.

“You are so on. A lot may have changed between us but I can still kick your ass.”
“What is in this?”

Glimmer asked, motioning to the oddly shaped cake that Catra handed to her.

“Uh...Pancake mix?” Catra retorted with a shrug before adding “relax, the Magi-cats are magicians, they're not going to poison you and I can't cook so there's that.”

With that she turned toward Bow and Adora, both who were already eating.

“Wow, how do they get so much variety in their foods here? I mean, besides a stray magi-cat sighting every once in a while, they don't really interact with other people.” Bow asked as he motioned down at the box of sweets between them.

“Frankly that has been the job given to me and Scorpia for the past few months and I have to say, it's easier to haul back supplies when there are two huge cats doing the work.” Catra answered, watching their eyes widened so she quickly added

“Long story short. Scorpia is a bleeding heart and she is having an identity crisis.”

Great...way to drop a bomb on the conversation. She mentally berated herself as she grabbed the nearest of the cakes and stuffed it whole into her mouth–which only resulted in cream filling getting all around her mouth when the pastry explode.

Can this day get any worse?

Catra wondered as she reached for a napkin only to go stiff when she heard a voice say

“Oh gods, Catra's rabid!"

Obviously it could.
She suppressed a hiss as she turned glaring at the man who was coming their way as she rubbed the cream from her face.

“Dad, could you not?”

“He’s your dad? How?” Glimmer asked, earning a groan from Catra who tossed one of the cream puffs at the tiger-like Magi-cat, only for him to catch it with his magic.

“My mom was held captive by the Horde and had me in the slave camps...Now can we not be weird about any of this?” Catra rushed to explain, casting a glare at Tora who had what she could only describe as a cocky grin on his face.

“What's wrong kitten? Afraid I may tell your friends something you don't want them to know?”

This time Catra couldn't help but growl.

“Dad, don't you have something else to do? Like making sure Amur doesn't get drunk while showing off.... Again?”

“Not to be rude but what happened to him?” Adora asked as she followed Catra into the crowd after Glimmer and Bow had went off to look around.

“Scorpia's dad happened when Tora was trying to save my mom, he has a really messed up lower back where he was basically tail plowed into a rock.” Catra answered before sighing and adding “some friends and I were planning on having a little contest down in the mine, you in?”

Adora couldn't help but feel the wave of nostalgia that hit her at the challenge in Catra's tone. How often had they did this sort of thing? Roping each other into stupid challenges and then laughing about it when one or both made a fool of themselves?
“You think I'd say no to a challenge?”

She finally responded, snapping out of her thoughts.

*Maybe things haven't changed that much between us after all.* She thought as she followed the half-feline.

“Hey Adorka? You okay down there?” Catra called with a snicker, watching as Adora tried to detangle herself from a vine that they had been climbing up.

“Oh hack up a hairball, fur-face.”

Catra couldn't help but to laugh at that.

“Fur-face? What are you? Six? I swear Adora, I think that the more time you spend with Sparkles the more you….”

Catra began, only to cut herself off with a yelp as Adora grabbed her tail and pulled, causing her to go off balance and fall off her perch and toward the waters below.

“You are not getting by with that, Blondie!” She exclaimed, sending a blast of magic toward the Vines, causing them to freeze—and causing Adora to tumble into the water after her.

*Okay that is definitely new. When did she learn that?*

“You asshole!” Adora growled, Dunking the other girl down into the water which only managed to get her pulled back under by the feline.

When they resurfaced they both burst into laughter.

“You should have seen your face.”
Catra was the first to speak as they made their way to the edge of the bank, Catra not even bothering to stand upright as she shook the water from herself.

“Ugh! Catra, I know I'm already soaked but I don't want to smell like wet cat!” Adora complained, only to find herself being tackled to the ground by the other teen.

“You know, you really shouldn't have said that.”

Catra retorted with a lopsided grin as she sat crouched over the blonde, who responded by shoving her back into the water.

“Hey!”

Catra yowled as she glared over at the laughing form of her former best friend before an idea began to form in her head.

“Hey Glow Girl, think fast!”

Catra said before sending a ball of water charged energy toward the blonde, only to miss its intended target—and hit C'yra right in the face.

“I see I found where you two vanished to.”

Catra saw Adora go ridged upon seeing the queen but Catra couldn't help but laugh at how C'yra looked when her usually wild hair was wet and plastered over her face.

“Oops...Sorry. Let me help...Dad taught me a wind spell.”

Catra said, ignoring whatever Adora was whispering to her.
“vento tempestas!”

A sudden blast of light and wind hit C'yra—who didn't even flinch—although when the spell past both the younger girl's burst into laughter.

“Sorry! I….” Catra tried between laughter as C'yra gave her a annoyed look.

“The spell you meant is siccis aer.” She managed to say as she walked over to the lake, causing Adora to grow quiet.

“She didn't mean…” the blonde began, earning a snarl from Catra however before either Catra or Adora could get anymore words out, C'yra sneered at her reflection—which was rather fluffy after the water and static had came into play—and said:

“I know Adora...Even if see did make me look like some kind of cloud creature.” The queen responded before smirking and sending a golden blast of light along the water, knocking Catra back beneath the surface.

“Can you stop trying to be a hero? It's annoying…. especially since she's not going to hurt me!” Catra growled as she resurfaced, however Adora—not surprising to Catra—responded with a sharp

“How can you be sure?”

Should I just tell her?

Catra wondered as she glanced over at her mother who was just watching the exchange with a mild interest.

“Adora…Trust me when I say I've put her through hell both intentionally and unintentionally and she has never hurt me. Besides she's my mom...and I trust her.”
Like the past pt 1

Chapter Notes

Sorry it's sort. Next one will be longer

"wait, she's you're mom? That means you're...."

Catra wasn't going to give Adora time to finish that sentence as she lead the blonde toward the underground lair that she and Tora had designed.

"The blood heir? Yeah...But if you ever call me a princess I am going to personally shove something into your mouth."

*that is the last thing I need.....I am not going to deal with all of that crap.*

She felt a light tug on her tail at that, stopping her in her tracks.

"Catra, We could really..."

Again Catra cut her off, smirking slightly as she wrapped her tail around her former best friend's wrist.

"Hate to break it to you but I'm not joining no princess alliance that twinkles is a part of and I refuse to be stuck in your shadow again, so I'm doing this *my* way this time."
“Seriously, why do you always have that funky, musty smell when you get wet? Do all cats smell like that?” Adora asked as Catra towed herself dry in a room that Adora could only describe as a lair.

“Dunno, maybe? When I asked Dad about it he said that it had something to due with oil our body makes? Basically the oil reacts badly with water...Which would explain how I only would stink if I get wet outside of a shower. I mean the soap would strip away the oils so…”

Catra trailed off and Adora could practically see the gears in her head turning.

“Whatever you're planning, I am not letting you drag me into one of your hair brained schemes!” She stated, earning a laugh from the half-Feline who just grinned at her.

“As if you have a choice! Besides, you're She-Ra! It's not like you'll get banished from Half-Moon!”

Adora just crossed her arms over her chest and fixed Catra with a look.

“Well some of us don't want to test that theory!” Adora retorted, only to earn a face full of towel as Catra moved to walk past her.

“Come on Adora or are you afraid that She-Ra can be beaten by a giant cat?”

“When that giant cat is not only the queen of a warrior race but also the mother of the one person who could probably kick my ass, yes!”

“Are you sure you wanna get Blondie involved? I mean...she's human. Can she keep up with us?”

Catra couldn't help but roll her eyes at Shenya's comment as she turned toward her.

“She's slower but who do you think I played with as a kid? Relax Shen, Raiona and her not boyfriend won't beat us. I'll make sure of that.” Catra retorted, using air quotes at the word not
“Adora, meet Shenya….She's literally the first person here who tried to befriend me. Shenya, this is Adora...The one I was telling you about.”

Catra really hoped that this was a good idea—getting Adora involved anyway—especially since Glimmer and Bow seemed to be even more morally driven than Adora—and that, by far was saying something.

“Okay, so here's the plan...Upon Scorpia's signal you and Adora will go to the east end and set off the smoke grenades while me and the guys seal off the exits with a paint bomb...then Catra, you can try your new secret weapon.” Catra barely paid any mind to what Shenya was saying since this had been in planning for over a week—and she knew that Raiona and her friends had been planning as well.

*If Adora hasn't completely lost her sense of fun this should go over smoothly. I mean. She did help me get revenge on Shadow Weaver that one time and she idolized her.*

“Okay, so what is all of this?” Adora's question jarred Catra from her thoughts as she motioned toward the technology in front of them.

“Shenya's not good with magic but she is a genius when it comes to cunning tactics in battle. She can explain more.”

“I swear the Cubs are worse than you and Taiki were.” C'yra muttered, being careful not to be heard over the chatter of the rest of the people in the main hall so that Catra couldn't overhear.

“Hey, you were just as bad besides, let them have their fun.” Tora snickered, earning a challenging look.

“Oh they are going to get to have their fun…but I'm going to get to have mine. You wanna help or not?” The queen retorted, earning an eye roll from her husband.

“And you said that the kids got it from *my* side of the family? What are you planning?”
Meetings

A sound like gun fire filled the air, causing everyone in the dining hall freeze as thick, blinding wisps of putrid smelling smoke.

“Scorpia you idiot!”

C’yra heard Catra’s voice snarl out and it was all she could do to keep from laughing as she heard the half-Scorpion respond with a “I’m sorry! Somebody grabbed my tail!”

“No one grabbed you! No one is even near you! You probably stepped on it or something!”

C’yra chuckled aloud at that and glanced over at Tora who was glowing in a faint green color.

“You’re awful.” She whispered to her husband who just grinned and winked at her.

“Oh so you think you can be the only one who gets a laugh out of this?”

Cyra knew that they weren't being any better than the children at this point but it wasn't like anyone would even care about this whole prank war, after all it had been Taiki and her that had started the tradition to begin with.

Not that these kids needed to know about it.

She just really hoped that this next trick worked or else she would have a bigger mess to clean up than if she hit her target.

*I hope this works, Catra has been being a little shit lately.*

She thought with amusement as she threw a dagger toward the ceiling and another pop filled the air…..and there was a sudden burst of bright blue goo that erupted over the rafters.
“Ew! What the hell!”

“This stuff is so gross! Rai, you better not have done this!”

“It got on us too! Oh stars, this stinks!”

C’yra couldn't help it, she burst out laughing as Tora made a movement and cleared the smoke from the room.

“You lot may want to deactivate whatever traps you set for each other and then go get cleaned up….That stuff may stain hair and fur if it stays on for too long.” C’yra called, earning a snarl from Catra who glared down at her.

“This was you? Mom, you are such a jerk!” Catra snarled, leaping from the rafters and wiping her hands across C’yra's face, earning a grunt of annoyance from the otherwise amused Queen.

You are definitely your Uncle’s Niece and my daughter.

C’yra thought as she turned her attention toward the others and smiled slightly “come on, let's go get cleaned up then we'll join the feast….and clean up our mess.”

What the hell were you two thinking? Are you trying to make us look bad in front of Queen C’yra?” Glimmer demanded and Catra could feel her eyes burning into her.

*Accuse the actual magi-cat that lives here and knows these people better than you do, Firefly. Real smart.* Catra thought although she didn't say anything to the other princess and instead turned her attention toward a nearly hyperventilating Adora.

“Adora, she's not going to eat you or something. It was just a prank and besides that, you saw her reaction to that mess...She just coated us in plant goo!” she tried to sound reassuring but that was a bit difficult when she also was trying not to growl at Glimmer.
“Oh yeah, and you know this how? Why did they even keep you anyway?” Glimmer’s response earned a snort from Catra who just stretched.

“Because this sort of thing happens every year!”

“How would you know that? You've been here how long? A month?”

“Try seven!”

Catra really wanted to just deck this girl in the fact and finally shut her up but she also didn't want to end up on latrine duty or worse so she just crossed her arms over her chest.

“Guys stop it. I know you wanted to use this time to try to recruit the princess or queen of the magi-cats into the alliance but if Catra says a prank isn't going to upset the queen then I believe her.”

“Oh sure, believe the one who destroyed Thaymor!”

Catra actually flinched at the pop that Glimmer made when she teleported from the room.

“Well…” Catra began “At least that explains why She’s been such a bitch.” Catra found herself saying just as the door opened to the guest house and Bow came in.

“Okay…What did you guys say to Glimmer because she just went outside to find something to hit before and I quote ‘she slammed her fist into Catra's face.” He asked and Catra just smirked.

“I didn't do anything to princess marshmallow. Not my fault she can't add two and two together.” Catra responded as Adora sighed beside of her.

“Catra, I literally assumed you stole someone's clothes and I'm pretty sure Glimmer would to. I mean how many times did you steal my shirts growing up?”

Adora’s question caused Catra to let out a laugh as she rolled her eyes.
“Okay that’s fair but even you think I look dumb in a cape and how many people here do you see wearing silky, shiny, impractical things like this?”

Catra could practically see the realization hitting both Adora and Bow in the face.

“The only people here that….Oh my gosh, Catra you’re the lost princess!”

The more I hear that word the more I hate it….But at least he seems smarter than I gave him credit for.

“what? No! I am just an ordinary citizen. Where is your decency?” She responded sarcastically before deflating a bit and adding in a lower tone “but technically yes and as soon as we go and eat, the sooner I can take this itchy monkey suit off. You have no idea how weird silk feels on fur.”

Adora wasn't sure what she expected of the Magi-cats but this sure wasn't it. The whole underground city was alive with music and she could practically feel the magic filling the room.

“Hey Adora, I want you to meet someone.” Catra said before motioning to a younger girl with a dark red mane of hair that was nearly longer than Catra's.

“Adora. Meet Raiona...Or Rai for short. She is my younger sister.”

The girl in question seemed as lost for words as Adora, although the blonde was the first to speak.

“Wow, she kinda looks like you did when you were little! I mean, if you didn't have your stripes and dark hair…” Adora began, watching as the younger girl suddenly got a sparkly eyed look about her.

“I do really?”
Adora could hear Catra groan beside her although she chose to ignore that.

“Yes...And why am I not surprised the eye thing is a Magi-cat thing?” Adora answered, earning what could only be described as a choked squeak from Catra.

“I have never made a face like that in my life!”

“You totally have! Any time you get really excited over the idea of something you go all...wide eyed and rumbley.” Adora argued, smirking as she saw Catra's ears fold back

*Oh she is totally going to be embarrassed about all of this. I guess payback is really a bitch.*

“I do not purr!”

Catra argued, growling a bit although Adora ignored it and responded:

“Okay then miss Moody...If you don't purr then I guess that it was the rat under my bed that was rumbling every time you slept with me?”

Catra wanted to vanish at that moment. After all, who would want to admit that they purred like a kitten? However suddenly the mood was ruined even farther when a white furred figure walked or rather—in Catra's opinion anyway—strutted over to them.

“Hey there babe, You must be Catra's friend. I'm Amur.”

Catra faked a gag before grabbing her cousin by the tail, pulling him out of Adora's personal space.

“And she's not interested. Seriously dude, learn how to flirt without being a fucking creep.” she commented, earning a growl from the slightly older boy.
“Mind your own business Catra! Who asked you anyway?” He snarled back however Catra just rolled her eyes as she released him.

“Okay but if you keep on flirting with any chick you see then you’re going to end up getting knocked on your ass and I am going to laugh my ass off!”
Ghosts of the past

Catra couldn't sleep, her mind repeating the things that Adora had told her months before. Was it possible that she couldn't remember all those times that Shadow Weaver had blamed her for something Adora had done? Was it possible that perhaps Shadow Weaver had done something to make Adora remember things differently?

Was there any way for her to actually know for sure?

Sighing she got up from the mattress she had made into a bed and headed toward the bookshelf—being careful not to disturb anyone sleeping in the room as well.

Perhaps one of those times Dad copied for me has some form of answer in them. I mean, Adora doesn't seem like she is lying about any of this.

She thought, summoning a ball of light into her palm in order to see the dusty spines on the shelf.

I swear if I spent so much time being so angry about things that Adora didn't remember...I'm going to find the most painful curses to put Shadow Weaver through, see how well she can handle being powerless and in pain for once.

She thought bitterly as she headed toward her desk, the sound of the chair causing Adora to jolt awake, grabbing her sword from the bedside table.

“Relax Adora, It's just me. Go back to sleep.” Catra whispered as she turned her attention toward the book before her, determined to get some kind of answer—even if she had to ask her father for help.

“What are you doing? It's what? Four in the morning?” Arora asked sleepily, causing the feline to sigh.

“I couldn't sleep and decided to actually do my magic lessons before Anu rats me out for slacking off again.” Catra retorted, lying easily as she enchanted some of the rocks along her wall, giving them an eerie green glow.
“You know, you're different now…Less…”

Catra didn't let Adora finish

“I’m happy here. I’m more than some kind of sidekick or just a number. I mean besides playing babysitter to a bunch of kittens and a giant arachnid... I'm not forced to do anything. It's not like the Horde, even if I piss someone off.”

Catra answered honestly, smirking a bit as she remembered a fight she had with her mother a few months ago, which had ended with her being pinned on her back by a giant paw. If it had been the Horde, she would have been beaten not just growled at and held down until she stopped spewing nonsense.

“C’yra is intimidating as hell and can be kinda scary when she's mad but despite how rough Magi-Cats are by nature...She's not the kind of person who would just hurt someone. If she fights, there has to be a reason besides her ego or temper. Glitter can say what she wants...But I've learned a lot here.”

Catra added, glancing back at Adora who was still sitting up.

“I can tell...I mean. You're the same Catra I grew up with but you were so angry back on Mysticor….and now it seems like you don't hold a grudge.” Adora's voice wavered a bit as if she was nervous to even speak those words but Catra just sighed.

“Adora, you suck at lying so I believe you about not remembering somethings and I want to know why. If it's true and Shadow Weaver had something to do with it….besides She's the one who beat the fuck out of me every day….Not you.”

Another wave of silence fell over them for some time before Arora spoke again.

“She told me that the only way to protect you was if I made sure not to mess up...I guess that was a lie, huh?”

Catra felt her ears twitch upward at that and her fur stood straight on end.
“That witch said that to you? Adora, she would always tell me I was dragging you down and I was to blame for everything! Evidently that….ugh.” she began, only to trail off with a growl as she leered down at her book.

*Shadow Weaver and her damned mind games. Was she trying to pit us against each other even as children? To make some kind of super soldier who would obey the her every command?*

“Adora? Catra? Why are you two up so late? Is something wrong?” Bow's voice shook her from her thoughts.

“Nothing’s wrong...Go back to sleep. I need to go see if my dad still has that one book he had sent from Mysticor.” Catra answered with a sigh.

*This is between Adora and me....Not between anyone else. I want to figure out what the hell happened on my own.*

C'yra sighed as she filled another glass with Amber liquid, her mind too bogged down for sleep.

*Did we do the right thing? Did I do the right thing by letting Tora sentence them in such a way?* The queen wondered, tail flicking about slightly as she tried not to imagine how all of that played out.

However suddenly the sound of a door snapping shut caused her to jolt from her thoughts—and caused the contents of the small glass to slosh onto her lap.

“Shit! Who is it?” She demanded, wincing at her own voice that sounded way too harsh for her liking.

“Sorry, I didn't know anyone was still awake. Are you alright? You usually don't drink.”

She relaxed when she heard Catra's voice, knowing that the teenager had thicker skin than some
“Yeah, I'm fine. What are you doing awake at this hour? Another night mare or is it too dark down there?” C'yra responded, not wanting to focus on her own problems at the moment.

“Dad taught me a light spell...and besides it's a lot easier to sleep in a dark room if there is more heartbeats than just mine. I just couldn't sleep.” Catra answered and C'yra was surprised when she felt the girl sit beside of her, tail gingerly wrapping around the wrist that held the glass, preventing her from refilling it.

“Mom, you've been weird lately. What's wrong?”

C'yra sighed, not having the heart to tell the girl to mind her own business.

“Nothing for you to worry about, kitten.”

She could feel Catra's tail tighten around her wrist at that.

“Mom, I overheard Anu and some other men talking about what happened with Nahuel and that other guy. Is that what this was about? Because if it is, I will tell you how I see it. Making tough decisions to protect the people you care about doesn't make you a monster.”

C'yra growled at that but deflated when Catra bumped against her.

“you've ruled since you were only a little older than I am....and this is the first time in your reign that you had to do something like that. Do you think a tyrant or a monster would do that? Hordak had people executed just for a disability, if it interfered with the Horde's interests. Would you ever do that?”

C'yra turned then, seeing the defiant look in her oldest daughter's eyes—as though she was daring her to argue.

“Of course not! What are you getting at?”
She watched as a smirk came across Catra's face at that.

“Then I rest my case. Protecting the people you love by any means necessary doesn't equal being a monster…. especially when you struggled to make that choice.”
Catra knew something was wrong when Raiona came inside, her cheeks still wet from crying and her ears pinned back.

“Rai? What's wrong? Who do I have to kill?” Catra asked, earning a surprised look from everyone at the table, minus Tora who's eyes narrowed slightly.

“Rai? What happened? Did someone hurt you?”

Catra knew that Raiona would never argue with or lie to their father—that was reserved for their mother—but she also could see that the younger girl didn't want to answer the question.

“Do I have to go wake Mom?” Catra asked, earning a sigh.

“Fine, it was Amur okay? Can I go to my room now?”

Catra growled and glanced at Tora before standing heading toward the door.

“Your three enjoy the sights….I've got something to deal with first.”

It didn't take her long to find herself outside her aunt's house, knocking on the door as hard as she could before giving up and sending an illusion spell beneath the crack in the door, which prompted her aunt to finally answer.

“Catra? What are you doing here so early? You usually come around with Rai around noon.” The woman asked, slowly articulating each word as she narrowed her eyes at the teen who sighed.

“I need to talk to Amur, is he home or out with someone? He decided it was a smart idea to make my little sister cry and now I'm going to kick his ass.” she said slowly, stumbling to make the correct hand gestures to accompany the words.
“He's out with Damisa.”

Catra hissed at that before signing her thanks before bolting off.

*That bastard better have a good excuse and not just because he wanted to make out with some stuck up chick!*

C'ryra awoke to the sound of a slamming door, followed by muttered curses and choked sobs.

*What the hell is going on at eight in the damn morning? Did Catra do something to Rai....again?*

The queen wondered before slowly climbing out of bed, mentally cursing herself for drinking so much the night before. As she made her way out the door—stumbling over a table in the process—before she eventually made it to her youngest daughter's room.

“Rai? Are you alright?”

She asked through the door, only to hear something hard hit the other side of the door.

“Go away!”

C'ryra sighed and rolled her eyes at that.

“Rai, I love you but if you break something by throwing a temper tantrum I'm not going to replace it.” C'ryra said calmly, cracking the door open to make sure it was safe before letting herself into
the rather messy room.

Without a word, C'yra moved to sit on the bed beside her daughter.

“Did Catra lose her temper again?” She asked, lightly putting a hand on the girl's shoulder, only for the younger girl to shrug away with a hiss.

“No! Now leave me alone!”

_This is odd...she's usually cheeky, not completely standoffish. What is going on?_ The queen wondered, gingerly replacing her hand back on the girl's back.

“No chance kiddo, now you gonna tell me what's up with the tears or should I track down that sister of yours and interrogate her?” C'yra asked, earning a hiss.

“Can you just go away? It's not like you fucking care about me to begin with!”

Raiona's words chilled C'yra to the bone.

_Why in the world does she think that?_

She wondered as she stood, moving to the head of the bed, kneeling by the girl's head.

“Raiona, I don't know who told you that or why you think that I don't but you're wrong...I do love you, more than anything.” C'yra said firmly as she nuzzled against her before adding “now I know you don't believe me but I need to know what happened, sweetheart.”

C'yra expect resistance—or an argument—but instead she got none, but felt Raiona stiffen.

“If you loved me you wouldn't fucking play favorites!”
“What the fuck did you do to her Amur? And don't you even say you didn't because the little brat never cries over things.” Catra a snarled, slamming her cousin against a tree with all of her strength.

“I told her the truth...C'yra only had her to replace you... She'll never be trained like she wants because she isn't the hire!” He said, shoving Catra away.

“You're lying and you know it! Do you know why Mom doesn't train her as hard as me? Because I can handle it! If she instinctively punches me, I brush it off and hit her back. Do you think Raiona would know how to react to that?”

Catra snarled in response, punching him as hard as possible in the gut.

“Raiona is a lot softer than she wants people to believe she is and I for one will kill you if you dare to make her cry again.”

Catra growled before turning and heading back toward the entrance.

*I really hope Aunt Tya doesn't hold it against me...I actually enjoy her company.* She thought as she shifted, heading back home.

She made sure to return to normal before she headed back into town—where she could be seen by Adora and her friends—only to nearly run directly into Tya, who was standing in the doorway.

“Shit! Sorry!” She muttered, knowing it wasn't any good to say anything unless she was facing her aunt.

“I assume you found Amur. Do we have a full excuse as to why we're going to have to hide a body?” Tora questioned, arching a brow at her as Tya turned toward her, giving her a quizzical
look.

“I didn't kill him...But I'm sure that he'll be feeling that for a while but before you three start yelling at me….wait until you heard what he told Rai.” Catra responded, earning a sigh.

“If it has anything that could explain to me why I just got my head bit off by my eleven year old daughter, who swears I don't care about her….Then maybe I won't.” C'ya responded, sounding tired.

And Catra was sure it wasn't because of the hangover either.

“Alright...but one of you need to translate for Ty, because last time I tried to explain something to her I signed something along the lines of 'I am a drunk cucumber’ and she didn't let me live it down for a month.” Catra retorted, earning a snort of amusement from C'ya.

“Neither would I.”

Catra tried to explain what happened the best she could, nearly snarling at some points as she told C'ya everything.

She could see Tya making motions out of the corner of her eye, but she was moving so fast that she couldn't keep up with what she was saying.

“Catra, go chase down your friends….I think I need to sit down and have a long, honest talk with Raiona….and then I think my nephew needs a lesson about stretching the truth.” C'ya said, her tone more of a command than an suggestion.

"Alright, but if you need me for anything just send Peralia.”

Catra agreed before heading outside, only pausing when Tya's hand gripped her shoulder tightly which caused her to turn to face the older woman, who slowly starts to sign to her.

thank you for telling us...He will regret it.
Catra understood after her aunt repeated herself three times.

"Dad, can you translate: Don't mention it...and Don't kill him?"
Conflictions

C'yra knew that this would be tough on Raiona, let alone would the girl believe her.

“Raiona, I know you're not going to believe me but I do love you….More than anything.” She began, leaning against the preteen's bedroom wall and closed her eyes.

“I treat you differently than Catra because you are different. Catra was raised as a soldier without any form of affection or acceptance outside of one person not to mention that she trained her whole life to be a soldier.”

C'yra began, pausing to make sure she was wording herself correctly before continuing

“I spar with her and am rougher towards the because she is used to it. If I accidentally punch her...Guess what? I'm going to end up getting bitten, scratched or hit back. She enjoys the challenge but knows I'll heal her up later...You on the other hand are still so young and while I know you could handle getting knocked around by someone closer to your size, I'm pure muscle Rai….I could hurt you without meaning to and I couldn't live with myself if I did that.”

C'yra wasn't sure what to expect since Raiona had reacted out of character so much that day however she wasn't expecting a choked whisper.

“Amur said you avoided me by working so hard...And that you didn't ever really want me….which is why you take time out of your day to train Catra.” Raiona confessed, sitting up, ears pinning nearly flat against her hair.

“I train Catra because I'm the only person who can. if you had told me you wanted me to spend the day with you, You know I would. How many times did I miss important meeting because you were sick or hurt?” C'yra prompted gently as she moved across the room to take a seat on the bed beside the preteen who smiled slightly.

“Remember that time that I faked sick just to get you to stay home and I know you didn't fall for it but you stayed home anyway.” Raiona answered, earning a laugh

“You're a terrible actress but I figured you just wanted me home so I stayed.” C'yra said before
nudging her and growling playfully “Come on, let's go do something….just us.”

“What was all of that this morning? You took out of there like a bat out of hell.” Adora asked once Catra had caught up to them, earning a sigh from the half feline who flicked her tail in annoyance.

“Amur basically put a load of shit in Raiona's head and that girl is tough as nails for an eleven year old. I've only seen her cry twice before...and once was because she fell out of a tree during training and broke her arm. So seeing her *that* upset over Amur this morning I knew it had to be bad.” Catra answered, almost nonchalantly as she leaned against the rock behind them.

“I'm surprised you even understand…” Glimmer began, but trailing off as she watched Catra bristle.

“Look, just because I would have done anything to rescue my best friend doesn't mean jack shit okay? I know what it means to protect the people you care about, especially your family.” Catra snarled, deflating slightly as her hand ran over her belt, which Adora noticed bore the same symbol that was on the ring Tora wore.

“Family? Ugh...How didn't I notice that before? How the hell did that happen?” Glimmer asked, earning a humorless laugh from the Magi-cat.

“Hordak decided not to kill me since if I grew into my powers, I would be a force to be reckoned with. Unfortunately for them, I found myself here after leaving the Horde and C'yrara, despite everything, gave me a chance...No matter if I did mess up a lot.”

Adora could easily hear the hints of emotion in Catra's voice as she answered the question and it was easy to see that Catra thought highly of the Royal family.

“Catra, I'm sorry about what happened. I know it worked out in the end but...She...I…” Adora struggled to find the words she was looking for, but gave up when she felt a familiar, fuzzy tail curl itself loosely around her upper arm.
“Adora, stop. I get it...Kinda. I mean, I've seen the Horde's destruction after I came here and I get why you left...I just don't understand why you left me. You know I probably would have stayed in Bright Moon if you had let me come with you that night, right?”

Adora sighed, closing her eyes as she leaned backward against the wall of rock behind her.

“I know….I really messed up."

The tail tightened around her arm slightly before unwinding itself.

“Yeah well...I zapped you with a stun baton. Pretty sure we're even.”

It was getting late and Catra knew it but for whatever reason no one wanted to go to bed, not even Adora who had been yawning her brains out ever since they had gotten back from the ruins that had once been the palace of D’riluth.

“You know, after you attacked me in Thymor I figured you would be….More hostile to us being here.” Bow commented, catching her off guard by coming over and sitting beside of her.

“We're not exactly on the opposite sides of a war now... Besides Magi-Cats are rough by nature but...We do have a code of honor you know...Besides my mother would kill me if I was overly hostile at you.” Catra found herself responding before she offered him a hint of a smile and added “Is Princess cupcake over there always this paranoid? I mean she acts like I'm going to eat her.”

“She is afraid you're going to hurt Adora. I mean, you did attack us before.” He answered earning a sigh.

“I wanted her to feel even a fraction of the pain I did when she just didn't come back. I wondered if she had been captured or even killed...But when I saw her turn into She-Ra....I was just so angry.”
"Despite what Sparkles might think, the Horde wasn't all bad. People are raised to fight. Not all of them are terrible...A lot are like Adora or even Scorpia....where is Scorpia anyway? I swear she's been vanishing lately."

Bow shrugged as he glanced over to Tora and the other tiger-like Magi-cat, both where signing to each other.

"Your aunt is deaf? How did you get used to that since I know what Adora told us about the Horde." He asked earning a sigh.

"If a disability didn't affect your fighting they didn't care but once it did, the best you could hope for was a honorable death. I was beyond shocked when I was introduced to Tora and saw he was paralyzed." Catra replied "But he is so strong...and can do so much despite everything...I can definitely see why they respect him as their king."

She tried to ignore Bow's face at that comment.

"You look up to him, don't you?"

"Yeah, I do. I mean he is strong despite everything and a tactician thats not afraid to make the tough decisions but he's also really compassionate and that is not something I expected from a ruler."

Catra didn't notice C'yra walking up behind her until the woman asked

"What an I? Chopped liver?"

Catra leaped into the air before she glared at the woman.
“Mom! I swear if you keep sneaking up on me like that I'm going to end up punching you into the middle of next week!” Catra retorted, rather loudly—causing the whole room to go quiet.

C'yra however just smirked and gripped the back of Catra's neck, causing the younger magi-cat to go limp.

“Think you better grow some more first, kitten.” The queen stated and Catra could hear Adora's heartbeat increase and she was sure Bow was holding his breath.

“Mom, I swear that feels so weird. Let go of me!”

Catra grumbled, earning a laugh from her mother.

“I have to tease you somehow. After all, wasn't it last week I woke up to that booby trapped mess that was my bathroom?”

“What was it that Queen C'yra did to you earlier?” Adora asked that night while she watched Catra fill Clawdeen's food pan.

“A pressure point thing….It feels really weird and makes it nearly impossible to move but it doesn't hurt or anything, She does it because she knows it annoys me.” Catra answered before adding “you've been walking on eggshells around her since you got here. What's up with that? I mean you've met my mom before.”

Adora swallowed hard before sighing and glancing down at the tiled floor.

“I already have to deal with Angella not liking me, I don't think that I could handle any more judgemental glares getting throne my way.”
Please don't throw the past in my face right now. She mentally pleaded with Catra, who had narrowed eyes at her slightly.

“I don't know about queen Firefly but I know my mom isn't like that. I mean, when she found out that a highly respected commander had tortured Scorpia, she was furious and Scorpia's father was the one who imprisoned her and broke my dad's back so you see that she doesn't hold too harsh of judgement against people who mean her no real harm.” Catra responded before sighing and leaping onto the mattress beside of her.

“Besides, you're She-Ra. You can take on anything!”

Adora let out a grunt at that before drawing her knees to her chest.

“Sometimes I wish I never found that damned sword.”

She half expected a sarcastic response but instead she felt Catra's tail inch it's way around her waist.

“Hey, look on the bright side...When this war is over you can hang up the glow sword and just do whatever the hell you want. You may be She-Ra but you're still just Adora...and you are more than just a flashy sword, just like I'm just Catra despite my title here in Half-Moon.”
Late night advice (and early morning questions)

Tora knew something was up when he found Catra wondering the deepest parts of the underground city, the parts that were not used as a armory but the ones that held spiritual significance.

“Got something on your mind, kit?”

He noticed how she practically jumped at his voice, her fur flooding out although she deflated when she saw him.

“You could say that but I don't want to talk about it.” She answered simply before she sighed and closed her eyes.

Tora wanted to press the subject but didn't, instead gingerly tugging a strand of the teenager's wild mane.

“Well, I'm here if you need to talk. How are you handling having Adora and her friends here?” He asked, earning a small smile as she turned toward him.

“I have a over talkative marshmallow practically stalking me and a cotton candy colored over protective cloud leering at me all the time but it's nice to be able to talk to Adora again, you know?” Catra answered earning a arched brow and crooked grin from him.

“And Scorpia isn't just a prickly marshmallow?”

Catra couldn't help but laugh at that before walking over to him, leaning against the handles of the wheelchair.
“Right.” she agreed, her hand coming to rest on Tora's shoulder before adding “Dad, How much do you know about dark magic? I mean, I know you gave me that book to read but I can't find all the answers on my own.”

Tora knew that particular confession was hard on Catra—who just a few months before would have never admitted that to anyone—but he also knew that if she was asking for help, it was something she thought was serious.

“I know some things. What can't you figure out?”

He felt Catra gently grip his shoulder before she moved to sit down beside him on the floor.

“Adora remembers things I can't and I remember things that she can't and I have a feeling that Shadow Weaver had something to do with that but I don't know what kind of voodoo that witch could do and I want to….I want to know what it was and why.” Catra answered and he could tell there was more to this than he was being told.

But he also knew he couldn't just make her open up to him if she didn't want to.

“I'll see what I can find, just promise me you won't do any experiments on either yourself or Adora with any spells.” He replied, earning a snort of either amusement or annoyance, which he couldn’t decide.

“Dad, I'm not that good at magic and the last time I tried to do an advanced spell...I ended up not only cleaning dishes for two weeks but also on trash duty. I'm not making that mistake again. That was the only time I actually thought mom was going to hit me.” Catra responded as she stood back up, her tail lightly wrapping around Tora's forearm—which hung off of the armrest.

Tora smiled slightly at the gesture that he knew was her way of reaching out to people, something he had noticed she had began to do after having a nightmare and seeking something to ground her into reality but had turned into a small display of affection—rather or not she was seeking or
“You could have killed yourself of course she was mad. I was too for that matter...But you were freaked out enough by getting a zap from me I pretty much was afraid I would traumatize you.” He reminded her, using his magic to send a wave of warmth over her, earning a small hint of a smile.

“I was more shocked about how out of control I got...I know you wouldn't hurt me like she did.”

As Catra said this Tora noticed her expression darkened, especially as she added

“Dad…There is something I should probably tell you…..Shadow Weaver is the sorcerer formerly known as Light Spinner. I wanted to tell you on Mysticor but to be honest...Seeing her freaked me out too badly, sorry.”

He noticed how her tail loosened around his arm then and her ears seemed to flatten.

She expects me to be angry and pull away.

He realized, sighing and reaching out and grabbing her arm lightly.

“Catra, don't ever apologize for being afraid or upset. Should you have told Castaspella about Shadow Weaver? Yes, however I don't blame you for not wanting to talk about what happened. Now come on, let's get to bed. You and I will look for answers tomorrow after breakfast while the Bright Moon lot tries to convince your mom to join their alliance.”

With that he pulled her closer to him, wrapping an arm around her once she was close enough.
“Thanks.”

Catra's voice was barely audible as she nuzzled against him slightly.

“For what?”

Tora was confused by that to say the least, after all since when did Catra actually let herself be vulnerable?

“For everything.”

He knew there was something that she wasn't saying but he knew not to press the issue. After all, she would just shut down if she thought he was trying to make her open up. So instead, he just tightened his arm around her, letting her choose when to break away from him.

Morning came all too quickly for Adora, who had more nightmares than she would like to admit...Even if she did have two purring felines nearby—one being her childhood best friend, who had kept her tail touching Adora all night.

_I wonder what that was about? Did she hear me wake up? We used to crawl into bed with each other all the time when we had nightmares in the Fright Zone or is the tail thing a Magi-cat thing?_

She wondered, although her thoughts was interrupted when Scorpia practically dropped a platter filled with some kind of fruit filled cakes down onto the table in front of them, her expression hopeful.
how can anyone be this cheerful during the morning? When no one has to be awake? she wondered, although she just turned her attention back to her breakfast.

“Now I know I don't know you guys that well but try these and tell me what you think. Miv's brother's husband gave me the recipe and I swear these things are to die for…..If I managed to get the measurements right this time.”

Adora arched a brow as she glanced down at the weird shaped little pastries on the plate in front of them before looking back up at Scorpia, who was practically beaming now.

"Go ahead, try one and tell me what you think."

“They're at least eatable because I got stuck being lab rat last night and I haven't croaked over with food poisoning….and she didn't catch anything on fire, which is more than I can say about Catra.” Miv retorted with a laugh, using his tail to snag a fruit from the bowl on the counter.

“Wait...Catra actually tried to cook? How did that happen?” Adora asked, earning a laugh from the spotted magi-cat who just grinned.

“She wanted to surprise Tora for his birthday since everyone but her was making a big deal out of it....She practically smoked my wife and out of our house and I ended up having to make the cake for her.” Miv retorted, just as Catra walked into the room.

“Don't you have anything better to do than talk about people? So what? I turned a cake to charcoal. Old news. Please tell me you have coffee made this morning because there is no way I am drinking that tea my mother likes.” she muttered, sitting down at the empty seat beside Glimmer.

“Okay, who thought it was a good idea to give you coffee because I remember all too well what happened when we sneaked those instant coffee packs out of the mess hall….and that you bounced off the walls…. literally.” Adora commented as she glanced over at the magi-cat who seemed to still be half asleep.
“Shut it Blondie…..Spirits, you're so annoying.”

Adora couldn't help but snicker as Catra wordlessly accepted one of the pastries from Scorpia only to nearly gag when she bit into it, all her fur bristling as soon as the taste hit her.

“Scorpia….What kind of fruit is in this because I swear it could lock someone's jaw.” Catra managed to say, shuddering as she unceremoniously dropped the food in question into a trash bin.

Adora watched as Scorpia's face fell.

“Oh man, are they that bad? I was sure I followed the recipe perfect!”

Adora couldn't help but feel bad for the half-arachnid although Catra just let out a sound of amusement.

“I think you need a better teacher then because the fruit center needed a bit more sugar. Miv, why don't you teach her? She hasn't killed me yet and I'm usually the one testing her concoctions.”

It didn't fly over Adora's head that Catra's tone held a challenge, or that Miv looked uncomfortable at the idea.

What is Catra doing? Is there a plan to this all along?

Adora wondered, however suddenly Cyra's hand reached between them, snagging one of the aforementioned cakes, popping it whole in her mouth and seemingly swallowing it without too much chewing.
“Yeah a bit too many Verdi berries...Not enough sugar. Still good though.” The queen said “If Miv is being a jerk and won't teach you, ask Amur in his free time. He likes cooking.”

Was the queen actually trying to help a former enemy? Did C'yra really trust Scorpia? Was this a form of plot that Catra had came up with?

Adora didn't want to think the worst of Catra but Catra was underhanded and would definitely play dirty if she had anything to gain. However Adora wasn't sure, not this time. Not when Catra seemed so happy here.

“Hey Catra?” She began, earning a grunt from the half asleep magi-cat who glanced over at her.

“You said you got stronger here...I was wondering if you would spar with me later?”

Catra managed a nod as she yawned.

“Sure….As soon as I'm done with lessons with my dad.”
Honeysuckle

Chapter Summary

Catra discovers why C'yla doesn't let her and Raiona have much coffee

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tora knew that something was wrong as soon as he saw how Catra's hands shook as they gripped around her sword's hilt. But what could be wrong? She had already been strong enough to lift the heavy blade of the Azmer family.

Was she sick? Injured?

He couldn't help but worry as he narrowed his eyes, watching as she wildly swung the blade around in hopes to summon the enchantment from its core and into the blade.

“Are you alright?” He finally asked after several minutes of watching her failed attempts at summoning the energy—and the constant flicking and twitching that her ears and tail were doing.

“Of course! Why wouldn't I be? Do you honestly think I'm afraid of this puny replica?” She retorted in a tone that clearly was an challenge, however Tora just rolled his eyes.

“Then why are you so jittery?”

“I am not jittery!”

No sooner had she asked that, Catra's hands slipped from the blade and embedded into the wall at his left.

Tora shot her a look before removing the sword from the wall.
“Okay...that's enough of that training. Let's work on your sensing abilities before you end up hurting someone.”

Cyra was in middle of meditation when she was suddenly tackled from behind by something that felt like a person sized torpedo.

“What the...Catra! What on Etheria are you doing?” She asked, earning a mew from the rather sparkly eyed teenager.

“Sorry! I'm just bored and Anu is still talking to Adora and the walking glitter bomb.” Catra said in a tone that was almost a whine.

“you're not skipping Tora's lessons again, are you?” She asked, flicking her tail into Catra's face only to earn a light growl.

“No! Even if I didn't learn anything new.” Catra retorted and C'yra would have laughed at the pout the girl was giving her, if it wasn't so out of character.

“Catra? What did you eat today?” She questioned, flicking her tail a bit as she tried to figure out what was going on. Could it be Nepeta? She doubted it but there were cases where it was used recreationally.

Not that she believed Catra would actually do something like that but she was a teenager and she definitely had more issues than either wanted to admit, so it wasn't unplausible.

“Just some of Scorpia's overly sour doughnut things, eggs and some coffee.”

Catra answered, all while trying to grab C'ya's tail.
“How much coffee?” C’yra asked, not allowing her thoughts to finish.

“Just three.” The teen didn't even bother to lie although C'yra let out a growl of annoyance and roughly batted the girl with her tail, earning a Yelp when there was no way that it could have hurt.

“Catra, you know that a lot of coffee has negative affects on our body! What were you thinking?” C’yra scolded, although her tone wasn't harsh.

“I was just sooo tired.”

C’yra wanted to growl again and possibly slap her upside the head for the lame excuse but also because of the whiny tone, which sounded way too much like Raiona at the moment.

“One cup would have been enough plus you could have told your dad and he would have let you have a nap before classes.” She responded before sighing and gently putting a hand over the pressure point at the nape of Catra's neck.

“Come on...You need to drink some water.....And I need to figure out how long you're going to be this loopy.”

Chapter End Notes

Okay so coffee can effect young magi-cats really energetic and jittery....plus a special ingredient that Catra sleepily put into the drink made her completely loopy
Adora wasn't sure what to think when she walked into the Half Moon 'palace' only to find C'yra laying on a sofa, tail flickering across the floor while Catra—who looked rather glassy eyed—chased after it.

“Uh….What happened?” she asked, although she instantly regretted saying anything when she was suddenly knocked backward by Catra, who had pounced in her.

“Tora left the tea powder out on the table last night….She grabbed the wrong box so she put nectar in her coffee—which mind you—would have already made her hyper.” C'yra responded, smirking as Adora knocked Catra off of her.

“What kind of tea makes people act like….this?” Adora asked, motioning to Catra whose tail was curling around her waist.

“A sweet medical tea made from Honeysuckle.”

C’yra responded and Adora could have sworn that she saw a grin ghost across the woman's face as Catra circled around her.

“Honeysuckle? Why did she…” Adora began, only to let out a squeak of surprise mid sentence when Catra started sniffing at her.

“You smell nice, what kind of perfume is that?”

Adora nearly jumped when a sudden loud laugh rang out, causing her to look over at the magi-cat queen who looked way too amused by this.

“locus? Lotus? Some kind of flower, now get off me!” Adora answered, pushing the slightly younger teen away from her again, earning a mew in response before Catra retorted

“what? Don't you like me anymore? Is that why you left?”
Adora let out a groan and shot a glare at the still laughing queen, who just smirked in response and retorted

“Hey, don't blame me. Tora's the one who forgot to put his medicine up last night. Besides, you have to admit it is pretty funny to see little miss closed off this high.”

That is not how I would describe this.

Adora thought as Catra rubbed her shoulder against her, her whole body seeming to rumble.

"How long will she be like this?" Adora questioned, gingerly unwinding Catra's tail from where it had wrapped itself around her.

C'yla just made a noise in the back of throat and shrugged.

"Great….Even you don't know. How on Etheria do we supposed to get anything done with her acting like this?" Adora groaned, earning a pout from Catra who responded with

"Aww….What's wrong Adora? I thought you liked me?"

Glimmer couldn't believe what she was seeing as Catra raced across the room after the ball of glowing pink energy, nearly hitting the wall before she could get herself stopped.

"Uh….Are you sure that she isn't just brain damaged?" Glimmer asked, earning a laugh from Adora who shrugged.

"At this point….I don't even know. I'm just glad that she isn't currently trying to fight you or Bow
for that matter."

"Yeah….I was pretty sure she was going to have her Lion-beast thing to attack me earlier."
Glimmer retorted, only to go rigid when she felt the Magi-Cat brush up against her.

"Hey, I'm not that mean!

Glimmer didn't even think when she teleported herself halfway across the room.

"On second thought, At least normal Catra is predictable!"

Tora wasn't sure what he had come into when he heard Catra laughing while Adora was picking herself up off the floor.

"Uh...Do I even want to know?" He asked, earning a huff from the blonde who motioned towards the still laughing Catra.

"This one grabbed the wrong box this morning at breakfast and has been high for the past hour and a half." Adora explained and before Tora had time to get a word out, he suddenly had a lap full of teenager.

"I'm not hurting you am I? Where did you disappear to? When can we train again?"

Tora really hoped he didn't look as confused as he felt.

"Uh no...Work and whenever this wears off."

He managed to get out, not sure how to take the girl's behavior.
"Really? Great! Can I ask you something? Why don't you have a tail? And couldn't you use magic or tech of some kind to walk again?"

*Okay….she is really just a kitten right now. I wonder what she got into that made her act like this?*

"It was amputated and it would take a very strong form of magic to heal me, Catra. So no."

Tora could hear the sound of C'yra laughing as well as the sound of a click of a button.

"C'yra what the heck are you doing?" He asked, earning a laugh from his wife.

"There is no way I am not recording this. I mean she complimented Glimmer's hair and chased after energy balls. Is that anything you'd expect from our Catra?" She answered, earning a sigh from Tora who rolled his eyes.

"This is also going to be payback for me being careless isn't it?"

He questioned, watching as his wife's lips twisted into an almost cruel smirk.

"Totally."
Taking The Crown

Chapter Summary

Catra realizes not everything is as she thought and makes a tough choice.

A scream woke her up, causing her ears to ring even worse than usual due to the honeysuckle that still seemed to linger in her system.

*What the hell?*

She wondered, slowly getting out of bed and following the noise, only to find herself outside the room that Adora was staying in.

Slowly opening the door, Catra found her former best friend sitting up in bed, arms wrapped around herself as she seemingly trembled from whatever horrors her mind had played out to her.

"Hey Adora, You okay?"

She noticed how Adora jumped at the sound of her voice before trying to school her features, but even in the dark Catra could make out the trembling of her the other girl's body.

"Catra! What are you doing in here?"

Adora demanded, only to earn a chuckle from Catra who leaped across the room and onto the bed.

"Adora, remember we grew up together. I'm not going to fall for your tough girl act...Now spill...What's wrong? It's not like the protector of the universe to be nearly in tears." Catra responded, tail curling around Adora slightly, watching through the darkness as her former best friend seemed to deflate.

"I keep seeing her...Feeling her touch. I know you had it works Catra, So much worse but she....She hurt me too alright? It was like I would never be good enough, that if I made one
“mistake I was a failure and when I close my eyes, I'm back in the fright zone, surrounded by shadows and she…can we not talk about this?”

Catra wasn't sure how she felt when she heard this but Adora didn't cry and yet. She sounded on the verge of tears.

"Hey, that witch can't get to you now." Catra said, lightly elbowing her before adding "Don't take this the wrong way but I could stay the night if you want. Spirits knows that you put up with my constant nightmares enough growing up."

Catra couldn't believe she had said that but she also knew they she didn't like seeing the usually strong girl that he had declared her rival so broken.

"You don't have to."

Adora's response was so meek that Catra wondered if this wasn't a test of some sort.

"I offered, didn't I dummy?" She retorted, tail tightening around Adora slightly before she added "come on, I'm beat and my head is busting...Which I currently hate my parents for by the way. Plus I know you have to be tired. I promise, I won't let anyone hurt you."

"Catra….Nevermind. Just thanks."

Catra felt a sense of deja Vu at her own words, which were so much like ones that had passed between the two of them in the past. However she shook it off, knowing that if she thought about it she would become bitter.

And Adora needed support not bitterness in that moment, she could be angry with Adora again tomorrow.

Just not tonight.
Lightly putting an arm around Adora, Catra fell backwards onto the bed, effectively bringing Adora down with her.

"Don't...You would have done the same for me."

Adora snuggled closer then, face pressing against Catra as a silence passed over them then even though Catra could easily smell the tears that Adora was hiding in the front of her shirt.

*Shadow Weaver fucked with both of us it seems....I guess no one had an easy time under shadow Weaver. But I won't let Shadow Weaver lay a hand on her again. Even if she didn't get tortured....Even if I did have it worse, If it was bad enough to give her nightmares then it had to have been awful.*

Catra thought, closing her eyes and tightened her arm around her.

"No more playing hero Adora. No more taking the world on your shoulders, Everyone needs to pull their own weight. With or without the princess alliance or She-Ra."

She muttered, eyes narrowing as she turned her attention towards the ceiling, her mind making itself up to what she had to do.

She didn't know how long she had lay there with sleep alluding her but she felt Adora curl against her in her sleep, murmurs escaping her lips as more peaceful dreams overtook her and Catra couldn't help but purr.

The familiarity and warmth getting to her, but she didn't care.

Not if it kept Adora safe from the mental torments that Catra herself was used to battling alone.
C'yra was surprised when Catra walked into the council room the next morning, dressed in regalia and carrying herself with an air of importance.

"Mom...I need to talk with you, on the subject of the princess alliance." She announced, causing the whole room to grow quite.

"Catra, you haven't even connected with the runestone…" Anu began, earning a growl from Catra who stalked over toward the glowing orange stone that decorated the far wall of the room.

"I don't need a magician to tell me how this works. I've watched Shadow Weaver do it multiple times. I know how it works." Catra retorted bitterly, closing her eyes as she pressed a hand to the smooth surface, watching as the energy swirled inside of it before traveling up into her arm.

She could feel a warmth growing inside of her, something warm and safe. So unlike the time she had touched the black garnet.

"Catra, the stone grants abilities based on one's physical strength. It's not fancy but…" C'yra began to explain, only to earn a smirk.

"You forget, I don't need fancy. I just need something that would allow me to kick Shadow Weaver's ass."
"Scorpia!"

Catra barked, earning a Yelp followed by a this by a this as the girl in question stood up abruptly—or rather tried to—and hit her head.

"Ow! Shoot! What is it chief?"

Catra rolled her eyes at the other girl before letting sigh as she glanced up at the light fixtures before answering:

"I need someone I can trust to help me find a way to defeat Shadow Weaver. Plus you're the only princess I can actually tolerate."

She watched as Scorpia's eyes widened before she glanced away before nodding.

"I've seen what they have done and it bothers me, it really does. But I...I hate the thought of turning my back on my family." Scorpia answered, her voice dropping however Catra just put a hand on her arm.

"I get it. I am not trying to make you, do what you want. I'm not Hordak and I damn sure aren't Shadow Weaver."

C'yra sighed as she saw the pair of teenagers come into the throne room, her daughter looking grim while Scorpia looked nervous.
"Mom, about my request earlier….I know that you don't want me to join the princess alliance and frankly I could care less about all that bleeding heart, friendship is magic bullshit but I do want to put an end to the Horde after everything that they did." Catra began, voice wavering slightly toward the end, ears pinning back.

"And what do you proclaim then if it is not to join the alliance?" C'yrq questioned, quirking a brow as she sat up a bit straighter, giving Catra her full attention.

"Allow me to make my own team...We'll ally ourselves with this so called alliance but we'll do it our way, not theirs. The Horde is brutal and we'll need to be just as brutal to combat that. But since I am technically the Princess of D'rluth I need your permission."

C'yrq sighed, closing her eyes as she mulled it over.

*It's too dangerous*

She wanted to say but she knew that Catra had faced danger before. Besides it wasn't like she was sending an untrained child into battle, Catra had been trained as a soldier since she was a child.

"Put together a team and then we'll talk about it. I know you two know how to fight, however I need to know that you aren't basically playing roulette with your lives."
Invitations

Chapter Summary

Catra and Adora talk and Scorpia invites Catra to tag along with her to the all princess ball.

"Why won't you join the alliance?"

Adora asked as she watched Catra pull herself up over the bar once again, earning a huff from the sweat covered feline.

"Because I refuse to be stuck in your shadow again….Besides I don't want to deal with prissy, stuck up, princesses!" Catra retorted as she dropped onto the ground before adding "I can barely tolerate You and Glim-Glam on a good day."

Adora really wanted to roll her eyes at that as she watched Catra pick up a weighted staff, swinging it through the air with surprising ease.

"Scorpia is a princess or did you forget that?" Adora questioned, smirking as Catra seemed caught off guard by her knowing that.

"Scorpia is on an annoyance scale of her own. You don't live with her."

They continued in silence for some time before Catra spoke again

"Adora, I was told my whole life that I was nothing but your sidekick...That I would never be anything and that you were the only reason I was kept alive….I need to know I don't need you."

For some reasons those words hurt, however before Adora could say anything however, Catra continued
"You got to choose your own path when you found that sword... You chose to become She-Ra. I need to be able to choose mine... besides it's not like we're on opposite sides of this war. I want The Horde gone just as much as you and the bleeding hearts squad does. But I do this my own way... With my own team."

Adora didn't know what to say. Had she really made Catra feel like that?

"You know I never meant to make you....." she began, however Catra cut her off.

"I know that now, Adora. I promised you I would help you find the answers to why we both remember different things and I don't go back on my word. Just trust me when I say that this is for the best."

With that, Cares returned the weighted staff to it's holder before sighing.

"Don't look so freaking sad... It's not like I hate you or anything. I mean I kinda did when you just left but after all you've told me... and everything that has happened... I can't. Shadow Weaver screwed with both of us for whatever reason and I am going to find out why.... Even if I have to kill the bitch to do it."

Adora had heard Catra angry before but never like this. Her tone sounded so primal, like a kind of mix between a growl and a hiss, not to mention that Catra never had spoke of killing someone.

Not Lonnie.

Not Kyle.

No one.

Had Catra really changed this much over the course of the last few months? Was there much left of the girl she had grown up with?
"Catra! Guess what?"

A sudden voice jerked both from their thoughts as Scorpia's voice echoed even louder than the door as it slammed open.

"What is it this time?"

"No, no, hell no. I am not going to some fancy ball nor am I going to wear a damn dress!" Catra retorted, ignoring Adora's giggles.

"Oh come on! I'm sure it would be fun with you there! Besides you're a princess and…" Scorpia responded, earning a glare from the Magi-Cat who just sighed.

"I am not going to a dance Scorpia! We may have had those simulations about culture and shit but I have never danced for real, in my life." Catra retorted with a hint of a hiss just as Adora finally spoke up.

"Come on Catra, I bet you would look cute in a dress!"

Catra felt her fur stand on end as she heard this.

"For one I am in no ways "cute" and for two I am not the dress wearing type. You of all people should know that!"

Catra tried to ignore the how it suddenly felt hot in the room as she heard Adora's words, after all Adora was just teasing. It wasn't like she really thought she was cute.

"Oh come on, you'd be so adorable in a dress and with your hair all put up in one of those fancy bows!" Adora retorted, doubling over with laughter as Catra felt even her ears burn alongside her face.
"Shut up! Remember you're staying here another day before heading to Bright Moon and I am very capable of smothering you with your own pillow!" Catra retorted, although Adora just waved her off.

"You wouldn't and you know it. But you would totally look awesome in pigtails."

Catra growled at that particular statement before freezing the training mat under the blonde's feet, causing her to slip and fall onto her back, although this did nothing to quell the laughter.
before the dance

Catra growled as she looked through the clothes that had been laid out for her to choose from. She could hear Scorpia oohing and aahing over something in the other room of the shop.

"There is literally nothing here that I would be caught dead in." She commented, which prompted C'yla to hold up a red dress that Catra could only describe as a tacky, stapless thing that was way too short for her liking.

"Uh...Mom. I get it that you're kinda old and out of the fashion loop but I am not wearing something that looks like that." She retorted, earning a laugh from the old woman who worked in the shop.

"Your mother wore one similar to that to her first ball if I remember correctly." She stated, causing Catra to bristle slightly and glanced over at C'yla who just arched a brow at the statement.

"If I'm that old then perhaps I shouldn't be helping you get ready then." The queen retorted, hanging the dress back up.

"Ugh that is not what I meant! Look...I just meant..." Catra began, only to have a shirt thrown at her.

"You said the same thing I did at your age. I know what you meant, brat."

A comfortable silence passed over them for some time as they continued to look for something for Catra to wear. But after a while Catra couldn't help but ask.

"So my grandmother helped you with your outfit?" She asked, earning a chuckle.

"She did...I don't think she wanted to but she tagged along." C'yla answered before adding "I kinda didn't expect you to ask me for help. I mean, it's not like you need it."

Catra glanced over at her and wrapped her tail around the older female's.
"Hey, there's a lot of crap I don't understand and I'd rather you help me if I need it than someone I don't know."

She could feel her face growing hot at that confession, although she felt her mother's hand gently run through her hair.

"I'm glad you trust me so much. I know it must have been hard for you."

Catra couldn't help but smile slightly as she leaned into the touch.

She wanted to say more, to put her feelings into words but she couldn't. Not really, but C'yla knew she cared, right?

She was about to say something when Scorpia came back in dressed in a black and red dress with clashing eyeshadow.

"What the hell are you wearing?"

Catra couldn't help but ask as she started to laugh.

"Oh come on it's not that bad is it?" Scorpia asked, earning what sounded like a choked chuckle form C'yla.

"Did you really let Kit pick out your outfit? Did you at least look in the mirror after?" The queen asked, earning a confused look.

"Uh no?"

C'yla wordlessly directed her toward a mirror, which was followed by laughter from the half Scorpion.
Catra just shook her head at all of this and headed toward the rack at the far back of the store, determined to find something to wear before her mother stopped advising Scorpia.

"I look stupid."

Adora grumbled as she examined herself in the red dress that Glimmer had practically forced her into.

"No you don't. Relax would you? It's just a dance. Don't tell me that the Horde didn't have those either." Glimmer retorted, earning a sigh from the blonde.

"We had simulations but other than that, no."

Adora's answer earned a confused look from the pink haired princess.

"Wait….why did they have simulations if they never had….You know what, nevermind. Forget about the horde. Let's just try to enjoy ourselves tonight, okay?"

*I'd enjoy myself more if I knew what the fuck I was doing.*

Adora thought, although she didn't say anything. After all, Glimmer had been excited about this for whatever reason so she was going to try to make the most out of it.

At least for her sake.

A silence passed over them for a few minutes while Glimmer tried different hairstyles out on Adora—who tried her best to sit still even though she didn't see the point of all the flashy styles.

Especially since her hair was just limp and bland.

"Do you think Catra will go?" She finally asked, just to break the silence only to earn a shrug from Glimmer.
"Dunno. I mean she is a princess but I don't know if anyone invited her or not. Let's just hope if she does come, she doesn't ruin it for everyone else." The shorter girl answered, earning a sigh.

"She's not *that* bad Glimmer." Adora retorted, earning a scoff from Glimmer.

"Not that bad? Really? She's down right mean. I mean she is rude, harsh, doesn't have tact, and I don't think she knows the meaning of the word respect!"

Adora rolled her eyes as she let out a small laugh.

"True, but you don't really know her. I grew up with her, remember? I've been on both sides of her temper and of her sense of humor. I know how she ticks."

"I'm sure you do."

"What does that supposed to mean?"

"Nothing, only that she is all you have been able to talk about since we got back from Half-moon!"

"Scorpia I am going to kill you! I look like a mutant Raccoon!"

C'yra couldn't help it, she started laughing at Catra's expense as the younger Magi-Cat grabbed a rag to wipe the thick, blue makeup from around her eyes.

"I don't know, I rather like that look on you Catra." The queen retorted, earning a hiss in response.

"Let her out that gunk on you then!"
C'yra just laughed in response and leaned back onto her bed, watching as Catra fumbled with the sleeves of her jacket in an attempt to cuff them.

"Here, I can help."

To say she was surprised when Catra got up from the vanity table and walked over to her.

"You don't mind me wearing this? I mean that old lady said something about tradition and all that jazz when I picked it out." Catra caught her off guard with the question.

"Nami was an elder when my mother was a girl. Of course she is hung up on how things used to be. She said the same thing about my dress when I was fifteen." C'yra retorted earning a snicker from Catra.

"In her defense, if the dress you wore looked anything like that red, strapless, tacky thing you showed me. I'd wonder what the hell you were thinking too." Catra responded, earning a tail to the face.

"Brat." C'yra retorted with a chuckle before adding "do you need any help with the tie?" She asked, reaching to where the aforementioned item was laying on the bedside table, only for Catra to catch her arm.

"I'd rather go without it. I don't do collars or anything else around my neck."

C'yra felt as though her blood ran cold at that explanation. Had she made Catra uncomfortable in the past without meaning to? She wondered however before she could ask, Catra continued.

"When I was little….Shadow Weaver had these collars….if I did something worthy of punishment, but not a full out beating she would use those to restrict me to one place or another I would be lucky if it was just the barracks. The others got it too...Sometimes but I was more beast than human. I deserved it more….I could lose control….Couldn't be trusted."

C'yra felt the ice in her veins turn to fire as she heard that.

*Shadow Weaver....You are going to pay for that in one way or another. Even if not by my hand....but I will make sure she can prove you and everyone else wrong.*
The queen thought as she gingerly placed a hand on Catra's cheek.

"That is bullshit and you know it. That bitch is more of a beast than you are."

C'yra responded, earning a ghost of a smile.

"I know that now...But back then I wondered if maybe I deserved it for some reason." Catra replied, leaning into the touch.

A silence passed over them for a few minutes before C'yra spoke again

"Catra, I want you to enjoy tonight, Not to worry about anything you don't have to. You know you're stronger than they ever thought you would be and the fact that you were stubborn enough to survive and strong enough to endure everything that life had thrown at you."

Catra couldn't help but lean into her mother's touch at that.

It was still odd to hear anyone speak so highly of her, even if that person was her own mother.

"I'll try but I don't know anything about balls or fancy, sparkly parties." Catra retorted, earning a chuckle.

"Then let's start by getting your hair fixed up and figure out what to do to spice up that suit so that you'll really turn heads tonight....I'll try to explain all the formalities to you so it will be less awkward." C'yra grinned a bit as she said that and the gesture was contagious.

"Alright but I am keeping my hair down....I look dumb with it up." Catra responded, earning a snicker.
"You've been cursed with thick hair...it would probably take three hours to tame it anyway." C'yla responded with a small grin before adding "now come on, let's make your first dance one to remember."

"I feel like such an idiot! I shouldn't even be going! I'm not a real princess! I grew up in the Horde for crying out loud!"

Glimmer sighed as she watched Adora pace across the room not bothering to look into the mirror at one corner of the room.

"Adora, chill out. It's just makeup. Besides you're more than just a princess, you're She-Ra! Besides didn't you say that this would be a good time to recruit princess Frosta in to the rebellion?"

Glimmer said as she did her own makeup for the night.

"Besides, if Catra does come wouldn't you want to be there to talk to her or whatever? What would she even wear anyway?"

"Catra?"

The younger Magi-Cat had been half asleep as she let C'yla brush out her mane of hair and had jolted awake when C'yla spoke.

"Hm?" She responded, not feeling like ruining the calm moment.

"Have I ever scared you? I mean I…." The queen began and Catra could see the reflexions of her mother's tail lashing slightly through the air behind her like a whip.
"No. Mom, you have done things to annoy me but never anything that made me uncomfortable. You're not Shadow Weaver and I know that." Catra responded, closing her eyes as she once again relaxed under the gentle motions of the brush running through her mane of hair.

Catra was nearly half asleep when a sudden question dawned on her.

"Hey Mom? What happened to Grandma? I mean….Her name isn't inscribed in memory hall so she can't be dead."

She half expected C'yr'a to deflect the question, however without missing a beat the queen responded.

"I don't know. She left shortly after I fell pregnant with you. Said something about having a vision or some shit during a vacation on mysticor. Haven't seen her since."
"I'm not sure that I should even be here."

Scorpia said, pausing in front of the tall double doors as she fiddled with one of the earrings she wore, earning a sigh from Catra who took hold of Scorpia's arm.

"Of course you should! You've got just as much right to being here as anyone else!" She said with a sigh before gently pulling the larger girl in through the doors. "I didn't travel all this way just for you to chicken out and leave me sitting by myself all evening."

Catra couldn't deny that she too was nervous but she wasn't about to admit that. Not to anyone.

______________________________

Someone just shoot me now. I have already made a fool of myself today.

Adora thought, wishing that she could just rewind the disaster that had been her greeting to the ice princess.

I fucked everything up for Glimmer's alliance with the snow kingdom and now I have to deal with whatever this thing is between Bow and Glimmer.

She thought as she put her head down onto the table in front of her.

Tonight can't get any worse.

She thought with a groan, not even noticing when someone walked over to her table until she heard a familiar, cocky voice say

"Hey Adora."
Surprised, Adora looked up to see her childhood friend standing there, dressed in a maroon suit with the tie hanging loose around her collar, untied.

Arora couldn't help but think that the look suited her.

"Catra! I didn't know you were coming! You look good." She found herself saying only to want to smack herself for sounding so lame, however Catra just laughed.

"Jeez Adora, makeup. Really? Not only that but you've lost your edge it seems." The feline teased before adding "nice dress though, I'm surprised you agreed to wear something that showed yourself off like that."

If Catra realized what she had said, she didn't act like it as she took a seat across from her.

"Why are you sitting here alone? I was sure Sparkles and Crop top would be with you."

Catra tried not to laugh at the blush that crawled into Adora's face.

*Did I say something weird? You know what, it doesn't matter. We've been friends forever.*

She thought as she waited for Adora to answer her.

"Uh...I don't know where Glimmer went but her and Bow aren't exactly getting along for whatever reason and it doesn't help that I made Frosta mad." Adora responded after a few minutes.

"Ooh, What did you say to princess Glacier? You're usually little miss perfect on everything."

Catra suddenly found herself falling to the floor as the chair was kicked from beneath her.
"Shut up Catra."

Ignoring the stairs Catra just laughed and stood, shaking her head.

"Aw, what's wrong? Don't tell me you're going soft already?" She jeered, just as Frosta made a call for the first dance to start.

"Again, shut up Catra! Did you just come here to annoy me?" Adora grumbled, causing her to snicker.

"Maybe. But right now, why don't you join me in a dance...For old time's sake?"

Adora felt like an idiot.

Was she really doing this? Really dancing with the most complicated person in the universe? What if this was some kind of trick to humiliate her further? After all, Catra had always been the kind to take revenge.

"Would you relax? You're stiffer than Rogelio that time the heat messed up in the barracks." Catra said, a hint of a laugh on her voice as Adora found herself being twirled away from the other girl, only to be pulled back.

*When did Catra get so good at dancing?*

"You know, I still have an suspicion that you did something to the wiring when you went exploring the vents the day before." Adora retorted, forcing herself to fall into step, one hand still touching the feline’s, who just grinned.

"Hey, you didn't get cold though, did you?"
Adora felt herself blushing again for no apparent reason.

"Why do I have a feeling you just wanted an excuse to sleep in my bed?" She quipped, only to find herself caught off balance by Catra suddenly dipping her.

"Maybe I should have let you get cold then? Would that have been better?"

Catra responded, earning a look.

"Do you want me to knock you on your ass again?"

Adora said after finally catching her breath that had—for whatever reason—gotten caught in her throat although Catra just lowered herself closer before whispering

"Is that a challenge?"

Something about how Catra's voice sounded—and how her tail twisted it's way around her waist—caused her to lose whatever words that she had been planning to say and she could only follow the half-feline's dance steps as her mind raced.

*Why was she feeling weird all of a sudden?*

*Was she getting sick? Was it something she had ate?*

No sooner had the music began it had ended, leaving Adora standing with her hand still intertwined with Catra's.
"Why is catra being so….weird? I mean….Sure she can be nice but frankly she is being too nice. Adora thought as Catra placed a plate of snack food in front of her.

"I would have been back sooner but a chick with tentacle hair stole my food while hanging from one of the banisters upstairs. Like how the hell is her hair that strong?" Catra stated before glancing over at the table where Scorpia and Glimmer was sitting, the latter obviously upset by something.

"What's wrong with Glitter cloud over there? She looks pretty upset."

She added, tail wrapping around herself as she took some kind of fishy smelling thing from the plate.

"She and Bow are fighting. I don't understand what it's about but she's afraid Bow Is going to ditch her for perfuma."

She noticed how Catra's ears twitched at that name.

"Who's perfuma?"

Catra sighed as she waited for Adora to trace down anyone else that she felt that Catra should meet. But between a passive aggressive princess, one with the personality of the ice palace itself, and then there was whoever the dorky guy who kept getting ignored by the metaphorical ice princess, Catra wasn't sure if she wanted to meet any more of them.

"Is your friends always this crazy? I mean it looked like Princess icicle up her ass was about to knock the caterpillar off of seagull's face." Catra asked once they were far enough away from the
"Uh….No?" Adora began before adding "and his name is Sea Hawk."

Catra let out a laugh at that and rolled her eyes.

"Sea Hawk? You sure that's his real name? I mean honestly….The Nursery aid may have named me Catra for whatever damn reason but no one in their right mind would give a kid a dumb name like that!"

Catra dodged the light jab that was sent her way by the blonde.

"Can you at least try to be nice, for once?"

Adora asked although Catra only smirked.

"What? I am being nice! You're the one who's been weird all evening!" She quipped before sighing and added "what's going on with you? I mean you've been acting like I'm going to turn into some kind of Lykos and eat you."

Catra saw the confusion paint itself across Adora's face and facepalmed before sighing "right...Magi-Cat horror story….Point is Adora, you've been acting like I'm up to something and frankly I'm tired of it. I already have Glimmer glaring at me."

She could practically see the gears turning in her former best friend's head before the blonde finally spoke.

"Because it seems like you're making fun of me okay? All these….Comments and that thing you've been doing with your tail….Like I know it's probably a Magi-Cat thing but…" Adora began however she trailed off and Catra let out an annoyed growl.

"I am not trying to make fun of you. Hell, I'm teasing if anything. You've been all blushy and weird and it was comical to see miss perfect getting so flustered." She responded, watching as mixed
emotion came across Adora's face before the blonde just huffed and walked away.

"Ugh….When the hell did she get so damn sensitive?"

Catra groaned as she pinched the bridge of her nose as she tried to figure out what the hell had just happened.

She didn't know how long it had been when she was sitting at the table alone when someone came over to her.

" Seems like you hit a nerve."

Looking up she saw a girl–or rather woman–standing near her the table.

"Ugh….you princesses are way too sensitive! Adora wouldn't have reacted like this back in the fright zone!" Catra responded, earning a light chuckle from whoever this person was.

"Either that or she thinks you're just playing with her emotions…..and from how she is acting...she really seems to like you."

Catra felt herself choke on her own spit when she heard that.

*What? There is no way in hell! She would not like me…..not like this chick is implying anyway.*

She thought as she stood up, sighing.

"Yeah right, I think I'll just go talk to her about it. Adora may live in Brightmoon now but I've still known her longer."
Catra found Adora on a balcony the overlooked a frozen forest to the castles west.

"I'm not playing with your emotions you know although I will admit it was fun seeing you blush." Catra said, leaning against the doorway before adding "I know there is some kind of bad blood between us that has basically been brewing since we were kids but it's time we let that shit lie."

"Everything's so confusing Catra! I mean...you remember our childhood differently than I do...I mean Shadow Weaver manipulated me too but you seem to remember worse! But I don't and I know for a fact if I had seen half the shit that you claim she did....I would have gotten you out of there. I would have done something!"

Catra felt herself bristle, however she couldn't be offended.

"Shadow Weaver has been messing with our heads since we were kids. Do you think that it would be too low for her to mess with someone's memories? Look....I've been researching some things with my dad and there is a whole subgroup of dark magic rituals that can make memories change or erase. But I need you to trust me for once and let me help you."

Catra said with a sigh as she walked over to where the other girl was standing, tail lightly wrapping around the other girl's waist as Catra leaned against the railing beside Adora.

A heavy silence passed over them for a few minutes as before Catra spoke again.

"It's freezing out here and you're only in that sleeveless dress, let's go back inside before your princess friends think I killed you or something."

Adora laughed aloud at that and then glanced down at the furry appendage that had been wrapped around her waist.

"I would but I'm pretty sure I'd end up hurting you." She said, pointing to the Magi-Cats tail before adding "what is up with all this tail language anyway? That makes like the twelfth time you've put it around some part of my body."
Catra felt heat crawling into her face but she just shrugged.

"Magi-Cat thing. It's easier to say things that way."

Should I mention what the pink haired chick said? No...I'd look stupid and I'm not stupid!

"Then what are you saying? Catra I don't understand half of what you've been doing tonight and I mean I figured it was just some kind of prank to pay me back but…." Adora trailed off again as Catra unwrapped her tail from it's resting place

"It wasn't a prank. Look….There's things we definitely need to talk about…..But not right now...Not here freezing our asses off….or in my case my tail."

Holding out a hand toward Adora, she then smiled.

"Come on, let's rejoin the party."

Adora allowed Catra to lead her into the castle, her mind whirling.

She wasn't sure how to feel about everything that was happening and Catra was being so different….Lacking the harshness that she had expected but not the roughness that had made itself known even when they were little.

But even that was less now than it was then.
"So you study magic now? I thought you said magic was a tool that weak people used to seem powerful?"

Catra snorted at that and glanced toward her.

"Not everyone has the same strengths and not everyone is the Shadow Witch either. Magic is a tool...like a sword or stun baton. It only does what the wielder wills it to." Catra answered simply.

"You've changed."

Adora half expected an accusation although Catra just laughed.

"So have you. You're not the battle hardened Senior Cadet who once punched me in the face over an argument anymore either. Let's face it Adora... We're not what the Horde wanted us to be. We took separate paths to forge our own destinies."
Opposites

Come on Catra, stop being weird!

Catra thought as she let Adora spin her around on the dance floor. How many times had they done this very thing in simulation? How many times as a young teen did Catra feel her heart go into her throat at the thought of how this would feel for real? But now that it was happening, she couldn't help but think that it felt different.

Like a dream.

What would it be like if Adora was in the same position that she was? Would Adora be trying hard not to get lost in her eyes the way that Catra was? Would Adora feel as if her nerves were alive with electricity, or that her stomach was filled with crawling creatures?

Somehow Catra doubted that.

After all Catra was a mess and Adora was.....Well she Adora and Adora was perfect.

Always perfect.

Even as a child, even in the horde.

There was not any way that Adora would ever like her like that...Even if that was what the pink, hefty princess said.

But even with knowing that Catra couldn't help but wonder about what it would be like to kiss the blonde. To be the one who made Adora smile, to be the one who stuck by her side and helped her when she needed it.
Suddenly her thoughts were interrupted by Adora suddenly laughing.

"Catra? Why are you looking at me like that?"

Catra felt her whole body stiffen when she heard this and took a step back.

"Like what? I aren't looking like anything!"

She snapped, earning another chuckle.

"You're eyes are dilated and kinda sparkly! What were you thinking about?"

Adora said, the amusement still in her tone.

"Nothing! I'm not thinking about anything!"

«_______★_______»

"Come on Catra! Spill!"

"Shut up Adora!"
Adora couldn't help but laugh at the slight hint of a blush that she could see through the other girl's fur. It just felt so much like what had been between them before. But could things really return to that? They were both so different now.

But there was a softness to the feline now. Gone was the nearly cruel sense of humor, replaced only by a less harsh version that still had the familiar bite.

"Come on! We never had secrets!" Adora responded, earning a look from Catra who just smirked.

"So you think! I'm full of secrets!"

Adora opened her mouth to say something however what happened next seemed to happen in a whirlwind.

Catra's expression changed, ears twitching toward the door. The next thing Adora knew was that she was practically thrown across the room and into a table nearby, a crackling wall of ice forming around her just as one of the palace pillars came crashing down near her.
Catra growled as she glared through the smoke that filled the room, noise crinkling as she recognized the smell of ozone and the crackling of magic.

"What happened Shadow Weaver? Hordak threaten to kick you out because you lost not one but three horde soldiers?" She sneered, eyes adjusting to the suddenly dim room.

"Oh you survived? I figured you would have done the world a favor already."

The nearly silken voice caused Catra's blood to run cold, although she just bared her teeth, fur standing on end.

*There is no way I can let her get to me! This is what I trained for with the old man….This is why I spent nights locked into my own hell!* She mentally told herself as she forced her energy into her claws, orange light cutting through the ever growing blackness.

"Shut up! The only one that should do the world a favor and die already is you!"

She snarled, her voice sounding more beat than human as she charged.

And that is when she felt the magic swirling around her, filling her very core like a vortex of pure power waiting to erupt.

*What the hell? Who cares….This should be enough to buy Adora some time to get her stupid sword.*

«_________★_________»

Adora didn't know what was going on at first until she heard Netossa barking orders and the sound of fighting. However what really surprised her was the Amber colored blur that seemed to be bouncing through the tails of darkness left behind by what Adora recognized as dark magic.
What the? Who I the world could be doing that? When did Catra learn really strong magic? Come on Adora, focus! You need to get the sword....It's your job to protect everyone!

Adora thought before she slammed herself against the ice, to no prevail.

Until the ice suddenly shifted.

"I didn't know your cat had ice powers too." A monotone voice stated, causing Adora to sigh.

"I knew she could chill drinks...not this."

Catra growled as she watched Lonnie and Scorpia fight off to one corner. Stun baton against looked like a piece of a broken table.

*I wish I had brought one of the damn swords here...Even if it was my Uncle's training blade!*

She thought, jumping over one of the tentacles once again.

She could feel herself wanting to freeze in place and how her heart clenched every time she felt her claws met flesh but the anger won out every time.

"You're terrified, just like you have always been! You know you're not strong enough to stop me!"

Shadow Weaver's voice seemed to echo as the darkness finally surrounded her.

*Remember what you know....This is not real....this is merely an illusion. Memories or lies made to drive you mad.*
Catra mentally told herself as images began to play before her eyes.

«________★________»

Adora saw as the darkness consumed Catra and something clicked inside of her. Why did this feel familiar? Why was her own heart suddenly racing at the sight?

She didn't have time to ponder on it and she knew that.

"For The Honor Of Greyskull!"

She didn't even think as she felt slightly out of control, an almost primal energy forcing her toward the heart of the darkness. The darkness that was Shadow Weaver.

"Do you think you can beat me Adora? The one who raised you?"

The silky, fake sweet tone came from nowhere and everywhere all at once and then suddenly Adora felt the power rush end and it was hard to breath.

The next thing she was aware of was a hand touching her face but she was frozen, unable to move as red energy crackled around her.

"You could have achieved greatness...Had you only stayed and left alone the weak links I warned you about. But you left? For what? Love? Friendship? Don't you see....you and that before....but I guess you leave me no choice."

Adora could only close her eyes as she felt a familiar static like sensation come from the hand on her face, however suddenly she heard a scream and found herself falling to the ground.

"Now I have my answers you damn witch! You fucking used both of us! You Well guess what, I am not ever going to let anyone else hurt her!"
Adora looked up to see that standing in a glowing orb of light was a large tiger like creature, the light seemed to pulsate around her like electricity and then in an instant, the creature was nothing but a blur of light as it landed onto the Horde Commander.

"How? It takes years to…"

Adora could hear Shadow Weaver wheeze and then it dawned on her.

"Catra?"

«_________★_________»

Catra hated this.

She hated the choice.

The horde had taken her in when they could have killed her. Shadow Weaver had trained her, Lonnie was an asshole but she wasn't evil. Neither was Rogelio.

Kyle wasn't cut out for the horde.

She knew she had to fight. She knew she had to defend her people's honor….her own honor.

But the smell of fear.

The fucking smell of fear.

"So this is why you hated me….because you were afraid! You fought someone like me before."

She stated, eyes narrowing as she felt the energy channel through the mask around her face.
"You knew how strong I could be so you kept it away from me...Afraid of a rebellion. Afraid I would find out the truth!"

She could feel angry tears filling her eyes then and in a snap decision she mumbled the same words she had heard for months.

Words she knew were forbidden to her.

"memòria revelat!"

Catra saw the fabrics of reality shift for her eyes as mysticor seemed to appear around her. However this mysticor was different than the one she had visited.

"Cyra! Not like that! Spirits, girl! Are you trying to blow the place up? I thought the Masters here could teach you magic but I guess the power is useless with you."

Catra felt her eyes widen as she saw the woman who was talking. A Magi-Cat with dark gold fur, whose long, scarlet mane of hair was pulled back into a somewhat spiky ponytail and her armor bore a symbol on the chest very similar to that Catra herself wore on her belt.

"That's either Mom or my grandmother….Why am I seeing her?"

She wondered however suddenly someone giggled.

"It's pretty bad when the princess of the Magi-Cats Can't even…."

Another student began, only to scream a moment later as a lion-like cat pounced on her.

Catra found herself suddenly forced out of the vision, landing painfully on her side as Shadow Weaver's Magic overwhelmed her, cutting off her air as it tightened around her throat.
And then a beam of light came seemingly from nowhere.

And she could breath again.

"Catra! Holy shit... Are you okay? What was that?" She could hear Adora's voice but the world was already blurry.

"Give me a minute, dumbass. I think bitchzilla broke something."
Tough decisions

Chapter Summary

Or Catra does bad things for the right reasons

Catra sighed as she glanced around the room that had been given to her until a healer came—or in her case...Anu. there were others who had been hurt in the attack but none as terrible as she had even though she had seen the darkening bruises around Adora's wrists and throat.

And it made her hate herself even more

Why did I let her escape? She has hurt so many people so much.

She berated herself as she lay there, arm propped up on what felt like a block of ice.

"Hey Kitty. You okay?"

Glancing up, Catra was surprised to see the state that Scorpia was in because her eyes were bloodshot and it was obvious that she and been crying.

"I've seen worse as a toddler. How about you?"

She knew from the way that Scorpia was fiddling with eh claws that there was something going on.

Something Scorpia didn't want to talk about.

"You don't have to tell me if you don't want to."
Catra then turned her attention away from Scorpia, a heavy silence passing over them.

"Lonnie told me that because of me….My parents were sent to beast island months ago. Evidently the Horde had struck a deal….If I was given up as a Horde's man….they could keep their reign of scorpion hall. Evidently…..Everyone lied to me."

Scorpia's voice was barely more than a crackling whisper then and it made Catra's blood run cold.

"by Catullus's fang, what kind of deal is that? Lose your rune stone and daughter or lose your throne and become a slave?"

"Well I won't lie to you and we'll didn't a way to get your parents off the island. On the honor of my ancestors, I promise you that." Catra stated, voice going cold as she felt that swirling vortex of power filling her again, like a beast wanting to let loose but finding itself caged.

What is this feeling? You know what...It doesn't matter. I need to figure out how to free her parents. It's my people's fault that they are prisoners .

«________★________»

Two days.

It had been two days since the battle and Catra still couldn't shake the wild emotions that ran through her very core.

Anger at herself and at the Horde. How dare the horde hurt so many people? How dare Shadow Weaver erase and change memories, How dare she touch Adora.

How dare they lie to Scorpia and Scorpia's parents.
Catra knew that she couldn't tell her mom about this, after all it was to help king Thorell and queen Shara, who had supposedly betrayed the rebellion.

But things weren't that black and white were they?

Just like it wasn't black and white what had happened with Adora.

And Catra knew what she had to do.

She had to find the answers….Had to fill in the blanks left behind by both sides. Even it meant going to beast island, the horde's not so secret version of a death camp.

And so at midnight on the third night, Catra—with her mind made up—sneaked into the mother's study and took sword from it's place on the wall.

I hope you can forgive me for this mom...But I have to do this. I have to get more answers about what is going on with the horde....I will not fail anyone like the first rebellion did.

She thought as she crept into the vents and toward Scorpia's room, pausing only to send a mental command to Clawdeen so that the now nearly grown cat would be waiting on them by the door.

However, what she didn't expect was to find someone waiting on them alongside the pink cat.

"Catra! I heard you and Scorpia talking about going on a secret mission. Take me with you! I know I can help!"

Raiona....Shit. how did she hear us?

Catra cursed to herself as she glanced over at Scorpia.

"Load the supplies on the ship...I'll take care of this." She said, prompting the half-Scorpion to leave while Catra turned toward the younger girl.
"Rai, where we're going is too dangerous. You could end up dead." She stated bluntly before turning to follow Scorpia, only to feel a hand on her arm.

"Then that's all the more reason for me to come! I can help you! I mean if it's that dangerous..."

Catra hated being in this position but she knew from experience that Raiona wouldn't listen. That the girl would just follow behind the and hide away on board the ship until there would be no chance of turning back.

So she did the only thing she could think of doing....Breaking the girl's trust in her.

Her whole body seemed to be scream for her to stop as she whirled around, the back of her hand colliding with the preteen's face.

"I don't want you there."

She sneered and in a way it was true.

She didn't want Raiona there....Didn't want her in danger or hurt.

But she couldn't let the cub know that.

Not tonight.

So without so much as a second glance she turned and walked away, trying—and failing—to appear unphased by what she had just done.
In which Catra is injured and an very unlikely savior appears

Stop thinking about Raiona and C'yra. That is a future Catra problem….Right now you need to focus on sneaking into the island.

She thought as she glanced over at Scorpia, who seemed to look much more serious than she had ever saw her before. Catra wanted to say something, wanted to assure Scorpia that everything would work out but there was no denying the risk.

No denying the danger.

That was why she had done anything in her power to keep Raiona safe at home.

Turning her eyes back toward the horizon she could see what looked like fire shooting into the morning sky, silhouettes of creatures flying over head and looping through the flames.

Dragons.

She mentally snarled, hand gripping the hilt of the sword as she watched them.

She had heard stories of Beast island. An prison island where at best you rot in a cell. At worst you were tied to a stake for the creatures of the tropics to eat alive.

It was a death sentence, she knew that.

But she had to try, After all, it was her people's fault.
As they drew closer to the island Catra glanced over at Scorpia.

"Go below deck… the technology will be easy even for you to work. On first sign of attack….Fire back." Catra ordered, drawing her sword from the sheath, pausing only to glance down at the seemingly shimmering deep violet blade.

"Clawdeen….Let's go girl. We have people to save."

«___________★__________»

The ship was sunk, Scorpia was wounded, and the only thing that was keeping the prison guards at Bay was Clawdeen's snarling and the electrical like energy blades that Catra could form with the sword.

_Damnit. Mom said this sword was strong! This isn't strong! This isn't even stronger than the blade my uncle trained with!_

Catra thought, feeling her fur sticking to her skin from both exertion and the heat that came from the island itself.

Then she heard it, the primal snarl that had freaked her out as a kid.

_Grizzlor._

Before she could react she felt a blaster pressed to the back of her neck.

"Fool. Did you honestly think that Lord Hordak wouldn't have warned us of possible Rebellion forces coming to beast island?"
She felt herself freeze up.

_Damn that pressure point. At least if I die here...I die for something worth dying for. I just wish I could explain myself to everyone....one last time_

She thought.

Catra knew she couldn't fight like this however she felt as Clawdeen whirled them around. claws slashing out and knocking the fur covered man away from them.

"Thanks girl." She whispered, her mouth suddenly dry but with shaky hands she lifted the sword again, just in time to send a blast toward the guards who had opened fire again.

She didn't see Grizzlor lift his blaster, but she felt the laser cut through her shoulder.

Everything then seemed to happen in slow motion.

There was a towel filled the air, like that of a mountain cat followed by what could only be described as a wall of fire blasting through the forest and straight into Grizzlor.

Catra closed her eyes as the sound of screams filled her ears.

_I either die by the horde or by a dragon._

She thought, however suddenly she felt a calloused hand grip her arm.

"Leave it to C'yla the second to send her whelp into battle using half assed sword techniques."
The feminine voice was familiar somehow, causing her to open her eyes only to see a large, scar
covered Magi-Cat with long, graying maroon hair and pastel yellow fur. Even with her injury Catra
forced herself to move, claws glowing as she lashed at the woman, who easily dodged.

"Who the hell are you and how do you know my mom?" She demanded, eyes landing on the horde
symbol on the older Magi-Cat's chest.

The woman just laughed, tail flicking behind her.

"So much like C'yra….Yet so clueless." The elder sneered, although catra could see it in her eyes.

A almost mischievous sparkle.

*She's baiting me.*

Catra realized, stopping the attack.

However he rears twitched toward the prison compound, the sound of many foot soldiers coming
toward them.

And suddenly the older magicat was back beside her, one hand pressing painfully on her injured
arm, causing her to release the sword.

"Sorry cub, but the sword is practically crying after deflecting all of those lasers. It's time to end
this!"

Catra watched in amazement as the woman lifted the sword into the air single handedly, it's blade
glowing crimson and pulsating and then with what could only be described as a roar, she brought it
down in a sideways slashing motion, but instead of a single energy blade being produced from the
blade there came a whirlwind of energy that cracked the Earth and seemingly spread out as it
gained speed.
"What the…How?" Catra found herself stammering as she watched in both amazement and horror as the last destroyed all it touched.

"You and your friends need a healer…I'll explain later."
The True Owner Of The Great Sword

Chapter Summary

Catra finds out that just because you think you know the truth...it doesn't mean you do.

Catra glanced over at Scorpia who was currently sleeping beneath a heavy fur blanket then back at the Magi-Cat that had saved them.

"Just who are you and why are you helping us? I mean...You're a Horde…" she began, only to be cut off by a snort.

"I'm not with the horde dumbass. When you live by what you can steal, catch, or trade you make due." The woman retorted before handing a cup of some kind of lumpy stew to her before adding

"They call me Prima but...none of us go by our actual names in order to protect our families if we were to be caught. Beast island is our base because although it is Horde owned...It is the safest place from the horde."

Catra watched as the elder Magi-Cat sat near Clawdeen, a hand running over the bandages that covered her.

"You can speak to her, yes?"

Catra wanted to say anything but the truth however in the light of the crackling fire Catra could see curiosity on her face.

"Yeah...Found her as a cub after the Horde killed her mother. Scorpia and Raiona convinced C'yra to let us keep her." Catra answered before taking a tentative sip of the concoction.

"You do not call her mother?"
Prima's question caused Catra to freeze, the events of the last twenty four hours playing over in her mind.

"Why should I? It's not like I'll have a place to go when I get back. I hit my sister and stole that sacred hunk of shit you call a sword. She'll never forgive me."

Suddenly a hard grip at the back of her neck caused her to help in pain—although the hand restraining her loosened instantly.

"I know C'yla...She will be angry but she is not the kind to kick her own child out." Prima hissed before forcing Catra to look at her.

"Surely she never has given you a reason to doubt her?"

Catra hated looking into the nearly chocolate eyes of this woman, who's rough demeanor was not reflected in her gaze.

No, her eyes seemed gentle.

So unlike anything she would expect on this island.

"No but...I barely know her. I mean...What if she thinks I am still loyal to the horde? What if...." Tears spilled over then and Catra hated herself for it but found she was unable to stop.

"The horde?"

Prima said quizzically, hand moving from Catra's face to rest heavily on her back.

"We were raised by the Horde."
Catra hadn't even heard Scorpia wake up.

"So D'ryliuth fell?"

Prima breathed before closing her eyes.

"Damn it I should have been there!"

The suddenly exclamation caused Catra to flinch away from her, however she felt her fear melt into something else when she saw the obvious mix of hurt and anger on the older woman's face.

Catra awoke later that night to the sound of something making a strange cooing noise near her, only to see a reddish brown creature that kinda looked like the mix of a koala and an owl with brightly colored ear like flaps along it's head sitting on her chest.

"Holy shit! What the hell is that thing?"

She yelled, jumping into the air. Startlin the animal and earning laughter from not only Prima but man in red armor and dark hair that sat near the fire outside the tiny hut.

"Sorry about that...I should have kept a better eye on him." The man said, holding an arm out and whistling, causing the creature to fly over and land on his arm.

"Relax. It's a Kowl. They're harmless unless you want to trick someone or have a note to carry." Prima stated before returning her attention to what she was drawing in the dirt.
"My name's Catra and you still haven't explained anything and I don't know rather or not you'll kill us! I mean I saw what you did with that sword and…" Catra trailed off, eyes growing wide.

"Wait...was that the sword's full power? Then you're…"

Prima stood, eyes narrowed as she picked up the sword, causing Catra's blood to run cold. However the woman didn't move to attack her and instead looked down at the blade.

"No, it's full power would have probably destroyed the compound and everyone in it and yes...I am C'ya Azmer, the first of her name of the Royal family of D'ryliuth."

«______★______»

My grandmother...

Catra felt as though her brain was going to turn to mush as she repeated those words in her mind. C'ya's own tales of her mother replying over and over in her brain.

"You beat your kids and forced them to submit to you! You sentenced your own husband to die! You sentenced people from your own Royal guard to death just because...." She suddenly erupted, only to be cut off by a rather hard shove onto the ground.

"I didn't beat my kids...I never left a mark and if you wanted to save someone wouldn't you do whatever the hell it took to get them to comply? Yes I had people executed...including the man I thought was my soulmate! But do you know why? No! Because I never wanted my daughter to take my place! I never wanted…"

Catra had heard enough and in an instant she had charged at the woman, only to feel a magical blast hit her in the chest, knocking her back.
But Catra wasn't done

"Shut up! Mom has scars from what you did when she refused to fight you!"

She snarled but then she saw the anger fade, replaced with a look that could only be described as shock.

"I….What?"

The man suddenly stood, a hand on the older Magi-Cat's arm.

"Prima...I remember the civil uprising….I'm sure you didn't mean...." he began, only to earn a hiss.

"What monster hurts their own kid like that? You have a daughter....Tell me....Would you ever lay a hand on her?"

Catra couldn't believe what she was hearing. All this time she had imagined C'yra the first as a tyrant and abuser like Shadow Weaver had been but now, seeing this she began to wonder.

"Didn't you smell the blood?" Catra snapped, earning a sigh from the woman who glanced over at her.

"No. I...Our race value our high senses but I....I was born defective and had my siblings survived infancy...I would not have ruled."

Catra growled at that however the man sighed and shook his head.
"Magi-Cats are a proud race derived from warrior clans that were run by feudal leaders...or Lords and ladies if you will. Your grandmother was born with a condition called Anosmia. The inability to smell and for a cat when she was a cub...That was weakness."

«____★____»

Catra woke up alone and could see the man in red armor standing off to the side talking to Scorpia but Prima or C'yla the first or whoever was nowhere to be seen.

*That's fair...I did accuse her of being another Shadow Weaver last night.*

She thought, taking a seat by Clawdeen who was knowing on a large bone.

"I really fucked up this time huh? I insulted the one person who could probably teach me how to do that blast thing. I guess I'm just stuck here without even..." She muttered, burying her face into the lion's mane, only to hear a light chuckle.

"I'm not that mean kid. You deserve living with your family....even if your mom is going to beat your ass when you get home."

Looking up she saw the older Magicat approaching, trailed by a dragon.

"But first you will need to learn to harness your powers...Be it the freeze fire in its purest forms or the fauna communication powers you have. In the meantime I'll send some of our own troops inside the compound to make sure no execution orders are carried out on the Scorpions of Crimson Castle."

Catra wanted to protest but remembered all too well how Shadow Weaver had handled that sort of thing...and C'yla had described the woman in front of her as very similar so she just nodded.

Only to feel a warm brush of healing magic a second later.

"Not right now however. Mi....uhm...Red Knight has something he wants us to see first and you
obviously need food since you ate so little last night."
C'yra felt sick.

*Beast Island? Why the hell did she go to beast island alone? Does she have a death wish? Why didn't she say something? Why didn't she...*

C'yra felt a mix of emotions running through her mind as tears silently flowed down her face.

"Tora...Please be able to astral project to her....I can't lose her again."

She whispered, earning a sigh from Any who gripped her arm.

"I have the feeling that the girl will be fine. She is strong after all...just like you were."

«________★________»

Catra's whole body hurt as she reflected another freezefire using the sword, which had heated up to nearly unbearable proportions due to the fire.

"How is this thing not a puddle of goo?"

Catra gasped after a while, the heat and exhaustion setting in, although this only earned a chuckle from Peima who just sighed.

"When Cattulas enlisted the mages on mysticor to help him forge a blade worthy to protect all of the Magi-Cat tribes...he chose Adamant, the hardest material in the world. It is nearly indestructible and can cut through nearly anything." Prima answered, sending an ice beam that froze the blade.

"Time to take a break and let it cool."
Prima noticed the way Catra flinched whenever they were close to each other, the way her ears shrankled around nervously as if they were radars trying to find her. What had C'yra told her? Had she really hurt her youngest that much?

Sighing Prima decided to just bite the bullet.

"Catra...does your mother ever talk about her father?"

She asked. Earning a scoff from the teen who glanced over at her.

"You mean the one you killed?"

Prima sighed then and shook her head.

"Yes...But I doubt she would have made a very different choice if she was trying to protect you or Raiona." The elder Magi-Cat responded, even though she hated how cold her voice sounded.

*Should I tell her? It is her history after all but...but I kept C'yra from it...kept her from knowing. It was better drive her away from D'ryliuth that. Have her in danger...But was that really such a good idea? She still took the throne...she still put herself in danger.*

"Would you have kept someone alive after they forced your child to go beyond their power? Would you not have blamed the man who caused the death of his own son? Who committed high treason in order to try to raise to power to drive D'ryliuth into the clutches of the one thing that would have wiped our freedom from us? What would you have done if you were terrified that your early born child could be destroyed in the name of power?"

She began, her words turning more and more into a snarl as she spoke.
"Wait...He wanted to join the horde? I thought that your son killed himself! C'yra told me that herself! She told me...."

Prima felt herself chuckle as she glanced up at the smoke covered skies.

"I told C'yra that he did...it was much easier that way. I would rather her hate me than to lose sleep over fear. Perhaps I was selfish however I just wanted her safe. If she had ran off alone, it would have been easy for them to Target her."

She could see the confusion on her granddaughter's face, which quickly twisted into a snarl.

"So you lied to her? What kind of mother are you?"

She didn't think as she whirled and brought her forearm across the girl's chest, knocking her back.

"Would you call that abusive? Would you have told her that her own brother had died because of the very sword that was the emblem of her legacy? The same sword that is currently frozen?"

She snarled and instantly regretted it when she saw fear flash across her face.

"She has scars...Like I do...If you didn't rip the blood out of her then who did?" Catra responded and Prima felt her blood freeze in her veins.

"Scars? Did I ever actually...There isn't any sign the girl is lying. Had one of Leontios' men tried to seek vengeance on me by turning her against me?"

"I don't deny that I wasn't emotionally there after Diata passed from the fever but....I never struck her with anything and if I ever did....I hope one of these beasts strike me dead here."
She doesn't seem like she's lying...she doesn't even smell like a lie. But I don't think that mom lied either and she was hurt when she told me about it.

Catra thought as she closed her eyes and leaned back against the tree, watching the woman shadow spar. She wondered how the woman could handle the heat. As it was burning her up even without the jacket that Tora had given her.

She can communicate with more than cats....I mean she has a dragon of all things! I love having Clawdeen but it would be so cool to have something that could breathe fire or maybe even electricity!

She thought as she leaned back, her muscles protesting as she tried to relax.

"How did you befriend a dragon anyway? In the horde there was stories of our...their strongest warriors being killed by daring to venture out of the compound here."

She asked after a few minutes, earning a sigh.

"Tell me...have you talked to any other creatures besides your mountain cat? You may find that if you really want to convey something to something, that you can."

The former queen responded before stretching and adding

"I need to go into the village. Grab your sword and I'll show you around...Maybe my second and the Beast King could help you unlock that communication power of yours."

"Beast King? Village? Okay....I know monsters rule here but a village? Of what?"

catra asked, rushing to get the sword.

"The natives of the island and those like the red knight who escaped the compound."
Catra sighed as she lay in a gnarled tree, listening to the bustle of life go on beneath her. She could hear Scorpia and The man in red armor discussing something off to one side, the sound of magic crackling around him as he spoke of a fight he had with some kind of slithering dragon inside the compound.

_They sneak in and out of the Horde's toughest base? How? This prison is supposed to be the most secure._

Glancing down at a group of small kids playing with a leather ball, she sighed.

_And how can people turn a place that holds so much pain into a home? I understand the natives because they lived here before the Horde took control but the red knight guy, the half blind lizard dude who is tanning leather, and the others here who were obviously prisoners? How can they be content living here? To raise a family here?_

She wondered, her mind drifting to the fright zone.

Would she had been content to move back there if she had a choice?

Would she had been content even living _near_ there after all that had happened?

It wasn't a prison...It had been home. But why was she so unsure?

"Catra! Come here a second! J'Milla and I need some help with the hunt!"

Prima's voice called, causing her to sigh.

"Hunt? Hunt what? Do you people eat dragons?"
She questioned, flipping out of the tree and landing on her feet, earning an eye roll from her grandmother.

"Of course not. There are boar on this island...amongst other creatures. You want training, put your nose and reflexes to work...and you can take that cotton candy cat with you."

Catra hissed at that.

"Her names Clawdeen and maybe if you didn't go around barking orders I may consider…" she began, earning a smirk.

"You have been napping all day since training so it's either you help hunt a boar for dinner or you can help me fish for it."

«____★_____»

"Catra's such an idiot. I mean….ugh. Beast island? Why in the stars would she want to go to beast island? I mean no one returns from there! It's basically an execution camp!"

Adora grumbled as she loaded supplies into her backpack, much to the confusion of Swift Wind.

"Hate to say it but it sounds like your friend has a death wish but since you're the one who gave me these awesome wings to begin with I guess I could help you."

Adora could feel her blood pressure going up as she listened to the alicorn talk.

"Tell me, how on Earth is a winged unicorn going to be better at taking me to Beast Island than...I don't know...A Boat?" She retorted, earning a snort and a feathery wing to the face as the horse stretched out to his full wingspan.

"Hello ...I can fly? Get you there quicker? Besides, if Glitter comes we can do aerial attacks!"
Pushing the wing out of her face she turned her attention back to packing.

_Great. My former best friend put herself in danger like a dumbass and now I have a horse that wants to go to beast island because he wants to be a part of an air strike! Is everyone I know crazy?_

«______★______»

Prima sighed as she watched Catra from a distance.

_How the hell does she not know how to track? Hasn't C'yra not taught her anything? Doesn't seem likely...C'yra loved to hunt._

She thought, being careful to conceal herself in the leaves as she waited, watching the teen who was trying to catch a trail of the boar they had been after for the past hour.

She wasn't sure how long she had sat there, watching both Catra and Clawdeen sniff around the woods when suddenly Catra let out a scream and jumped backward a few meters, every hair on her body standing on end and ears folding down.

Instantly Prima was by her side, glancing around.

"What is it? horde troopers?" She asked, watching as Catra seemed to deflate

"Uh...That rock over there moved."

Arching a brow Prima glanced over to where Catra was pointing only to see a very large tortoise shell.

_She doesn't know what a turtle is?_

The former queen wondered.
'I know it sounds crazy but I had just transformed and was sniffing around when that rock just started to walk away!' Catra began and Prima couldn't help it, she started laughing.

"Cub...I don't know what the horde taught or didn't teach but that is not a rock."

She said, earning a confused look.

"Uh...It's not?"

Prima shook her head and suddenly the thin headband she wore began to glow and Catra saw it seemingly grow a head and legs.

"Whoa....Okay....what the fuck is that?"

She questioned, backing up slightly.

"It's a tortoise...The rock as you called it was it's shell. He said you woke him up and he was going to move out of your way because you almost stepped on him twice." Prima responded, still snickering.

Later that night Catra rode Clawdeen into the forest, the embarrassment of not only failing to kill the largest boar but also for being afraid of a slow moving creature weighing heavily on her mind.

"Come on...the old croon said that the nesting grounds was up near that creepy skeleton mountain. If I can earn a second familiar... especially if it is a full grown dragon she'll have to respect me! I mean of all the nerve to tell J'milla about that damn rock thing!'"
Clawdeen grumbled under her causing her to roll her eyes.

"Yes I know that was a tortoise! Ugh...Don't you start."

Silence passed over them for a while as the air began to smell heavily of sulfur and smoke.

"Ugh...I didn't know dragon stunk this badly."

The dragon guarding the mountain was an impressive female with silver scales and bright blue eyes, both which seemed to glow under the moons that was lighting the sky that night.

"Whoa...you're cool." Catra muttered as she slowly walked toward the creature, which turned it's head to look her direction but made no real move to take a step.

_Come on Catra, you can do this. You learned how to understand Clawdeen and you didn't even want to keep her at first. This is a dragon! This thing could eat Shadow Weaver and Hordak before they could even think to attack! Half Moon wouldn't be in any sort of danger then!_

She thought as she tried to focus on the mask's powers, feeling the energy crackling around her forehead as she did so.

However the only thing her projected thoughts earned her was a snort of hot smoke full in the face as the dragon stood and took to the sky.

Coughing, Catra tried to wipe the stinking shoot from her face before she glared up at the shimmering creature that was now far up ahead.

"Yeah well, who needs you! Asshole!"
She could hear the rumble from Clawdeen from nearby and didn't need her powers to know that the big cat was laughing at her.

"Ugh...Shut up. I need to go find me a stream or something to wash this stinking shit off!"

As if to lead her, Clawdeen stood then and nudged her in a direction to the west of the mountain and farther away from the village.

"Ugh...no offense Clawdeen but you're not exactly a familiar. I mean I didn't do anything to earn you...I just found you as a baby and the connection just happened. I mean...Mom had Ghost, the white fang variation of the snow wolves of the kingdom of snows and my grandma has a fucking dragon now! She had a Scrackle Bird when my mom was a kid! They had to prove themselves to earn their trust!"

Catra growled, kicking a rock into the forest, only to earn a nuzzle and purr from Clawdeen.

"I know you like to help me girl but it's not the same. I mean...you chose to stay with me because we were the only family you had left. It's different...I don't like taking you into battle...I'm afraid you'll be hurt."

If it had been anywhere else, Catra wouldn't have let herself get so sentimental, however this was Clawdeen and they were alone so...like so many times before...she allowed herself to tell the large cat everything.

«______★______»

The air near the stream felt as though it was crackling with energy, the wind blowing salty sea air inland and even with the smell of shoot overpowering her sense of smell, Catra could smell rain.
"Looks like we'll have to call it a night early and try again tomorrow." She told Clawdeen who just snorted in irritation as she bent to drink from the stream.

_Why so I feel like that cat knows something?_

She thought as she started to scrub the shoot from her fur.

She was so lost in thought that when her mind filled with a strange, masculine voice filled her mind

"You seek to protect the ones you love."

Staggering to her feet, Catra drew her sword.

"Who's there? Who are you? Show yourself!"

A sudden clap of thunder resounded above her.

"You seek power... You seek to prove yourself. Yet you lack confidence and you hold pain in the deepest places of your heart. Tell me... why do you seek power? Why do you seek a familiar when you have a mountain cat of great strength?"

The voice asked again Catra growled.

"Get out of my head! It's none of your business why I want power!"

Another clap of thunder sounded as the wind picked up as the questions kept repeating themselves.

Finally Catra had enough
"Fine! You want to know? It's because I don't want to lose anyone I love! I never was anyone! I never had anyone but one person no matter what I did! But now….Now I have people I want to protect and I'll be damned if I'll let anyone hurt them!"

As she said this, two things happened. The clouds seemed to drop onto the ground from the sky, the winds sweeping around her so fast that it burned her lungs and the sword that she had drawn began to pulsate with a red light.

_Peace child...I am no threat...I am called Silver Storm._
Catra wasn't sure how to feel about the silver furred creature in front of her. His eyes were a stormy color, not quite blue but not exactly violet either and his mane was as black as night.

"What...You caused the storm? How...I mean you're…"

She almost dropped her sword in shock, causing the magnificent creature to laugh.

"I am no dragon no...But I am born of the meteor showers on an island west of here. Then men came and took anyone they could catch. I was just a foal then...barely off my mother's milk when I too was taken. The she-cat you were with earlier and the man called Micah rescued me. And now...I am offering my services to someone who has lost as much as I to those bat wing wearing fiends."

The creature said, spreading his great wings to show off the dark grey and pink accents to his wings.

"I figured we could help each other since we both want the same things. To protect and save those dear to us."

Catra wanted to argue. After all, what would Adora think if she saw her riding on a flying horse? But she had not only seen but felt his power and could only imagine that he wouldn't mind using that power on Hordak and Shadow Weaver.

"Fine but there is one thing….The Horde isn't all evil. Just the ones ruling it. I should know...I was taken there as a baby and raised to be a soldier. There are good people behind the lines as well as bad. It was join or die." She said, earning a nod from Silver Storm.

"I see...So these Rulers....Do you wish to defeat them?"
He questioned as he walked over, wings still spread, making him look a bit intimidating until he was near her, then he nudged her.

"Of course I do! Hordak especially! He nearly killed my parents! He did kill my uncle! I know the scorpions of Scorpion hill palace were the ones in that battle but it was hordaks command! They just wanted to remain free." She said, voice becoming softer as she finished.

The Pegasus let out a whinny then, rearing up onto his mind legs, static dancing around him and Catra jumped back, only for the creature to walk over to her.

"Get on...you can tell me everything as I make my rounds...I feel a strange energy near here."

Catra glanced over at Clawdeen who just grunted an affirmation before heading toward the village.

«_______★_______»

Upon returning to the village catra recognized instantly what the energy he felt was.

"You can feel that small of a change?"

She asked the creature, earning a snort.

"I'm a nature spirit...Why are you surprised?"

The tanks wasn't like anything that Catra had ever seen the Horde use, lasers besides explosives and the smell of ozone filled the air.

"Hang on tight….I'm putting an end to this before anyone is killed!"
Storm said, his wings flapping downward with such force that it sounded like a thunder clap as lightning shot toward the tanks, causing them to short circuit.

"Wow...Okay...For a over glorified horse you're pretty strong."

Yes couldn’t believe what she was seeing...not could she believe that Catra had snuck off on her own without telling anyone just because she had wanted to find herself a familiar! She felt like growling but she didn’t.

Calm down...She's just a kid and stars know you didn't your fair share of dumb shit at that age.

She thought as Catra and the winged horse landed in front of her.

"What in the name of Tri-Star system were you thinking? Do you know how worried everyone was when they woke up and you were nowhere to be seen?"

She asked, watching as the teenager seemed to deflate.

"I can explain everything, just stop yelling."

Catra responded, earning a sigh.

"Fine but this better be good."

"So this is why you snuck off alone? With a sword you could only half use? Because you felt insulted by a joke? Catra, you could have been seen by a horde spy or killed by one thing or
another! Were you not thinking?"

Prima growled as she grabbed Catra the arm, pulling her inside and away from all the shouting that was coming from the villagers. She could see the fear on the teen's face but Prima didn't care. Not right now.

"If that horse you managed to catch didn't stir up storms this whole place would have burned down! Do you have any idea what I thought when I couldn't find you? Do you think I want to have my first reunion with my daughter be because you got yourself killed like a dumb ass?"

Then Prima noticed the way the girl's eyes had clouded over, the way the girl was barely able to stop shaking and she cursed herself for not noticing sooner.

_Damnit, who in the name of the first ones hurt you so badly that getting yelled at causes this reaction?_

She wondered, thinking back to how the girl had stiffened whenever they were training.

"Hey...look at me."

Gingerly the elder feline lifted the girl's face to get her to look up.

"It's impressive that you formed a mind link with such a strong creature. I just wish you had told me before I woke up to find you missing and Horde troopers storming the place." She began, however as soon as she had let go of the girl, she bolted.

"You know it's your own damn fault...grabbing her like that."

She heard her dragon grumble from outside, earning a hiss.
"Shut up, smoke breath."

«________★________»

Catra ran and she didn't stop running until she was well away from the village.

"Stupid C'yla...Prima...Whatever the hell her name is."

She grumbled, drawing her knees to her chest and closing her eyes.

"She was worried."

Catra glared up at the silver creature and took a swipe at him with her claws, only to have a cloud from over her, pelting her with rain.

"You're pretty dense...trying to attack the prince of the pegasi."

The winged horse telekinetically said

She could practically hear the amusement in his voice.

"Are you okay?"

Catra hissed and turned away from him, closing her eyes as she tried to block out the creature's presence.

"Catra?...You know what...Nevermind. I will go get that mountain cat. At least you seem to trust her."
The raincloud vanished as he took to the sky, leaving the younger Magi-Cat with her thoughts.

"This isn't ethical!"

"Can you shut up spike? Like seriously...I do not care if it's right or not. I want to know what the hell is going on with that girl and I know for a fact that she isn't going to tell me jack!" Prima snarled as she lay crystals of different sizes and colors into a circle.

"Do you think the girl will ever trust you like this?"

"Do you think she will ever trust me anyway? C'yla told her I beat her! I know I wasn't mother of the year but Cattulas's fang! I never beat her!"

Prima snarled before stepping inside the circle, an aura forming around her and dancing off of the stones.

Her eyes glowed blue—which was a stark difference to the usual brown—and a primal yowl sounded from her throat.
"Are you sure that confronting her would be a good idea? I mean it is obvious that she has been crying and it's not like that mountain cat of hers was going to let you near her if it wasn't for that horse."

Prima growled as she drove her fist toward the man, only for him to parry the blow.

"I swear if you and that overgrown lizard don't mind your own business! I'm going to take your fancy armor and choke him on it!" She said, earning a laugh.

"Hey, remember I'm younger than you! I think I could take you on!"

He stated, dodging a sweeping kick from the feline.

"Just because your my daughter's age doesn't mean jack shit and you know it!"

Catra woke up in an unfamiliar room, covered by blankets made of dark fur and on a bed much softer than the mat she had been given the day before.

*How did I get here? I remember the attack on the village and....*

She felt bile rise in her throat as memories of the previous night came rushing back.

Shit...*She is going to be so mad.*

She thought the familiar sense of dread settling like lead in the pit of her stomach.

Glancing around she saw that her sword was leaned against the far wall and that Clawdeen was
curled up on the floor by the window, basking in the sunlight.

"I see you're awake. You okay? You were pretty soaked when I found you last night and sea breezes aren't non the warmest." The sudden voice caused her to nearly jump out of her skin—and prompted Clawdeen to raise her head up to look at the doorway where the former Magi-Cat Queen stood.

"Prima, About last night….I didn't…"

Catra began to stammer, suddenly feeling like a kitten under Shadow Weaver's gaze once again. However Prima just shook her head.

"Don't. We both screwed up last night. I should not have grabbed you but you had us worried and I didn't want to scold you in front of everyone. I'm sorry I frightened you, that was not my intention."

Catra could barely believe what she was hearing as the older woman came over and took a seat beside her on the bed. Was Prima really apologizing? Hadn't C'ryra said that she hadn't been attentive? That she had reigned with an iron paw?

"You thought I was going to strike you last night? Was that why you panicked?" Prima's voice cut her from her thoughts and caused her to glance away.

She wanted to like but she knew that would probably land her in more trouble so she just nodded, not trusting her words.

A heavy silence fell over the room then as if neither of them was sure what to say. But then Prima spoke again, her voice much gentler than Catra had imagined being possible.

"I didn't execute all those people from the Royal guard merely because they angered me, kitten. Nor was I strict with C'ryra because i wanted to be. What mother would want to isolate her child? What mother would want to be so bogged down with work that she didn't spend any time with her family?"
"Then why?" Catra asked, trying not to sound accusing when she already knew that her grandmother had a bad temper.

"Because I wanted to keep her safe. You see Catra….C'yra was an accident and since I did not know I was pregnant, I did not take any precautions and so she was born early. The doctors even told us that she would not live past her first birthday."

Catra felt her eyes widen at that as she involuntarily turned to face her grandmother.

"Not calling you a liar or anything but that's kinda hard to believe." She stated, earning a chuckle.

"Who would believe it? She grew like a weed and tried to out match her sister and brother….it only seemed to get worse as her father...Leontios...Turned further and further toward greed and power then Diata took Ill and then Ryion's……accident happened. Things were too much...For both her and I, although I should have pushed through for her."

Catra could hear Prima's voice break when she began talking about her other two children and without thinking, she reached to put a hand on the woman's arm.

"What happened? I mean….you said you lied to my mom. What really happened? I mean….if it isn't that hard to talk about?"

Catra asked, flinching when she saw Prima's hand reach toward her, only to feel it gingerly rest on her head.

"He was a lot like you actually. Stubborn, reckless. It was something that he and C'yra had in common as children but it was also what made Leo seek to petition me off the throne by replacing me with my son. After all, what good was a warrior with only half her senses? But Ryion wasn't strong enough to best me in combat….so Leo decided to test out a forbidden spell….one that is supposed to give power."

Prima paused then and closed her eyes, allowing her hand to drop down on Catra's shoulder, pulling her slightly closer.
"He went mad with power. The pure dark magic was magnified by the Adamant of the Crimson Fang's blade and it made him nearly unstoppable.....it was senseless slaughter and the only option I had was to...."

Catra watched as the supposedly emotionless woman broke into tears—which was answer enough.

"Hey...sounds to me like your husband was at fault. Not you."

Catra tried to comfort her, earning a sigh.

"He didn't tell me he was behind it until later....When he pitched the idea of turning C'yra over to Hordak in exchange for our freedom. That was when I forbade her from going anywhere without me or Anu. Then he and that greasy puma...Nahuel came before me demanding that I step down...Going as far as attacking me. Nahuel escaped via optical magic tricks....Leo...As is traditional law....was charged with high treason and sentenced to death by my own blade. I doubt C'yra will ever forgive me over that....she so opposed such harsh sentences."

Catra's mind was spinning as she listened to the rest of her grandmother's story.

*Nahuel? Wasn't that the name of the man who used dark magic to.... she cut the thought off before she had time to dwell on it.*

"I think I know what happened to make C'yra think you hated her because Naheul and a panther named Cain attacked me via magic since I was contaminated by the horde....and for the record....They aren't no longer of this world. I think Mom would understand what happened if you told her."
With talk of striking the compound dominating most of the village, Catra needed to get away from it as everything was setting warning bells off in her head. She knew it was stupid, the Horde had no power over her and had lied to her for nearly her whole life but at one point they were family.

She didn't want to think about it so she turned to training with the dark haired man that went only by the color of his clothing, although Prima seemed to nearly call him by another name.

"Come on! Is that all you have?" She jeered after dodging a volley of magical blasts, earning a sigh.

"Are you even taking this seriously?" He responded, smirking.

The banter reminded her of her own father.

"Ah shut up, old man. I can and will wipe the floor with you!" She responded, aiming a ball of energy toward him, only to have him deflect it with the staff in his hand.

"Best you can do kid?"

She laughed as she sent another wave of energy toward him, targeting then start, which began to freeze after some time.

"Oh shut up!"
minded. However upon the sound of a horn being blown she stopped, turning toward the man who
suddenly looked grim.

"Catra, I need you to trust me...Your grandmother and I would never let anything happen to you but
we're going to need disguises....and lucky for us...it won't be that hard to steal three horde
uniforms."

«________★________»

"There is a storm brewing up ahead! I don't know if I can fly through it!"

"You have to try!"

Cyra felt sick to her stomach—and not because of the waves.

Was Catra alright? What if she had been killed? What if?

She was so lost in thought that she didn't notice that the horse had landed back in deck until she
heard a help from Amur, who had been blown backward into an incoming wave.

"Tell your nephew to have some class!"

The alicorn said with a snort toward Amur, earning a sigh from C'ya.

"I've tried...what is going on up ahead?"

She asked, earning what could only be described as a shrug from Swift Wind.
"A storm of some kind. I can feel some kind of magic as well but I can't make it out." He answered honestly before sighing "whatever is making that much collective power...it's strong."

«________★________»

Catra couldn't believe her eyes as she watched the whole rooms freeze as a sky blue magic engulfed them. It was so much like the magic Shadow Weaver used as a restraint during her 'punishments' but this time she knew that she would not be hurt.

"Scorpia and the others have accessed the main control room. Catra...You go with him and release as many of the Prisoners as you can, give me the sword...I can keep these scumbags busy." Prima said, tail wrapping around her waist like a belt.

"Alright...fine. just don't break it. I don't want mom to have a reason to want to completely kill me." Catra responded tossing her the sword before rushing to follow the older man.

"When I say now...I need you to channel pure magic into what I'm about to throw...it should try every system this death trap." He instructed, confusing Catra as he produced a Veil of strange blue powder from inside his armor.

However despite this she obeyed and suddenly a sound like a bomb exploding filled the room, followed by doors falling off their hinges. Catra, however couldn't focus as her head felt as though it would split in two and she fell to her knees, overwhelmed.

"Note to self...Never tell a nervous teenager to do that again." She heard Him mutter as he gently took her by the arm, pulling her up and she hurt too much to care.

Then the pain suddenly stopped as he made a strange motion with his hand in front of her.

"Uh...What was that?"

She questioned, earning a smirk.
"Obviously not the same kind of magic you cats use! Come on, I'll explain later...after we free these people."

"What is that?"

Adora gasped as she drew her sword, seeing something seeming to glow as it darted over the island, which could barely be seen through clouds and what looked like smoke.

"I don't know but I feel a really strong presence."

C’yra answered, hand going to the hilt of the blade she wore strapped to her back before adding "Amur! Stop gawking at She-Ra's backside and force us on ahead before I kick your ass myself!"

Catra felt sick to her stomach when she opened one of the darkest cells in the prison, the stench hitting her before her eyes could even adjust to the light.

"Hey Red! I need someone over here stat! I...I don't even recognize half these smells." She said, trying hard not to gag as she turned her back from the inside of the cell, only for Prima to brush past her.

"Sometimes my birth defect is a gift from the stars themselves." She commented before letting out a curse "what in the seven levels of frilly hell did they do to you? Micah, get your ass in here and see if you can heal him before Scorpia sees this. No need to give that poor soul nightmares….Catra you keep yourself turned around as well. You shouldn't see it neither!"
It all happened so fast that Catra didn't even realize what was going on at first. Everything was just the sound of shouting and boots and the smell of a plasma gun being charged.

"Put all weapons down or this one's brains are going to be on the wall."

A reptilian hissed, tongue flickering from his red maw between words.

"Fine... We surrender... Just don't hurt her." She spoke first, hearing a hiss from her grandmother behind her, however as she walked forward she focused on the spell she had used on shadow weaver, easily seeing flashes of riches in the man's brain.

*Life is worth more than gold....I get that now. Most of the horde gets it. But some....some are as twisted as Hordak.*

She thought bitterly as she summoned her magic into the man's mind, imagining it to be like an eraser, cleaning everything in it's path.

Opening her eyes she saw Scorpia sank to the ground obviously terrified.

"Prima! More are coming! Throw me the sword!"

She called, only to be handed the weapon a second later.

"Your father would kill you for using dark magic." She stated, earning a sigh.
"The man only cared about his own greed, He isn't losing much. He was raised as a soldier...had no one to care about....only Hordak and money." Catra answered, feeling a hand rest between her ears before Prima went back to Micah's side.

"Catra, what?" Scorpia began, only for the feline to step in front of her.

"The horde has reinforcements coming this way! I am not letting them hurt my friends or my grandmother! There is no way in hell!"

She had seen the conditions inside the cells and smelled the scents of dried blood and body waste amongst other things. She knew what a risk it was for everyone. Yet all she could see was Scorpia inside the Magi-Cats dungeons. C'yra mourning a mother and a daughter.

Then she imagined Adora and her other friends, tears trailing down her face.

She would not let everyone down.

She would defeat the horde...She would get the Prisoners out alive.

She couldn't just sit by and let people die because she was too weak to do anything! She had to prove everyone wrong. Shadow Weaver, Lonnie, even Hordak.

As these thoughts raced through her mind, Catra felt a strange pulse come from the glowing blade and as she saw the horde troops rushing down the hall, guns charging and ready to fire she swung the sword.

The blast of energy cut a trench through the metal floor, crumbling stone and weaker metals along the walls and ripping through anyone it touched directly.

Catra didn't even realize she had dropped the sword or sank to the ground until she felt someone lifting her up.

"Close your eyes, kitten. You did more than your share...let's get you and Scorpia out of here."
Prima muttered, suddenly reminding Catra of her mother—who she suddenly wished was there.

Prima watched as Scorpia glanced over at her repeatedly, tail wrapping around herself slightly. She knew there were questions that the girl wanted answered, and answers that Prima didn't want to give.

"Is my parents alright?" Scorpia finally asked, the look on her face told Prima that she was afraid to know the answer but Prima knew she had to answer with something.

"Micah is the best healer we've got. Get some rest... I'll wake you when they start coming to camp."

It was avoiding the question and she knew it, however, Prima also knew that she shouldn't answer if she didn't have a definitive.

"I'm just worried...I mean...If I hadn't left..."

Scorpia began, only to trail off and Prima sighed.

_Time for some hard truth ...I Just wish someone besides me had to give it._

"Scorpia...J'Milla is our tech expert and she gave me this tablet containing prisoner data. Your parents are new residence here…. Evidently they wore out their usefulness to Hordak and was cast aside….Just like Captain Neo."

This peaked Scorpia's attention.

"Neo's daughter was in Catra and Adora's unit...Do you think she knows?"
Scorpia asked, earning a sigh.

"Probably not. Do you think Hordak tells anyone the truth?"

«________★________»

*Blood was covering everything, sticking to her fur.*

With a gasp she set up, finding herself laying on a fur mat near a fire, a hand lightly running through her hair.

"You okay kid?"

Prima's voice asked tiredly, causing Catra to sit up.

"I keep seeing...I didn't know the sword could do that."

She answered honestly, feeling the hand lightly trail down to her shoulders, pulling her closer.

"That is why I never taught that attack to your mother. It is a force of destruction that can slay a hundred enemies in a single stroke but it is such a gruesome attack that I knew it would be too much for her...besides it takes a pure desire to protect someone in an unadulterated move without regard of yourself."

Catra thought back to those thoughts that had seemed to trigger the sword's power.

"So it was because I wanted to protect everyone. I...I wasn't about to lose and let everyone down." Catra said, as if to reaffirm what she had just been told.

"Yes and you are a very strong girl...Much stronger than I was at your age." Prima stated, glancing over at Catra—who was blushing.
"I'm not strong. I couldn't even stand when I saw all those people…"

She began but let the words die on her lips with a shudder.

"Catra, I would have worried if you hadn't reacted that way. Former horde soldier or not...You're still so young and have not seen the true horrors of battle. Some learn to school their features but it never gets easier."

With that Prima nuzzled against her, catching Catra completely off guard and causing her to stiffen.

"You know, you're a lot like your mother...although she would never let me comfort her...even if I was trying to apologise for saying something in a fit of temper."

Catra began to ask her grandmother about that when suddenly a large crash was heard, startling Scorpia awake and prompting Catra to bolt to her feet, fur standing on end.

"Get your sword...It could be more of Hordak's troops."
"mom?"

Catra took a step forward before freezing in place, suddenly remembering what she had done to get to beast island to begin with.

Mom must be so mad, coming all this way.

She thought, after all she had stolen a boat and the family heirloom, not to mention she had hit her sister.

C'yra's expression was unreadable as she continued to walk toward Catra, who had decided to just accept whatever was to come and tried to brace herself the best she could, although she couldn't help but close her eyes when C'yra was within reaching distance.

To her surprise however, besides being struck, Catra found herself being pulled into a nearly crushing hug.

"Foolish girl...What were you thinking? Were you trying to get yourself killed?"

When She spoke, C'yra's voice faltered and Catra could smell the salt riddled scent of tears.

"I had to do something mom...I couldn't let them die." Catra managed to respond as she returned the hug, nuzzling against her mother, who just sighed and pressed a kiss into her hair.

"You should have told me...I would have sent real warriors with you."

Neither of them had noticed Prima coming over to them.
"She is a real warrior, C'yra."

Catra could feel C'yra stiffen at the sound of Prima's voice.

"Mother...What the hell are you doing here?"

Catra pulled away then, reaching for C'yra's hand.

"Mom, don't. You need to hear her out...Please. I know it isn't easy....I known you were hurt but....It's for the best. She's family and aren't Magi-Cats loyal to those they are close to?" Catra said, hoping she wasn't crossing a line, however C'yra just sighed.

"Fine...Only for you I will talk with her....alone. it's late and you look ready to fall over...go to sleep."

C'yra responded, leaning down and kissing her again before saying "I love you Catra, remember that. We will talk about everything that has happened later but right now I'm just glad you're safe."

«________★________»

Catra didn't notice Adora or Swift Wind hovering overhead or she would have been more discreet with her affection toward her mom.

"I love you too."

As soon as those words had left her mouth, Catra heard a laugh followed by a familiar voice saying "so you do have a heart." which caused her to bristle and nearly jump a meter backward.

"Adora! What the hell? How long have you been there and since when did you get a horse?" She exclaimed, earning a laugh from C'yra and Prima and a snort of annoyance from Swift Wind.
"Excuse me, I am my own horse!"

*Of course Adora not only has a flying Unicorn of all things but the damned thing can talk!* She thought, feeling the familiar tug at her mind as Silver Storm's mind linked with hers.

"*You are annoyed, do you wish for me to help?*

The elegant voice asked, causing her to sigh.

"*No. Adora is a fr.....It's complicated but this is how we've always interacted.*"

She thought back before glaring up at Adora.

"Shut up and mind your own business."
"what the hell do you want? To tell me I'm a piss poor ruler and mother?" C'yra snarled once she and Prima were out of earshot of the teenagers.

"No...I...Catra told me everything...And I know my words mean nothing so I want to show you something." Prima began, earning a hiss from C'yra who extended her claws.

"I am not letting you inside my head! I saw what it did to Catra when…” C'yra felt the familiar few set in as her mother glared at her, even though they were the same night now.

"I'm not going into your mind...You're going to see what is in mine."

With that Prima stepped into a circle made of many different gems, her magic seemingly lighting them on fire as it dance around them, forming a force field around her—a force field that crackled and showed images that caused C'yra to freeze in place.

This magic is painful….She used it on one of Today's cousins when I was small...She...She didn't know I had been watching but I saw him wither beneath the power. C'yra realized, watching as her mother’s face contorted but yet she remained conscious.

Catra could hear Adora trying to get comfortable on the mat near the door, muttering all the while about one thing or another.

"Hey Adora, trade with me. The bed is a lot better and I have Clawdeen to use as a pillow...unless you want Clawdeen to lay with you." She said after a while, earning a shocked look from Adora.

"What? Really? This isn't like…." Arora began, earning a sigh.

"Really Adora? This Isn't like me? Did you forget why we shared a cot? We both had awful
nightmares and...I couldn't stand hearing you beg in your sleep....No matter what was going on between us I hated it and I would do anything for you not to feel like I did." Catra confessed, glad that Adora couldn't see her embarrassment in the dim light of the room.

"Then why did you get so mad when I left? Why didn't you stay with me?"

Adora's voice wavered slightly and Catra felt a strange ache in her chest.

"You left me to take the fall for you, Adora. Would I have came to bright moon with you if you had left me come in the first place? Probably. Would I have gotten along with Powder puff? Not likely but if our roles were reversed I wouldn't have left you to deal with Shadow Weaver's bullshit."

Catra wanted to say more, to tell her how she had felt their whole life but Adora couldn't remember the beatings she had witnessed or the promise either, so there was no use bringing it up.

"I'm sorry."

Adora confessed in a tone that broke Catra's heart even more.

"I know...So am I."

Without another word Catra stood and walked over to where Adora was sitting, gripping onto Adora's shoulder.

"Come on...I'm a Magi-Cat. We can sleep anywhere...Trust me, you should see some of the places I've fallen asleep in." She said, pulling Adora to her feet and giving her a shove toward the bed.

"But Catra this is..." Adora began, earning a huff.

"It's a bed Adora. There is no ranks in Uru village...not like in the fright zone anyway. Sure there are elders and leaders but a bed is a bed and everyone hunts and eats the same thing." Catra explained then sighed "besides you look like you haven't slept in a month. What has those idiots in
Brightmoon been getting you to do?"

She ignored the dirty look the blonde sent her as she leaped onto the bed near the foot, sighing as she added "Adora, if you are that afraid of offending someone I'll sleep with you. That way if anything does happen, which it won't...I can say I told you to sleep with me."

It felt too much like the past for Catra but yet she stayed in her position at the foot of the bed until she dozed off, only to be awoken by a scream as Adora sat up, glancing around the room.

"Hey...You're safe. It's fine." Catra found herself saying "If anyone or anything came in here Clawdeen or Spike would have ripped them to shreds." Catra said, sitting up just as Adora his her face in her arms.

"You must think I'm pathetic. The girl who was going to be a force Captain...Haunted by nightmares of tentacles wrapping around her until she couldn't breath all while watching everyone die around me." Arora whispered, Sounding even more broken than she had earlier.

And Catra hated it.

She hated to see the usually strong willed girl so broken, so she did the only thing she knew she could do.

She moved closer and wrapped her tail around the other girl's waist, a hand moving to rest on her shoulder.

"Adora...No one is getting out of this shit without any effects. Scorpia is waiting to see if her parents are alive. My dad can't walk, my mom has nightmares and she's a warrior queen! I….I learned that one of the ultimate weapons my family has can rip a hundred people to shreds...and...I can still hear the screams and smell the blood. The Horde has ruined everyone's lives in some way...that is why we have to be strong and find a way to destroy them."
With that Catra allowed herself to rest her chin on Adora's shoulder, the closest thing to a hug she was willing to give at the moment.

"I think you're pretty strong...Not being blinded by the propaganda the horde fed us since we were toddlers."

«________★________»

C'yra watched in horror as the hologram of her father finally vanished, however she couldn't help the tears that were in her eyes.

"She isn't strong enough...Isn't it tradition from as far back as the time of the first king to leave the whelp somewhere? The healers said she was weak... wouldn't it just be better to either let it go or do it ourselves?"

"No! We are not going by a tradition a thousand years old or more! We are not savages!"

The words replayed in her head as she tried not to think about some of the things she had seen.

"Mom...I don't know what is going on!. I..."

She began but trailed off as Prima staggered to her feet and walked over to her, hand roughly grabbing the younger woman's shoulder.

"You remember things differently. You were hurt by either me or someone who looks like me...I...I never would have hurt you...If I was in control of my own self."

C'yra couldn't believe what she had seen but also knew that there was no way to lie via the magic.

"Why didn't you just tell me?"
Prima sighed and shook her head.

"Would you tell your daughter something that would hurt her far more than the lie?"

C'yra was silent for some time before she sighed and closed her eyes.

"No...I...I get it. I want to tell Raiona the truth but I just can't. I don't want to make her question her own worth."

She felt Prima sigh and shake her head.

"Raiona is your youngest...Why don't you explain to me what would hurt her so badly?"

«________★________»

Adora awoke to something moving by her side, it felt like a snake or bug crawling on her however as she sat up she saw that it was just Catra's tail twitching against her. Her fur was fluffed and ears folded down.

"Catra...Wake up."

Adora muttered, not wanting to be too loud since it would startle the feline even worse than the nightmare was.

Adora watched in shock as Catra set up, claws extended however she relaxed when she saw the dying embers in the fireplace and the familiar blue eyes.

"Are you okay?"
Adora questioned, earning a sigh as the feline curled back up.

"Yeah...Just a nightmare. Sorry, did I wake you?"

Adora sighed and ran a hand through the other girl's hair, feeling her relax under her touch.

"No. A random screech outside did." Arora lied easily before sighing and laying back down

"you okay?"

She felt Catra sigh and wrap her tail a bit tighter around Adora's waist.

"Yeah...I...I've just seen and smelled too much today. How do you do it? She-Ra doesn't make you forget about the fighting does it?"

Catra's question caused her to sigh.

"Unfortunately, no. Do you think I don't worry that one day the one that will fall is someone that had been in our unit? Catra I was terrified that you would be the one who I hurt."

Adora confessed, only to feel the other girl shift in the darkness, glowing two-tones eyes turned to face her.

"Yeah... I'm kinda glad that it didn't come to that. It would totally suck if I had to fight the one person who actually gets me."
"whoa...He looks so cool!"

Adora exclaimed as she ran a hand among the silver Pegasus's wings, earning a nudge by the creature.

"Excuse me...I look just as awesome!"

Catra couldn't help but laugh at Swift Wind's comment and patted the Alicorn's neck.

"Don't worry... Adora's like a bird. Attracted to all brightly colored or shiny things. You'll still be her favorite," catra retorted before adding "besides, Storm chose me...and I think that's the first time anyone has."

Arora was about to say something however she stopped herself. She knew what Catra meant.

"I know that some socerers keep familiars but I didn't know Magi-Cats did."

She said instead, earning a smirk.

"It's a royal family thing. My mom had a white fang named ghost and my grandmother now has a dragon. Evidently it dates back to Catalus and his mountain cat."

Catra trailed off when she saw Scorpia lead two people out of the compound, one with a bandaged eye and the woman barely able to walk.

"I'll be back...I need to check on something."
Catra knew that this was risky but she could see nervousness in the man's good eye.

"You're…"

Catra flicked her tail slightly and sighed.

"Heir of the Magi-Cats, yeah. I also was the one who helped Micah and my grandmother break you out of there. I know what happened with my parents but I also know the Horde lies to all those involved."

She stated, only for the woman to glance up.

"Thank you….Our daughter has told us everything and I…We…” the older female scorpion began, voice barely audible and only then, Catra noticed the bandages around her throat.

"Save your strength to get better. I don't care who did what...Scorpia is my friend and I was not letting her feel the way I felt for years. I was lucky to find my family...and I couldn't let the Horde take away hers."

She didn't notice C'ya walking up behind her until both of the former rulers of the crimson waste turned pale.

"Catra, you will make a good queen one day, if you choose...However for now...Let me talk with them." She stated and Catra wanted to protest, however C'ya just squeezed her shoulder.

"After what I saw last night...I'm more likely to seek revenge on Micah than I am on these two. Now please go show Adora around the village or something...I'm sure the village children would love to see She-Ra in action."

Catra was about to say something else when her mother gently nudged her.
"Kitten," she whispered "I promise...I am not going to hurt them. They tortured them...Do you see me as so cruel to seek revenge on someone who has nearly been killed for their loyalty?"

Can shook her head because she couldn't see either of her parents doing that.

"Then, Please do as I say. I promise, nothing bad will come of it for either side."

«________★________»

Adora couldn't remember a time when Catra had laughed as much as she was so she spoke with the slightly older girl who was the daughter of the chief of the native tribe located near the marshes of the island.

"Adora, this is J'Milla. She is wicked smart...and actually is fast on both land and in the trees." Catra introduced them before adding "she is the one who fried the systems in the beast island prison." Catra told her, snapping Adora out of her thoughts.

"Nice to meet you J'Milla." Arora managed to say before turning to Catra "That's great! You always had trouble making friends back in the right zone." Adora replied, earning a look from J'Milla.

"I do not understand why Catra would have issues." J'Milla responded in what could only be described as broken English.

"Psh...Yeah right. What was that you called me during the hunt? A...Tu..." Catra retorted, earning a smirk.

"Tuhipa….I think in your tongue it means asshole."

Adora watched as Catra's ears twerked upward before flattening.

"Okay...Yeah...guess I deserved that…and that would explain why Prima kept laughing."
Why isn't Catra getting mad?

Adora wondered however once again drew from her thoughts as Catra grabbed her wrist.

"Come on, I gotta show you their village. It's amazing that people can settle where the horde had decimated...I was kinda wondering if the fright zone could be redeemable, after the tyrants are gone of course."

This took Adora off guard more than Catra's laughter did.

"You want to rebuild the fright zone?"

Catra sighed and paused.

"Even I'm not dumb enough to think that everyone in the Horde is evil...The land belongs to the Royal family from Scorpion hill, if we can get them to be a part of your dumb alliance or something...Maybe we can kick Hordak and She-Devil out of the fright zone and return it to a civilian area."

She wants to help people? What the hell? Is This The Same Catra? I mean she would always help me when I needed it but...others?

"Are you sure you've not fallen on your head? You act.... different."

Adora stated, earning a sigh from her former friend.

"I'm not...not really. It's just people have lost so much already to the horde...I don't want them to lose anything to the rebellion as well." Catra answered before glancing up toward the large skeleton that made up the mountainside.

"I don't want anyone to feel as lost, alone or scared as I was."
When they got back to the village later that they found Scorpia sitting with her parents who was
talking to Micah, who was wearing the face covering that reminded Catra too much of the traveling
merchants that sometimes delivered supplies to half moon.

"We're having a feast tonight."

Prima announced as soon as she saw the girls, causing Catra to nearly jump out of her skin.

"Granny, you need to stop shouting at people! We're not deaf!"

As the night went on, Catra began to notice that Adora was acting weird–or at least weirder than
usual. Had she said something wrong? Had she offended Adora in some way? Catra knew she
shouldn't care but the fact of the matter was...She did.

Once Adora went to check on Swift Wind catra finally managed to let out a grown.

"Okay she was fine earlier but now she is acting like I murdered her puppy or something!" She
exclaimed, earning a laugh from J'Milla who just rolled her eyes.

"You really are as dense as mud aren't you? You have not noticed how she looked at you?"

The older girl's question caused Catra to groan.

"Why do people keep asking me that?"
She didn't even notice that Amur had been listening until he spoke.

"Oh Great...the princess of Magi-Cats has a crush on a girl who won't like her back and doesn't even care that she'll betray tradition and order just for her own selfish feelings." He jeered, prompting Catra to leap to her feet.

"Shut up you asshole!"

"Make me!"

«________★________»

C'yra had been sitting in one of the nearby huts with Micah and her mother when she heard a crash from outside, causing all of them to go rushing out side, only to find the pair of cousins locked in a fight.

"Oh for the love of all things pure in the multiverse." Prima muttered as she and C'yra walked over, ripping the two apart.

"What the hell is going on?" Prima growled, glancing between the two while holding Amur roughly by the back of the neck.

"Ask her! She's the one who is an abomination to what the royal houses stood for! She is a tribas!"

Everyone grew silent, looking confused but C'yra felt her eyes darting to Prima, who just stood there silently, still looking furious.

However then C'yra felt teeth sink into her arm causing her to drop Catra, who instantly ran off.

"C'yra...Go talk to her. I think this one." Prima began, pausing to deliver a hard cuff to the back of the boy's head "needs to learn how not to use shit to try to hurt his family for petty reasons."
C'yla was about to say something when Prima locked eyes with her and where she was sure would be disgust was just worry.

"And don't you dare judge the girl...She is frightened….And I don't need a nose to figure that out."
"uh...What happened?" Adora asked when she came back to find Amur sweeping up plates of food that had been scattered along the ground, muttering all the while.

"My granddaughter and this brat happened." Prima responded before sighing "she would be cleaning the mess up as well but she looked ready to go into a panic attack before she bit C'yra and ran off...I don't know what this boy was thinking but doing something to insult family...rather the words be true or not..is not how we Magi-Cats do things."

Adora could see J'Milla shift slightly at Prima's side, earning a glance from the woman who sighed

"You want to know if I think poorly of you...and of Catra if Amur's words are true." She guessed before placing a hand on the tan skinned girl's shoulder.

"Was I confused why a chief's child was allowed to behave the way you did when I came here? Yes. Because traditionally the higher ranking clans...or rather elite families...had the idealism that behavior such as a female who was not a girl or vise versa was not okay for those of Nobel blood, nor was a same sex relationship."

Prima paused and glanced at Amur who had stopped to listen.

"However, after I saw that nothing was different or lowly about you...and that even as you are...That you acted just like any other child. I understood why C'yra called me out on things...things that I said in an attempt to stop her worsening the storm that was already rising in the kingdom of D'ryliuth. So no, I do not think badly of you because you chose to be comfortable in your own skin...nor do I think badly of Catra for whom she may or may not love."

Adora's mind wheeled at the information. In the horde and in Bright moon no one cared about that sort of thing. It was as simple as stating your blood type or favorite color. But it seemed that in some places it was seen as taboo.

"Why is it such a big deal if Catra likes girls?"

She asked, unable to contain herself.
"It's unnatural! She's a Nobel and has to have a blood heir!" Amur growled, earning a wet rag to the face by a young man from the tribe.

"Shut up and get to cleaning, Cat. You're lucky Prima doesn't make you stay behind tomorrow to help with the harvest! You irked your cousin into a fight and wasted all of this food!" He stated before turning toward Adora "Like Prima just said it was a traditional value thing amongst her people. Just like some reptilians are not monogamous. Nothing wrong with it...it's just an old, twisted mindset that the Magi-Cats seem to have had..

Prima nodded at that and touched Adora's shoulder.

"Don't worry about Catra. She'll be fine."

Catra felt sick and no matter how hard she tried not to cry, she couldn't help it. How could Amur do this? How could he have turned her family on her like this? She wondered bitterly as she glanced down at the emblem on her belt. Wordlessly removing it and moving to toss it into the sea when a hand grabbed her arm.

"Tossing the royal crest into the water won't make you feel better, kitten."

C'yla's voice came from behind her and Catra began to shake, memories of a fake—calm shadow weaver filling her mind.

"What? You come out here to tell me I'm a freak and a disappointment? That I have embarrassed and insulted you for the last time?" Catra sneered, only to feel a rough, yet not painful wack from the big hand against her shoulder.

"I think this talk is long overdue if you honestly think I think any of that about you...or is that how you see yourself?" C'yla asked, voice a little hard but not losing the soft volume as she moved to sit beside the teen.

When she didn't get an answer C'yla sighed and continued
"You could never be a disappointment to me, Catra. Does that mean I can't be disappointed when you make bad choices? No. But you will never be a disappointment."

Catra glanced over at her and then down at the belt that was sitting between them.

"That doesn't even make sense."

She said, earning a light chuckle from her mother who responded

"And now you sound like me when I was a kitten. What I mean Catra is that I will never regret finding you, nor will I ever stop loving you. However I also know you are very intelligent so I can be disappointed that you didn't think things through when I know you could have found a better course of action."

Catra felt the knot in her throat tighten, threatening to choke her as she heard that.

"But I attacked! Rai! I stole the sword and I bit you! I'm the heir! Amur said…"

C'yra let out a small growl that caused Catra to freeze up, the words dying on her lips.

"Catra...first of all, Your father told me about your crush on Adora when you stole the ring to protect her. Amur suspects your feelings as well and he likes Adora. He would say anything to get her to himself...although I'm pretty sure that horse of hers dislikes him. Second of all, that sword belongs just as much to you or Rai as it does to me but i would have appreciated you telling me you needed it and as for hitting your sister...Mother told me what you said."

C'yra paused then, noticing the fearful look and reached out to gently tug at the lighter shade hair that hung at Catra's ears.

"Catra, you broke her trust in you so you will have to work hard to build it back...we'll talk about it with your dad and see what he thinks would be the best consequence but by no means does that mean being kicked out or beaten. As angry as I have been at you before, have I ever hit you to truly cause pain?"
The gentle gesture caused some of the fear to leave and Catra found herself finally able to look at the queen.

"No, I guess not. I mean...That one time with your tail stung a bit but it didn't hurt and I know you wouldn't actually hurt me, you didn't even mean to whack me that hard with your tail.....you never try to hurt me...not like I did Raiona. But this is different...I attacked your daughter."

She was surprised by another low rumble.

"You are my daughter too. Remember that. I don't play favorites Catra. If she hit you She would find herself getting the same treatment you are. But you want to really know the worst thing you did Kitten? You put yourself and Scorpia at risk. That's Why I am a bit upset at you."

C'ya found that she couldn't speak. Not even when she suddenly felt C'ya grab her, only to find herself pulled nearly onto the woman's lap and into an embrace.

"So you don't hate me?"

When asked after a while, feeling her mother growl again, but this time Catra understood that was her mother's way of telling her to stop being ridiculous.

"If I hated you. Would I have came to talk to you? Catra, I don't care if you want to marry a girl or a reptilian. Stop worrying about that...Now wanna go face your grandmother's lecture about the fighting and wasting food? I'm pretty sure that is the only thing you're getting one for."

Prima was nowhere to be seen when they returned and Catra was worried that she wouldn't want to talk with her after all.

"Mom? What if she really does hate me? She was so nice...Her and Micah both and…” Catra began, trailing off as they entered Prima's hut, only to see the elder cat sitting cross legged on the floor.
"So...Your cousin is right."

Prima said, not opening her eyes but using her magic to drag Catra closer, causing the teen to start to panic, at least until she felt herself being forced to sit beside her grandmother.

"Not all magic hurts Catra, just like not everyone uses a spell that can hurt...to do harm. Now Tell me, did I just hurt you? Outside of grabbing you by the arm a couple of nights ago have i ever harmed you?" Prima asked and although Catra didn't want to let her walls down for the fear of being hurt, she shook her head.

"Amur is mucking out stalls right now….since he wanted to behave like a brat. Now...as for you...I think your mountain cat needs fed….and Storm seems worried about you." Prima said before reaching over and putting an arm around her.

Catra found herself melting into the hug, just as she had with C'yla.

"And I am not so cruel as to be angry at you for who you love. Love is the only truly pure thing in the universe, you would do well to remember that."
A visitor

Chapter Summary

Adora gets in a fight with Angella and goes to Catra for a distraction

C’yra sighed as she listened to the front door slam, followed by Catra slinking into her study, tail in hand.

"I swear if that little brat steps on me one more time I am going to tie her tail to her bedpost!" The teenager grumbled as she sank down into the chair across from Cyra's desk, drawing the plush blanket that use had left in there the previous day around her.

"Well you did hurt her feelings pretty badly, kitten. Give her time."

The queen responded earning a groan.

"It's been two weeks! Ever since we came back I have been stepped on, zapped, kicked, drenched and poisoned!"

C'yra couldn't help but laugh at the dramatics.

"Okay you're being dramatic...She put hot peppers flakes in your drink, not poison. And she got in trouble for the other things." C’yra reminded her before smirking "speaking of trouble...I haven't heard you complain too much."

She watched as Catra shifted in embarrassment, tail still in hand.

"Yeah well….I was an idiot."

C'yra tossed a wad of paper at her at that.
"No, you are not. You messed up and feel guilty but that doesn't make you an idiot and two weeks is a long time to be confined to ones house. I expected you to start whining by now." She stated, earning a hiss

"I don't whine!"

Catra's response caused another wave of laughter from the monarch.

"Oh you totally do." C'yla said, unable to keep the playful tone out of her voice or body language as her tail waved behind her.

She allowed the paper ball to hit her when Catra threw it.

After all, it was boring for a teen to be stuck inside all the time and it wouldn't do any harm to play around once in a while.

"Oh you're going to pay for that, shrimp."

«______★______»

Tora had to dodge an onslaught of parchment projectiles when he opened the door to see what the noise was about, only to laugh at what he saw.

"I hate to break up this little…..whatever it is but there is someone here to see Catra." He said, earning an embarrassed look from the teen who had been had been hiding behind a chair to avoid the onslaught.

Tora watched as C'yla arched a brow at Tora before grinning.
"Go on, these last few weeks were just as torturous for me as it was for you. Go hang out with your friends."

As soon as Catra had left the room, Tora arched a brow as he turned toward C'yra.

"And people say you're strict."

C'yra just smirked and stood, not the least bit embarrassed by the whole ordeal.

"She's been rather docile about the whole thing so I see no harm in letting her off a few days early. Besides she has extra training sessions with me every morning...And I thats enough, she does like to sleep in after all."

Catra didn't know who could be calling on her since Scorpia was in the same boat she was and Scorpia's parents were still too weak to take care of themselves.

She didn't expect to see Adora sitting in the living room, looking nervous.

What in the universe is she doing here?

She wondered, however she swallowed the questions she wanted to ask and just said

"Hey Adora."

The way the blonde jumped at her voice told Catra that there was something wrong, something very wrong.

"Oh hey Catra."
It wasn't like Adora to be that nervous about anything and Catra easily jumped over the sofa and landed beside the other girl.

"Okay, what's wrong? You look like you've killed someone's puppy or something."

She asked, watching as Adora shifted nervously.

"I just have a lot on my mind okay? I know you're probably still grounded…"

Catra cut her off with a small chuckle.

"Actually mom told me I was free to go. Her and dad aren't that bad, it's not like I was chained to a wall or something."

She saw Adora pale at that.

"Please tell me that Shadow Weaver didn't do that to you."

Catra sighed and closed her eyes, her tail reaching over and wrapping around Adora's wrist.

"No. I don't think she ever got that creative…Now what's wrong, you're nervous as hell?"

Adora sighed and hid her face in her hands.

"I had an argument with the Queen of Brightmoon but I don't want to talk about it. Can we go do something? I don't wanna think about it."
Catra arched a brow at that before laughing softly.

"You and the queen fought? You know what...Not my problem. Come on, I'm sure Storm thinks my mom and dad killed me since I haven't seen him since we got back and I'm sure you're flying unicorn is around here somewhere."

«______★______»

Ugh...why did I let them talk me into this?

Adora thought although she couldn't help but laugh as Swift Wind sent them into what could only be described as an aerial barrel roll. She could hear Catra somewhere up head yelling threats to Storm, who seemed to be laughing when he rushed out of the cloud bank at lightning speeds, a rather puffy and irritated Catra on his back.

"Storm, you're an asshole! Unlike some people I have fur and the static does not agree with my hair!"

Adora couldn't keep the laughter at bay at that, earning a growl from Catra who had Storm glide beside Swift Wind.

"What are you snickering about? I get it...I look like a scruffer."

"A what?"

Now Adora was confused, only to earn a laugh from catra.

"Right...Not everyone is forced into boring Ecology lessons. Basically this forest spirit thing that looks like a mix between a minute lion and a poodle. Evidently they live in the whispering wood? I don't know...Like seriously no have never seen anything like that ever."
Adora couldn’t help but laugh at the look on Catra's face.

"You'll never change will you? Always questioning everything you're told. But I guess that is what I've always loved about you."

«________★________»

"Hey Catra...Do you ever feel like people just like you because you're suddenly a princess?"

The question caught Catra off guard but she sighed and shrugged.

"Not really? Is that what is going on in Bright Moon?"

Catra guessed, watching as Adora's eyes glazed over with tears.

"I don't know but it seems that way. I mean, Glimmer and the others are awesome but…"

Catra sighed and nodded. She wanted nothing more bit to comfort the blonde in some way but that was impossible while flying through the clouds on the back of a pair of flying horses.

"How about this? Stay at my place for the night and we'll head to Brightmoon tomorrow...I'm not afraid of Queen Firefly... Besides the worst she can do is ban me from Brightmoon because anything else would risk a war with my parents."

*From what mom has told me, Queen Angella was more or less one of the more...patient people in the original alliance. I am sure Adora is just paranoid as hell....I mean Shadow Weaver evidently did a number on her.*
Catra thought, wanting to keep an open mind about this queen since C’yra had talked so highly of her.

"Are you sure that Queen C’yra won’t mind? I mean I did punch her nephew."

Adora’s response made Catra laugh.

"Trust me, I think if you didn’t hit him...She would have thrown that canteen at him."

At least that got Adora to smile.

«________★________»

It was noon when they landed beside a lake surrounded by lavender shrubs.

"Whoa...This place is beautiful."

Adora commented, dismounting Swift Wind—who promptly headed toward the nearest apple tree.

"Yeah...this place isn't near horde lands like D'ryliuth or halfmoon. Looks like this place is barely touched." Catra retorted, just as she heard brush break upstream, causing her to groan

"Great...if that is a horde trooper I am going to personally going to…"

Catra trialed off as she saw a cat the size of a small pony come out of the brush, sides heaving and a frightened look on its face.
And even in the annoying scent of the flowers, Catra recognized that scent anywhere.

"Raiona?"
"Rai, I know you don't like me but you can't just force yourself…"

Catra began, earning a growl as Raiona tried to throw a punch at her only for Adora to catch the girl's hand.

"Stay out of this, lady! She was the one who hit me! I might not be her fucking sister but…"

Raiona began, only to feel a rough grip at the back of her neck from Catra.

"What do you mean you're not my sister? And I hit you because you wouldn't take no for an answer and I couldn't let you get yourself killed! damnit kid you're too much like me!"

Catra watched as tears suddenly filled Raiona's eyes.

"You really don't know? Amur didn't tell you? I'm not your sister, Catra….I'm just some orphan that the king and queen felt sorry for."

Catra tightened her grip slightly to bring her attention towards her.

"I don't give a damn if you're part monkey or ape kid, C'ryra and Tora adopted you, right? That means they are your damn parents and I'm your sister. I don't care if you do hate me, I'm not going to let you wear yourself out trying to earn respect and love when you've already got it!"

Catra glanced over at Adora and sighed

"I think Raiona and I need to have a long talk with our parents...Think Swift Wind will be okay hanging out with Storm in the mountains around D'ryliuth?"

«______★______»
"He said what?"

C'yra growled, fur bristling as she shifted in her seat. She couldn't believe her nephew's nerve.

"So that was why you were so upset when he said that ... Excuse me for a minute. I think I need to go talk to our aunt." Catra stated, ignoring any arguments from anyone in her family.

*I have half the mind to let her fucking rule just to shut his idiotic mouth up! He's no better than Shadow Weaver, Octavia or Lonnie when they said I'd never be anything. She's a fucking kid! She doesn't deserve to be talked down to like this! Especially not by her own damned cousin!*

Catra found her aunt Tya sitting outside with a group of older cats, one holding what looked to be a newborn.

"Sorry to interrupt but I need to talk to my aunt." She said while signing to Tya what she needed her for.

The dark look on Tya's face as she read the gestures caused Catra's skin to crawl.

Tya signed back rapidly, her brow furrowed and fur bristled.

She was angry and Catra had never seen her like this.

When she finally was told to go inside, Catra signed her thanks and rushed into the house, slamming the door behind her.

"Amur! Get your ass out here! How dare you tell my sister that she isn't good enough for the family because she was adopted from a lesser clan! That C'yra only adopted her because she could pass as her own!" She practically roared, feeling slightly guilty that she felt thankful that her aunt couldn't hear her.
"What? It's true, I mean...Can she do anything the royal cats can? The freeze fire? Wield that sword you've taken to claiming as your own? Face it Catra, they replaced you with her and now that you're back, she is nothing."

Catra didn't even think as she launched herself at him, claws extended. She knocked him to the floor, teeth bared.

"You're just jealous that you never had a chance at the throne! You're nothing and you want people to feel like they're less than you!"

She sneered before punching him in the stomach, hard.

"If you ever hurt my sister again...I will personally gut you like a fish."

With that she turned and walked away.

She wouldn't and she knew it. Beat the shit out of him? Sure. Kill him? No. He was family and not a real threat.

Besides, even though he was an asshole but one part of her couldn't help but like him, after all some of his pranks was quite funny.

«______★______»

Later that night when Catra walked into the palace, she glanced over at C'yra who was sitting near Adora, both drinking some kind of tea.

"How's Rai?"

She asked, earning a small chuckle from C'yra.

"She'll be okay but she'll need a lot of reassurance for awhile. How bad did you hurt him?"
Catra sighed and sat down by them, pinching the bridge of her nose.

"I may have bruised him...and I threatened him but I didn't do anything too bad." She answered, earning a small flick from her mother's tail.

"Tya didn't kill you?"

Catra groaned and leaned back then, letting C'yla's tail coil around her own.

"No but she made me stay while she yelled at him...and by yelling I mean she started signing really fast and basically grounded him until the end of time." Catra responded "she is kinda scary when she's mad."

"Hey Adora?"

Adora jerked from her thoughts as Catra came into the room they were sharing, dressed in pajamas with some kind of glowing floral patterns.

"Huh? What Catra?"

From the look on her friend's face she knew something was weighing on her mind because Catra rarely got serious.

"What you said earlier...what did you mean?"

Adora felt heat crawl into her face as she thought about lying to Catra, even though she knew that the feline would be able to see right through her.

"Exactly what I said." She managed to respond, earning a sigh from the other girl who sat down
beside her.

"Adora, you basically said you loved me...and I want to know what you meant because love can mean twenty different things." Catra said, voice almost a whisper and to Adora, it sounded almost as if Catra was afraid of the answer.

"Promise you won't freak out?"

Adora found herself whispering, feeling almost like she had as the junior Cadet that had stayed up long after curfew whispering beneath the thin wool blankets.

Catra shifted slightly on the bed

"I promise."

Adora felt her mouth go dry as her heart began to beat faster.

*Can I really say this? Can I risk our already Rocky friendship?*

Suddenly a hand touching her arm drew her from her thoughts.

"I love you okay? I have.....for a long time. I thought it was just a stupid crush until I thought you.....were dead then it was like nothing else mattered."

She said, not daring to make eye contact with the feline, who she was sure was going to laugh at her. However instead of hearing a laugh she felt something slightly rough and warm touch her cheek.

"Wish you would have told me sooner, Dork. I always thought I was an idiot for liking you like that.....You always noticed Lonnie flirting with you but never when I did so I just always thought you didn't like me like that."
Catra's response caught Adora off guard for two very different reasons.

"Wait, Lonnie had a crush on me?"

That's when Catra burst into laughter, partially doubling over.

"You never noticed? Adora, I love you too but damn you're slow on the uptake."

Adora felt herself blushing even brighter now as she shoved the still laughing girl off the bed.

"Ugh, you are such a jerk!"

She grumbled, only to be pulled down onto the floor a few minutes later.

"Maybe but I still meant what I said...I love you too."
Coalition

Chapter Summary

Things happen and While Adora talks with C'yra, Catra forms a plan.

The next morning Catra woke up before anyone, finding herself nursing a numb tail and partially buried beneath both Clawdeen and Adora.

Thankful that no one else was around she stumbled into the kitchen starting on coffee—making sure that she didn't grab the wrong box when she reached for the sugar—before moving toward the doorway.

The underground city was already bustling with life as some were headed off to work. One being her aunt Tya who waved to her. Catra smiled in response, waving back before stretching and letting out a yawn.

"Hey Catra! I'm surprised to see you up! Did your mom finally let you out of the dog house?" Shenya called to her, grabbing the back of some very young boy's shirt to keep him from running off.

"Yeah...yeah...I got released from prison yesterday and you would not believe everything that happened." Catra answered, still obviously half asleep.

"I wanna hear about it! After I get this brat to school."

Catra laughed at that.

"See you around Shenya."

Sighing she headed back inside, only to find C'yra bustling around the kitchen.
"You didn't spike the coffee this morning, did you?"

The queen asked and Catra didn't even need to see her face to hear the laugh in her voice.

"Can you let that go? That was Dad's fault!"

She responded, earning a laugh from her mother.

_I still can't believe she forgave me so easily._

Catra thought as her mother handed her a mug that smelled of coffee and something sweet.

"What did you put in this?"

She asked, sniffing of the steaming liquid.

"Something that I will probably regret but it won't make you loopy like the honeysuckle did. I just know you never tried it before."

C'nya had to bite her tongue to keep from laughing as her daughter's eyes seemed to grow in size at the taste.

_She doesn't make that face my ass._

She thought in amusement as she walked past Catra, ruffling her already messy hair.
"Miv will be here soon, think we should train before or after breakfast?" She asked, earning a sigh from Catra.

"Before because frankly I made a promise to Adora so I need to go to Brightmoon today."

It wasn't worded as a question but the way Catra looked to her, C'yra knew it was her way of asking for permission.

"That horse of yours will love that."

She answered before adding "speaking of Adora, what was you two doing up there last night? We heard two different crashes, you two didn't break the bed or something did you?"

Catra went rigid at that, her fur bristling and her fur wasn't enough to hide the blush.

"We were just playing."

"Never said you weren't." C'yra responded, wrapping an arm around her and adding "Is things okay between you two now?"

She felt Catra lean against her.

"Mom? theoretically speaking, If Tora was having issues with someone who was important...to the point where he felt used. What would you do?"

C'yra closed her eyes, remembering a certain harpy that had caused trouble for most of her friends when she was younger.
"I think I would support him the best way I could. Why? Is something wrong?" She questioned, only for Catra to turn her attention back to her drink.

"Kinda but I don't think I'm the best to explain the situation. I know you don't know Adora very well but maybe talking to you will help her? She's having issues with Angella and I..."

C'yra could see the worry on Catra's face as she trailed off.

"I'll try."

«_______★_______»

"It's no fair! Why do you get to do everything?"

Catra groaned as she shut the door and glanced over at Scorpia's parents who had exchanged amused looks.

"I apologise for my sister...I think our mom dropped her when she was a baby." She muttered before sighing and adding

"my mom and I were talking...The sure fire way to deal with this bullshit of Hordak's is to help the alliance....But that does not mean joining. I'm sure if you tried you could call power from the black garnet....and I have managed to link to our own runestone here in Halfmoon. If we work together we may be able to forge our own path...And get the red desert back to your family and D'ryliuth back to mine."

Catra knew she was running a risk but she also knew that taking a risk was the only way to make any sort of change in the way things were.

"You are proposing a coalition of sorts? How do you know you can trust us?" Thorell asked, narrowing his eyes at her.
"Yes and I don't...But I saw the way you reacted when you saw Scorpia. Don't you want something better for your daughter than being a pawn?"

She watched as his eyes glazed over and his wife finally spoke

"We joined Hordak because we wanted to keep her safe."

Shara's voice was still weak from the throat injury that Catra didn't even want to know the cause of.

"With the Horde...No one is safe. They threw you to the side once your usefulness was gone. Do you truly want to return to that? To put your daughter through that."

She found herself holding her breath as they exchanged looks.

"No...We don't." Thorell managed to say before sighing "you will take care of Scorpia while in Bright moon? Some People may not be as...forgiving as C'yra and Tora."

"You have my word. I will make sure nobody hurts her."
Adora sees a softer side to Catra.

Catra sighed as she buried her face in Storm's mane.

"Scorpia, I swear on my great grandmother's grave if you and that damned Flying feather duster don't stop singing I am going to freeze both of your mouths shut!"

She grumbled, earning a slap from Swift Wind's wing as Storm passed him.

"Come on, it's not that bad!"

Storm stated as he too joined in, earning a groan from Catra, who removed her mask and shoved it into her backpack.

"Okay, that's new. You haven't taken that...thing off since Shadow Weaver gave it to you when we were promoted to junior cadets." Adora pointed out, confused by the gesture.

"This thing has a lot of enchantments on it... Basically without this I can't hear anything but horse noises coming from him. People thinks it's a crown...It's actually just modified armor." Catra responded before groaning and adding

"If you imbeciles are going to sing, Stop singing children's songs!"

That earned laughter from all of them and she could even feel Storm rumbling beneath her. However there was a strange sound—not quite a laugh—that came from the cart of supplies that Storm had agreed to pull for them.

Glancing back, Catra took hold of her sword and jumped down from Storm while he was still moving, making a motion with her hand to be quite.
"Let's stop to rest here, the horses probably could use a break and the water here smells pure." She said before slowly making her way toward the back of the cart, pulling the fabric cover off all while pointing her sword at the cargo.

Only to roll her eyes as she found a rather frightened looking Raiona sitting amongst the sacks of grain.

"What the hell? Mom's gonna kill you."

Putting the sword away with one hand, Catra grabbed the younger girl by the scruff with the other.

"You know what, that's your problem but as of right now...You're walking. You think you're big enough to wander off without telling anyone...You're big enough to walk like Scorpia and Adora are doing."

*The hell is this kid thinking? Mom and dad are going to kill her...and I'm the one who's gonna be stuck hearing her whine.*

"Then why aren't you walking?"

Catra growled and lightly squeezed the back of the girl's neck, although careful not to hurt her.

"Because Storm's never pulled a wagon before and he asked me to guide him! Now walk, and don't even think about shifting...you don't have enough control to shift back and forth yet."

"Don't you think you're being a bit too hard on her? She's still just a kid." Scorpia asked as they walked, Raiona complained under her breath.

"Nah...If she gets too tired I'll let her ride Storm or hell, I'll transform and let her ride on me." Catra whispered back, glancing back to make sure that Raiona didn't hear her as she added in a louder
taste "And she needs to learn not to follow people!"

Adora chuckled at this and nudged Catra.

"As if you wouldn't have done the same thing at her age! Hell, we both would have!"

Catra suppressed a chuckle and lightly nudged her back.

"Shut it."

"You're a jerk face!"

"Yeah? So what? you're a brat."

Adora watched as Catra halted their journey once again around a half hour later, fishing out a canteen and some fruit from her backpack and walking over to Raiona and handed them to her and to Adora’s surprise, when Raiona shoved her—Catra just grabbed her by the back of the neck again and smirked.

"I'm faster than you runt, remember that. Now go sit down, rest and eat something. We'll be stopping in one of the recently reclaimed villages to drop off the supplies then get real food and to rest a while."

"Wait...Catra just brought enough for the three of us....did she just...she really has changed more than I thought."

Adora thought as she watched Catra playfully shove the other girl toward a shaded area.

"That was nice of you, I was almost afraid you'd take your food back after she shoved you." Adora commented once Catra had came back to where the horses were.
"Yeah well...Most kittens are emotional and rough. Besides her attitude from hell, this is the first time she's been away from home...to be honest I'm kinda worried she'll get homesick once we reach Bright Moon." Catra responded before dropping to the ground beside Scorpia

"You'd be surprised by what I've seen out of Catra when it comes to Raiona. I mean, I've seen Catra use the last of her allowance to buy Raiona trinkets and such to cheer her up after some other kids were picking on her. They fight a lot but it's mostly just silly little things."

Catra whacked the scorpion with her tail before she retorted

"Do you honestly think I like seeing my sister cry? Sure, I don't coddle her but I do care about the little runt….even if she does test my patience."

Adora glanced over at Raiona, who was trying to be indifferent but had an ear cocked in their direction.

"She's listening to every word."

Adora snickered, earning a scoff from Catra.

"Yeah, I figured."
A Promise

Chapter Summary

Catra stretches the truth to Raiona about beast island but finds herself pouring her emotions out to Adora.

Catra laughed as she watched Raiona try to lift a heavy sack of grain from the cart.

"Here brat. Let me before you hurt yourself...I said help out not kill yourself." Catra said, lifting the bag over her shoulder and carrying it toward the rest of the supplies.

"Whoa, how are you that strong?"

Raiona asked, earning a chuckle from the older Magi-Cat.

"I grew up in the Fright Zone...It was either be strong or get exiled to beast island."

Catra knew that was only half true and that some of her strength just came naturally, but if she could impress Raiona...Well that was a plus.

"Isn't beast island where you and Scorpia went to save her parents? What happened anyway? Mom told me not to ask about it."

Images of the battle in the prison compound flashed through Catra's mind, causing her to shudder.

"Beast island is swarming with dragons and other bloodthirsty beasts that don't care rather your horde or not, they'll gobble anything with a heartbeat up! Luckily for me the hidden tribes came out and chased off this huge silver dragon, just as it was ready to attack!"

Catra responded, dramatically which earned an eye roll from She-Ra who was walking by.
"Hey bloodthirsty beast, stop trying to scare your sister and help us. I may can lift this whole cart by myself but that doesn't mean I am going to!"

Catra hissed at that, glaring at the other girl.

"Stay out of this Adora! You weren't there!"

She called, only to hear a laugh.

"But I know what your grandmother said!"

"Wait, you meet grandma? What's she like? Mom never talks about her. What was she doing on Beast island? Was she a prisoner?" Raiona demanded, eyes suddenly going wide and sparkly.

"Uh..."

Catra blinked in surprise by the onslaught of questions.

"She's kinda intense, I guess? Um...she lives there helping people escape the horde? Uh no...I don't think so? Tell you what, after I get done in Brightmoon I'll take you on a detour to their village and let you meet her."

"____________★____________"
least that'll keep her busy for a while." Catra responded with a chuckle before adding "I think we need to talk about what happened last night...I mean...What are we?"

Adora felt her mouth go dry at that.

What were they? What did she want them to be? What did Catra want them to be?

"Um...I don't know. I...what do you want us to be?"

She stammered, earning a light chuckle from the feline, whose tail lightly wrapped around her waist at that.

She does that a lot. What does that mean? She says it's a Magi-Cat thing but...

"You know...I'm not the easiest person to get along with and I don't get along with your perfect, pampered, pampered friends. Are you sure that you want to ask me that?" Catra said with a purr and Adora could feel the blood rushing to her face.

"Catra, I like you okay? I really like you and I know you only ride Glimmer's case like you do because you can make her mad. Just like you would with Lonnie and Octavia. I...I like you for you and you should know that."

Adora hated how pathetic she sounded, however suddenly she felt herself being pulled closer to the Magi-Cat and when she cared make eye contact she saw hope. Hope buried in fear.

"I...I like you too Adora. Just please... Promise me this. Whatever happens...Don't leave me again. I have loved you for a while and when you left...when you, left everyone blamed me and I....I couldn't help but wonder what I did....to make you leave."

Adora hated hearing the emotion in the usual mischievous tone sounding so hurt.

"It was nothing like that. I….I know I should have came back for you but...I was scared. I would
have been seen as a traitor on either side. I...I saw what the horde was doing and I...Couldn't be a part of that anymore. I...."

Adora was surprised when a pair of lips met hers.

"Stop...You don't need to apologize anymore."

«____________★____________»

"So what happened between you and Queen Firefly anyway?" Catra asked as they rode along, both Scorpia and Raiona asleep in the cart that Storm was pulling.

"We had a mission yesterday to clear out a horde camp and....To be honest it was probably my fault because I am the only one with prior military training but....Honestly I think she was going to exile me or something. She was so angry that I didn't know what to do so I just...."

Catra tightened her grip on Adora's hand.

"Bolted?" She guessed before adding "whatever happens today remember, I'm there to protect you. Okay?"
Catra could smell the salty stench of worry as soon as the queen entered the room, and she hated it. After all, it was a lot easier to be angry with someone who didn't reek of the emotion.

"Adora, where in Etheria have you been? You just bolted off without telling anyone! Don't you know how reckless that was?" The queen began and Catra could feel Adora stiffen beside her, her grip tightening on Catra's hand.

"Tell her the truth." Catra found herself advising her, unable to keep from noticing that Angella looked as if she was trying to contain herself.

However, before she could get too lost in that, Glimmer's voice jarred her from them.

"Stay out of this, Cat!"

"Shut it, cupcake. I'm not letting her worry herself sick and get upset about something. Even if I have to take her back to half moon with me!"

"You're not taking her anywhere!"

Catra tried not to lose her temper, which would just stress Adora out more. After all, who would want to choose between two people they cared about, even if in theory?

"Oh yeah, and who died and made you queen of everything? Sparkles?"

"Yeah well at least I never stabbed my best friend in the back!"

"It was a stun baton you buffoon!"
Queen Angella yelled over their bickering before she sighed and turned toward Adora.

"Why don't we go talk in private? Where it's…. Calmer?" The queen asked, turning her attention back toward Adora now that Glimmer and Catra had been stunned into silence.

However, that didn't last long because before Adora could answer, Catra spoke again

"With all due respect, I am not going to let my girlfriend go behind closed doors with the whole reason she left in the first place!"

All eyes were on them then, Angella's narrowing slightly before she asked.

"Adora, what is she talking about?"

Adora released Catra's hand before sighing and glanced up at Angella.

"Maybe I should talk to her, Catra. Please don't cause any trouble."

Catra could only clench her jaws and nod at that.

"If you need me, just call...okay?"

Angella couldn't help but be confused as she walked into the room and she the door behind them. Had she did something to offend Adora? Had she, unknowingly hurt the girl? She Couldn't remember anything in particular that she had done besides lecturing her the previous day, but surely that wasn't it. Was it?
Had she said something that the girl misinterpreted? Did the girl not understand that she had put herself in harm's way?

"Now that my daughter and your...girlfriend isn't competing on who can yell the loudest, can you please explain what prey tell the Magi-Cat meant when she said I was the reason you left?" She asked, trying not to notice how Adora shifted, arms crossed across her chest.

"I...Queen Angella...It's just."

Angella sighed and gingerly placed a hand on Adora's shoulder.

"Please just talk to me, Adora. You have no reason to be afraid."

She could feel the usually stoic, cheerful girl trembling beneath her touch.

"It's just...I...Mean...I know I'm She-Ra and that's a huge responsibility and I appreciate you letting me live here but sometimes…"

Adora began, only to trail off and shift so that Angella couldn't see her expression, although the teen's voice was threatening to break.

"Its okay Adora, You can be honest with me. It is not going to offend me in the slightest." Angella assured, only to feel the girl shift from beneath her touch.

"Its stupid….I know I have a purpose and that i have to serve that purpose but... Sometimes I hate that the only thing people see when they look at me is She-Ra!"

Angella wasn't sure what shocked her more. The fact that the girl glared at her with tears in her eyes or the fear that she saw nearly instantly wash over her face when she realized she had just yelled those words.

"You're Majesty….I'm sorry...I…"
Angella just held up a hand.

"Don't apologise, it is alright. However, it seems to me like we need to have a long talk about what is and isn't expected of you." Angella said, reaching over to gingerly lift Adora's face so that she was looking at her "you as in Adora, Not She-Ra, who I know is as brave and good as any mythical warrior may be."

«___________★___________»

"Since when did you two become girlfriend's? I mean, there was obviously some sexual tension going on at the ball but...when did that happen?" Glimmer asked as Catra cocked an ear in the direction of the door

"Hey! Are you eavesdropping on my mom? She's not going to hurt her!"

Catra growled at this and glanced over at the two-tone haired girl.

"And if I am? What are you going to do? Throw sparkles at me?" Catra retorted, earning a glare.

"At least I have powers besides seeing in the dark!"

Catra scoffed at that and smirked.

"Oh really? You think that I don't?" Catra stated, suddenly glowing a pale orange and bolting toward the other end of the room, in what seemed like a second.

"Just because I don't have a flashy power doesn't mean that my runestone didn't give me something!" Catra said, flicking her tail in amusement at the look on Glimmer's face.

"Now that we've cleared that up, where the representative my mom sent here from Half-moon? Since my idiot little sister decided to follow me here, I need to tell my parents where she is so they won't worry...and since my mother fails at technology...the best way to do that is by letter."
Catra couldn't believe the size of the castle—or how many rooms were unused. Sure the guards had rooms, as did all the staff but some places were just empty, smelling of dust and old cloth.

However then she saw a painting that hung in one room—which was full of armor—and felt herself freeze.

*That's....Wait, He's the king of Brightmoon?*

"What are you doing?"

Catra almost jumped out of her skin but relaxed when she saw it was one of the girls from the night of the dance.

"Just looking...But one question, what is the King's name?"

The look she got was one of confusion.

"His name was Micah, why?"

"Just curious."

Adora hadn't been released from her talk with Angella for long when she suddenly found herself being dragged off by Catra, who had an irritated look on her face.

"Uh Catra...What the..."
She began, earning a sigh.

"Today would have been Angella and Micah's anniversary if the horde hadn't taken him." Catra replied, which only served to confuse Adora more.

"So? What does that have to do with us leaving?"

Catra sighed and closed her eyes entire turning toward Adora.

"Micah's not dead, Adora. Remember the guy with the red gypsy mask thing...well that is Micah...and we're going to bring him back. I know how my mom worries about my dad and if something were to happen to him, she would drive herself insane.....and I don't like Glimmer or anything but I know I would miss my dad like crazy if I were in her position. Now let's go."

Adora barely managed to follow along without tripping.

"Wait! Catra shouldn't we…"

Adora began, earning a scoff.

"Raiona wants to meet Prima...Well she can see Prima and we can bring Micah back...Even if I have to stun his ass. The world is in a full blown war against the Horde now...He's not protecting anyone by staying on beast island or hiding behind a mask."
Blood And Fire

Chapter Summary

While Catra and Adora head to beast island, something terrible happens

"Why was Micah on Beast island? I mean, why didn't he come home?"

Adora couldn't help but ask as they flew toward the island, Raiona clinging to Catra really tight with her face buried in her sister's hair.

"Beast island was an active place...After Prima nearly killed herself breaking him out ...He Used his magic to break out more people. They were staying on beast island to form their own rebellion of sorts after the first one fell. I guess he wanted to protect Glimmer and Angella from being attacked for holding a fugitive." Catra answered, using her tail to lightly rub on Raiona's back.

"Relax kit, we'll be there soon."

Adora couldn't help but smile at the sight.

"You know, I always knew you weren't that bad but I never thought you would be good with kids."

She said, earning a crooked grin.

"Yeah well there's a lot you don't know about me, Adora."

«________________★________________»

C'yla felt like she would be sick, as the scent of smoke and blood filled both the enclosed space and her senses.
She could see everyone fighting for their lives, even the Scorpions who still had so very little stamina. She could see Tora sitting nearby, blood covering the front of his shirt from the wound on his shoulder.

*I have to do something! Everyone is counting on me.*

She thought just as the blade began to pulsate with a crimson energy, as if the blade had a mind of its own and wanted to be used.

*What the hell is this? What do I do?* She wondered just as a large, red reptilian swung his baton at her, prompting her to bring the blade up to protect herself, and to her horror and amazement, a wave of energy shot through the blade and through the weapon...and it's wielder.

The blast spread out as though it too was sentient, leaving behind nothing but carnage when it touched those wishing to harm her people.

*So this is it's true power..That's why Catra told me to keep the sword...*”

"Secure then runestone! Make sure those bastards can't find it without magic at magic to guide them!" She ordered a group of clerics nearby, lead by Anu who just nodded and motioned for his unit to follow him.

"You're Majesty...What will we do now? Stay down here and we'll die like vermin!" A man called, half crazed with fear.

Cyra glanced down at the sword, knuckles turning white.

*I could blast the caves open again but that is too dangerous.* She mentally told herself, but to her surprise Tora took her hand.

"I can get us out of here. I need everyone to gather as many crystals as they can. Place them in a circle and then bring everyone into the circle." Tora called loudly and instantly everyone snapped to obey.
But C'yra couldn't believe her ears.

"Tora, You're bleeding and not to mention your back! I can't let you do this, there are too many risks!" Cyra stated, earning a sigh as he pulled her down, kissing her.

"Cy' I know you would never want me to do this and as much as I love you and our girls...I have to take this risk. I would rather for the girls to lose their father than both of their parents and that is the outcome if we don't get out of here before the oxygen depletes."

«_______________★_______________»

"So this is my youngest granddaughter?" Prima said, arms crossed and leering as Raiona tried to hide behind Catra—who rolled her eyes and stepped aside, resulting in the girl bolting to stand behind Adora.

"Yeah...and evidently you're scarier than mom is...and mom is buffer than you." Catra snickered just as she felt a strange sensation run down her spine.

"Prim? Did you feel that?" She asked, noticing how her grandmother had stiffened.

"That was a very powerful blast of ground based magic...and there is only four masters of that art still living." Prima said, suddenly grave as she let out a roar, causing the maroon and Crimson dragon to come soaring out of nowhere.

"Micah! Go with the kids back to Brightmoon....I need to go see about something."
Catra watched the reunion between the monarchs of Brightmoon, smirking slightly even though she couldn't shake the feeling that something terrible was about to happen. However she tried not to think about it.

"Hey Catra, Thanks….I guess I owe you."

Catra just shrugged, glancing away from the royal family of Brightmoon as heat crawled into her face.

"Yeah well….I know that I would miss my dad like crazy if I were in your place and I couldn't just sit by while knowing he was alive out there. He wanted to protect you but now that you're leading the rebellion….I figured that he would do more good here."

Catra hated to appear vulnerable in front of the temperamental princess but there was no way to explain herself without telling the truth.

“I guess Adora is right, you’re not that bad.”

Glimmer said, earning a crooked grin from the feline. However whatever joy that there was to be had in that rare moment of peace ended when someone burst into the throne room out of breath and wild eyed.

“your majesty! A beacon has been lit in the ruined tower of D’ryluith! Should we send troops to assist?”

Catra froze at that, her mind suddenly wheeling as Angella gave an affirmative.

“I’ll go too. Mysticor has always been allied with the Magi-Cats. If they are involved, then it’s only right that I help in any way I can.” Micah stated, placing a hand on Catra’s shoulder.

“you better stay here...We don’t know what is going on.”
Catra felt sick when her mother walked into the room, smelling of smoke, earth, and blood. However it wasn’t the smell that worried the teen, not really.

It was her eyes. Cyra’s eyes usually held a gleam that Catra had come to describe as a spark of regale power, however now they were a dull amber, lacking any hint of emotion.

“Mom? what’s going on? Where’s Dad?”

She asked, an uneasy weight filling the pit of her stomach as she watched as the woman’s eyes glazed over with unshed tears.

“Catra, go get your sister. Then we will talk.”

Catra felt like she couldn’t breath as she stood her ground, not wanting to disobey but not able to unfreeze herself from her spot on the floor.

“Is he...Was he....”

she couldn’t bring herself to say the word dead as what was once just a mere fact of life seemed to turn her heart into shards of glass, which in turned threatened to stab itself out of her chest.

“He is hanging on...But nothing is for certain.”
Cyra answered, her own voice breaking and that was all it took for Catra to bolt from the room, tears threatening to fall despite being surrounded by people she barely knew.

This is my fault...if I hadn't ran from Shadow Weaver...If I hadn't stayed in Halfmoon, This wouldn't have happened!

Catra thought bitterly, only stopping once she was nearly in the middle of the whispering wood, where she sank down on the ground, knees pulled to her chest.

She didn't know how long she had sat there however she suddenly felt a rough, strong hand ruffle her hair.

"He wouldn't want you sitting out here alone."

Glancing up Catra saw C'yra standing near her.

"What are you doing out here? You should…” Catra began, only to feel arms wrap around her from behind, however Catra just turned and hid her face into her mother's shirt.

"Catra, I know you nor Raiona will understand this but Tora did this because he loved you...and he didn't want to risk me endangering both of us." C'yra said, only to hear a growl

"If he loved us then why did he do something like this? Why did he want to leave us?"

Catra hated how pathetic she sounded but she couldn't help it.
"How could you let this happen? Couldn't you do something? You're the queen!"

"I bet you wanted him to die! That way you wouldn't have to deal with a cripple!"

Raiona's words rang in C'yra's ears as she stood inside the Bright moon gardens, eyes trained on the twin moons overhead.

She didn't know how long she had stood there but it was long enough for her to get completely lost in her own thoughts and the stillness of the night.

"Mom?"

Raiona's voice startled her from her thoughts but instead of saying anything she just opened her arms and knelt down, prompting the preteen to rush to her.

"I'm so sorry about what I said....I just…"

C'yra didn't let her finish, shushing her.

"Rai, sweetheart. I know. I know you're hurting...So am I. I want you to understand, I did want to try something else...But he wouldn't let me. Raiona, don't you ever think for a second that I don't love Tora with all my heart. Just like we both love you and your sister."

C'yra said, holding the distraught girl close.

"I don't want him to go."

Raiona whimpered, causing C'yra to sigh.

"I know baby...I know. Neither do I."
"He may be able to hear you...Just...don't you stay up too late. He's one of the strongest, bravest, and most noble of cats. If anyone can fight this...He can." Prima said, gently pressing her nose against Catra's temple before leaving the medical bay.

Catra sighed and once she knew she was alone, she sat at the edge of the bed.

"Why?"

She whispered, half hoping that he couldn't hear.

"I just found you...I had just understood what love and family meant....I....I don't understand. Why did you choose to do something that would take you from us? Why did you choose to do this? Did you think it would hurt less? Because guess what....It really fucking hurts!"

She couldn't keep the tears back, no matter how hard she tried.

"If I had known that this would happen, I would have never came to Half-moon! My happiness means nothing if it's going to destroy the lives of everyone around me!"

She didn't notice that someone had been listening by the door, who left as soon as Catra had said that.

She didn't know how long she had been there or how long she had been crying, but no matter what she couldn't stop the guilt that twisted at her stomach.

"I....There was so much I couldn't say...That I should have. I mean I never even said I loved you, did I?" Again she choked up.
"And now I may never get to."

"There has to be something She-Ra can do, I mean she supposedly has healing powers right?"
Scorpia asked as she wiped her eyes again, silently pleading with Adora who looked just as upset—although not crying.

"I could try….and maybe i could get Light hope to actually tell me how to do something useful besides shape shifting this damned sword into a teapot. But I don't know if it will bring someone out of a coma." Adora replied, earning a sigh from Amur who was leaned up against the wall across the room.

"It's not a coma...not really. He channeled too much energy from nature into himself, which wouldn't be so dangerous if he hadn't released it all at once to transport everyone to the summit of claw mountain. What he experienced was like one massive short circuit of his nervous system...made worse by the previous injury to his spinal cord. His whole body is exhausted."

He said, glancing across the room before sighing.

"If he can recover...He'll need time and rest. Not some girl who can only half use her powers."

Adora was about to say something when Glimmer stood up, sending a blast of kinetic energy straight into Amur's face, resulting in a hiss of pain.

"Listen you, Adora has saved all of our asses more than once! If she thinks that there may be a way to heal him...Then she will try to find a way. What kind of power do you have? Magic? Someone's half of Etheria. So Just shut up and stop acting like you're all high and mighty!"
Memories

“Catra, I know that this has to be really hard but you have to eat something.”

Adora began, earning a glare from her girlfriend.

“No Adora, you don’t understand. You’re like me! You never knew what love really was until you left The Fright Zone! You don’t know what it’s like to be so terrified out of your wits that everytime you’re around someone you feel like you’re walking on eggshells!”

Catra snarled with such anger that it made Adora take a full step back.

“Tora….He knew I was afraid but he didn’t exploit it nor did he keep his distance like Cyra tried to in those first few weeks. He showed me magic... *Harmless* magic. He showed me that it was possible to use magic that didn’t hurt.”

Adora could see the tears welling up in the other girl’s eyes again.

“He took over my training, you know. He knew Anu’s classes bored me and that I needed a new approach. He trained me as hard as the Horde did but he made it a game and he never minded that I would get creative with the counters...he wanted me to think critically. And whenever I was afraid to talk to mom, I could always trust him.”

Adora watched as Catra closed her eyes, a ghost of a smile coming over her face.

"He never got mad either...If Raiona or I would annoy him we'd end up with a faceful of sparkles or neon fur. He was always playful...Even if he was irritated. He hated seeing anyone upset. Hell, even when he was actually kinda mad he had this....soft...anger. like you knew he was upset and disappointed but....you also knew he loved you and that wasn't changing."

Again her voice broke and Adora reached over and took her hand.

"Tell me more about him?"
She requested, feeling her heart breaking for the feline as she put her arms around her, feeling the other girl stiffen before relaxing.

"What do you want to know?"

"Anything."

"Get off me! You're crushing me!"

"Sorry squirt...I can't! The gravity here is too heavy!"

*Catra laughed as she remained seated on Raiona, most of her weight on her hands while her legs were crapped over her.*

"Dad! Tell Catra to get off!"

*Tora just chuckled and shook his head at the two.*

"Catra...I told you to spend time with your sister, not flatten her. Why don't you two go play cards or something? Your mother has a lot of work to catch up on and you're roughhousing probably doesn't help."

*He chided, unable to keep amusement from his voice.*
He waited until their backs were turned before levitating a pair of cushions from the sofa at them.

Catra smiled at the memory as she glanced over at Adora.

"Well he is...was..kinda goofy and playful. One time he got all three of us kicked out of the house until Mom got her work done. Raiona and I were horsing around and he kinda told us to do something quieter...before he decided to levitate a pair of sofa cushions at us. A massive pillow fight ensued and Mom came storming out and told all three of us that if we wanted to be overgrown kittens that we could take it outside."

Adora couldn't help but chuckle.

"Was C'yra mad for long?"

Catra just snickered.

"When we finally came home that evening we found the living room boobytrapped. So no...she wasn't angry. Like my mom is kinda strict sometimes but she also has this really soft...Playful side."

Catra responded then glanced over at the unconscious form of her father.

*Mom said he wanted to protect everyone...that he didn't want Raiona and I to ever feel alone. Didn't he think we'd miss him?*

"And he was brave and strong. He even protected me when I was little more than a theory and a horde cadet….and he was willing to step in when C'yra couldn't bring herself to do something difficult. It was the only time he acted on his title as king."

Catra sniffed again.

"And right now if he was awake he's probably tell me if I didn't eat he'd make me wear it...and He
would be that underhanded to...He put vinegar in my water before for annoying him when I was sick...and annoying him."

C'yra was surprised to find Catra still sitting by the bed.

"Grandma said that you might be able to hear me...so I… I just wanted to apologise again for putting you into this position and not being the best daughter...I mean you were always there and I couldn't swallow my own pride for one damn second. Guess I was cut out to be a soldier, not a daughter huh?" Catra was saying and it broke her heart.

*Is that how she feels? That she wasn't enough?*

"I think if he was awake he would actually smack you for saying that."

C'yra commented, causing the girl to leap from her chair in surprise.

"Shit! Mom! I didn't hear you!"

She stated before deflating once again and adding

"There has been no change."

C'yra sighed and walked over to Catra, taking note of how tired she looked.

"Did you sleep last night? At all?"
She asked, earning a hiss.

"How can I sleep when my dad is dying! How can I sleep when I know that this is all my fault! If I hadn't come to Half-moon...this would never have happened..."

C'yra didn't give her time to become too upset before she pulled her out of the chair and into an embrace, before growling firmly

"This is not your fault Catra. Those soldiers came through there looking for useful relics....Hordak is planning something. By no means is this your fault." C'yla said softly before sighing and adding "your father would want you to rest you know."

*If anyone is at fault Catra. It's me. But he wouldn't want either of us to be weighed down by guilt.*

She thought but didn't dare say it aloud as Raiona's words from the previous day still rang in her ears and ached in her chest.

"Yeah, I know he would want me to sleep but...it's just....You actually got to talk to him before this happened and he knew you loved him. Me? I probably seemed to selfish....too prideful to..."

C'yla growled again.

"Catra, you say things in your own way. Sometimes without saying it."

She stated before sighing and adding

"That night you had that nightmare and was panicking. As soon as you smelled Tora nearby you reached out with your tail, wrapping around his hand. We knew that was your way to as for affection and comfort...we also know that it was your way of showing affection. You grew up without much emotional stability or even affection itself...we know you do things you're way kitten."
They stood like that for a few minutes before Catra finally asked

"How's Rai?"

C'yra sighed again and closed her eyes.

"As well as you can imagine. She didn't sleep much but then again, none of us have. I think she's asleep...hopefully. you girls shouldn't have to worry so much."
The price of power

Adora had never been so angry in her life.

*Why can't Light Hope just answer my damn question? I mean...there are lives at stake! I don't care what light hope says...If I can't fight for my friends and the people I care about then what use is there to being She-Ra anyway?*

Adora thought as she mounted Swift Wind.

"You okay? You seem...Tense?"

He asked, earning a sigh.

"Looks like I'm going to have to figure it out on my own, Swifty. I mean... seriously....how hard is it to answer a question?"

She answered

"Ah, I see. More of that 'no worldly connections' garbage?" Swift Wind responded, heading back to Brightmoon.

"Yeah. She doesn't get it....When you care about someone you just can't forget about them and their struggles."

Catra growled as she focused the magic even more, resulting in flame like orange energy whipping around her. She could feel herself wanting to lose control, the anger and bitterness she felt growing tenfold inside her chest, threatening to consume her.
Come on Catra...You can do this. The least you can do is revenge your dad! She thought, closing her eyes as she forced even more magic out of her body, forcing herself to gain focus and control.

My dad and uncle were great mages, my grandmother is a strong magic user. I can do this! I have to do this! I have to stop shadow weaver before anyone else gets hurt! She's the commanding officer that sends troops out! She is the one over the attack on my family!

She could see her vision turn blurry, spots dancing before her however yet she pushed on.

Come on, you can do it...just a bit longer!

Her whole body started to tremble from the strain.

«__________★__________»

Prima sighed as she stared out the window, her mind whirling with thoughts of the past.

Her outright rejection—although half-hearted—of Tora, her brutal training regimen with C'yra who was too young to understand the need for it to be so harsh.

Her daughter's nervousness when announcing her pregnancy.

Prima glanced down at the sword, sneering as she moved across the floor and into the medical room.

"C'yra, I'm going out. With everyone preoccupied and Catra ran off to gods only knows where...someone needs to make sure the horde doesn't plan an attack."

She stated, motion to the sword.
"Just be careful mother...I really don't want to explain to Catra that she's lost two loved ones in the same week. Not like you care, you always hated him."

C'yra replied, earning a growl from Prima.

"Listen C'yra." She growled, "that man is strong...he stood up to me didn't he? Damn it girl! I didn't think you would fall in love with the stubborn trickster but I hired him and his brother at the palace so that you wouldn't be so damn lonely. Did you honestly think I hated him all those years when I kept a roof over their heads in the palace? Don't you dare give up on him because I sure as hell know that he has a chance!"

Catra groaned, collapsing onto the dirt.

"How the hell does Micah, Dad and Shadow Weaver do it?"

She wondered aloud, not even noticing that she was being watched until a familiar, elegant voice spoke.

"Are you sure that overworking is the best outcome?"

Catra growled as she whirled around to face Silver Storm.

"What do you know? You were born with power! You never had to prove yourself! You never watched people you love die and be powerless to stop it even though you supposedly had magic inside of you!"

She spat, earning a snort from the Pegasus who just shook himself, unphased.

"You would gain more control if you focused on something...like water or Earth. Combine the elements of the two and you would gain power...However there is a price for power. You must
always choose when to use it wisely because you could badly hurt those you love."

C'yra watched as She-Ra pointed the sword at the still form of her husband, every instinct in her screaming for her to stop the girl however she knew that Adora meant no harm. So she allowed it.

She watched as nothing happened, sweat heading on the blonde's face in pure concentration and then ever so slightly, a flicker of light came from the rune stone in the sword's hilt.

The glow slowly formed, flickering dimly at first then slowly grew in brightness until it was a steady flow….which crawled along the blade until it formed a wide, white-blue beam that was angled right at Today's chest.

*Is she able to do it?* C'yra wondered as she watched and although Tora moved like he had been shocked, nothing happened.

"Queen C'yra...I…"

C'yra could hear the girl beneath the warrior facade breaking so she put a hand on her shoulder.

"It's alright...You tried. That is all anyone could hope for."
The Power Of She-Ra

Everything hurt and the only thing Catra wanted to do was to crawl in bed. However she couldn't just not visit her father. After all, it was her fault.

Walking in she sighed because nothing had changed.

"Hey Dad...I don't know if you can hear me or not but...Well I wanted to tell you about training today." She began, closing her eyes as she took a seat beside him on the bed.

"Remember how you told me I had to focus? Well Silver Storm has helped me with that...But I doubt you'll be proud of what I'm doing...But this is war and we're going to need everyone pulling out all the stops."

She stated before leaning over and nuzzling him, only to gasp in shock when she felt a hand weakly rub against her hair.

"Dad?" She yelled, pulling away only to ear a crooked smile.

"What's the about me not being proud of you Kitten? You should know by now that I trust your judgement."

Catra couldn't keep the tears at Bay then as she buried her face into his chest.

"I thought you were….gone."

Suddenly the word dead was too hard to say,

"I'm alright kitten...just tired and sore….and my back feels as though I've gotten stung by Thorell all over again. Do you think you could go tell one of the healers to get me something for the pain?"

"Of course. Anything else?"
Catra replied, not wanting to leave him but not wanting to see him in pain.

"Yes...go get your mother and sister."

Catra nearly ran into queen Angella on her way up the stairs.

"Catra! What in Etheria?" The queen began, only to be bypassed by the teenager.

"Sorry Angella! I just need to get my Mom and Sister! My dad's awake!"

Catra shouted without a second thought, although Angella didn't have the heart to tell her to slow down or be quiet.

"I take it that the king of D'ryliuth has finally woke up?"

One guard asked the queen who just nodded.

"Seems so....I don't think I've ever seen someone move that fast."

Adora had been still asleep when Catra barged in her room, pouncing on her and pinned her down.
"Wha–oh hey Catra, it's you. What's wrong?" The blonde asked sleepily, shoving the feline off of her and sitting up, rubbing the sleep from her eyes.

"You did it Adora! You healed my dad!"

Adora blinked in confusion, her heart dropping.

"I didn't….I mean I tried to but I guess I wasn't strong enough." She corrected, earning a scoff.

"But you did! He woke up! Whatever you did worked and I can't thank you enough!"

Seeing Catra like this was making Adora's head spin, but it was a vast improvement over Catra being depressed.

However the loud purring and the sudden brushed of a cheek against hers did catch her off guard.

"Thanks again Adora. You have no idea how much this means to me…I Mean, you went out of the way to help my family even though you don't know them." Catra added as she moved to give Adora more personal space.

Adora was taken aback by how soft her eyes were.

Had they ever been so gentle since they were kids?

"Catra, I hated seeing you so down and I would help anyone in my power. You know that."

Catra just rubbed against her again before retorting "yeah I know….and thanks. I totally owe you."

With that Catra kissed her on the cheek before hopping off the bed and adding
"Well I'm beat...Night Adora!"

Prima growled angrily as she drug her captive back to Brightmoon. Her sword glistened with blood and her fur stuck to her skin due to sweat. However her captive was unarmed.

"Queen Angella, with all due respect….My son in law was targeted and I want to know how they found out and why. This is a force captain...and judging by how she's limping...She was probably one of the ones that lead the attack." She said as she forced her captive to their knees.

"Don't be so rough. She may be a Horde Officer but we are not like the horde." Micah said, coming to stand by his wife.

Prima glanced at the girl and sighed.

"You're right. However we need answers."
Catra woke up to something pulling on her tail, resulting in her swatting the offender in the face with the furry appendage.

"Unless the Horde is attacking...Leave me alone."

Curling up a bit tighter beneath the cover—and pulling her tail near her side as well to prevent any more tugging.

"Well I guess I'll just eat your share of the pastries that are being served this morning...Not my fault you're too lazy to come to breakfast!"

Catra grumbled at the sound of her girlfriend's voice before grabbing a pillow and tossing it at her.

"If you wanna eat that much sugar, go right ahead. But when you're sick later don't expect sympathy from me!" Catra retorted, only to get wacked with the very pillow she threw.

"You know, even if you have changed a lot...You're still an asshole!"

Catra just laughed.

"Yeah well, it takes one to know one!"

"What did you do? Kill a bird?"
Glimmer asked as Catra came into the dinning hall, still picking feathers out of her hair.

"No, but I think Adora and I owe Angella a pillow."

Catra responded, shaking herself so that the feathers dislodged from her mane

"Hey! Watch it! You're going to get feathers in my food!"

Bow exclaimed, only to earn a smirk from Catra who glanced over at where Amur was sitting.

Using her powers she shot across the room on all fours, leaving the feathers along the floor—and all over Amur.

"Hey! What the hell! I'm going to kill you, you little bitch!"

Amur yelled, standing up only to end up falling backwards into his seat as a Catra sent a blast of light toward him.

"You're not going to do anything asshole!"

Glimmer couldn't help but snicker at the sight of Catra and her cousin arguing, until the door opened again and a green aura surrounded both of them, lifting the pair of teens apart.

"Can you two behave for five minutes?"

"Uncle Tora! You're awake!"

"Dad! Should you be out of bed?"
Both teenaged Magi-Cats exclaimed at the same time, only to be dropped unceremoniously on the floor with an oof.

"Thanks to She-Ra, I'm fine. Now will you two sit and eat like civilized people?"

*No offense but your cousins a bit of a jerk."

Catra was laying on a rock in the gardens, absorbing the heat from the moon rays that shone during their day cycle.

_You know what...Even if Adora is inviting every stupid princess here. It's totally worth joining if it means I can lay here in the light until dusk._

She thought, tail flicking idly as she listened to them talking.

"A bit of a jerk? Bow, he's a fuck boy, plain and simple!"

Glimmer's response caused her to burst out laughing.

"You know what, Glitter Glue. You're not _that_ bad." Catra responded, sitting up slightly as she glanced over at her "for the human version of a cupcake."

"And I guess you're not so bad...For an asshole."

Catra could practically sense Bow's confusion but she just smirked and laid back down.
"So how long until the other royals get here because I am supposed to help my mom with some shit she wants to do for Micah."

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was going to be longer but I decided to give the interactions with the princesses a chapter to itself.

Also expect some cute Catradora moments next chapter
Princesses

Catra really didn't like crowds.

They were too loud, nosey, and usually didn't watch where they were going—which ended with her nursing a stepped on tail most of the time—however she couldn't find it in herself to hate some of Adora's friends.

Even the goggle headed one who had managed to step on her tail twice in the last hour. No, she was just too damn odd to stay mad at.

Especially since she currently was trying to figure out what the hell the princess was doing in the vents of all places.

Well it's either dealing with Bow and Scorpia and what they are hoping turns out to be chocolate muffins or deal with whatever it is that Adora and the rest of the pansies are doing.

"So you're dating an ex horde soldier?"

"Adora is an ex horde soldier!"

Catra felt her ears twitch at that.

"Ohh...So you're dating the one who can turn really tall?" The geeky one—Entrapta, Catra believed her name was—said, turning toward her in the vent.

"Yeah. So? You're point? Aren't you like...older than any of us? Haven't you been on a date?"

Catra retorted, earning a shrug.
"I don't see the point? Like I guess I wouldn't be opposed to the idea but my research…"

Catra couldn't help but laugh quietly at that.

"Let's just say you're married to your research then."

*Maybe not all the princesses are terrible.*

"Where is the cat anyway?" Glimmer asked as she glanced around the room, earning a shrug from Adora.

"Knowing her? Sleeping curled up underneath something."

Glimmer rolled her eyes at that before rolling the dice to the board game they were playing.

"I know she's your girlfriend or whatever but kinda glad she's not here right now. She would totally take this game too serious. I mean...I saw how she reacted to losing that race you two had this morning after breakfast."

Glimmer retorted, earning a snort from Bow.

"Reacted? I'd say she lost it...I mean she froze half the floor ...Just to see Adora literally crash into your mom."

Glimmer snickered at that before glancing over at Adora, who was blushing.

"I think my mom is pretty used to crazy by now. I mean...Remember that one time I meant to teleport us to the kitchen and we ended up on top of her desk, in her Chambers?"
"And there goes the dice…"

Catra snickered, watching the pair of teens arguing in the room beneath her as Glimmer and Bow tried to calm the situation down before it became worse.

"Too bad I didn't bring a spy bot!" Entrapta stated, sparking Catra's interest.

"Now that is something I'd like to see...Besides seeing a princess throw dice at another princess is pretty funny." Catra responded, just as Adora managed to herd the others out of the room.

"Aw man. They're going outside! Now I can't finish my social experiment!"

Catra rolled her eyes at that as she stretched.

"You know, you could always take part in...whatever any of that was? I mean...Besides the kid huffing up and pouting and Blue hair screaming at Flower girl over collateral damage ...Which I don't get because it was a board game for first ones sake!"

Catra responded, morning to the now empty room, or rather empty except for the board game.

"Besides, who's to say that flower isn't going to get hit with a tidal wave next?"

They're not anything like what the Horde had us believe...as a matter of fact they act kinda like we did when Shadow Weaver wasn't around.
Catra thought as she watched Glimmer and Bow compete in some kind of target hitting game, then she heard a very familiar and unwelcomed voice come from the gardens entrance.

"Well I didn't expect to see my cousin actually befriending someone."

Catra glared up at Amur who looked as cocky as usual.

"Amur, go to hell." She commented nonchalantly, earning a gasp from Bow.

"Catra! There's kids here!"

He exclaimed, earning an eye roll from the feline princess.

"Yeah, an eleven year old. If she has never heard the word hell before then something is bad wrong."

Catra retorted, only to earn a smirk from Amur.

"How Can anyone date you? You have no class, Catra."

He retorted, earning a hiss from her.

"You're just jealous that you can't get Adora to bang you."

The whole garden went quiet before everyone erupted into laughter, except Amur who fluffed up in embarrassment and Bow.
"Catra! Again there are kids here!"

Catra could see Frosta stiffen at that.

"I may be younger but I'm not stupid! Nor am I a baby!"

Catra couldn't help but smirk at the girl's spunk, however that amusement vanished when Amur spoke again:

"Unlike you. I don't have to use magic to make people like me! There is no way that C'yla the first chose you over that sister of yours." He sneered, only to be blasted back the way he came by a sudden wave of water.

"Well that was annoying."

Mermista commented, earning a smirk from Catra who turned toward her.

"Thanks for that ...But do me a favor and keep the water way away from me."
In The Shadows Of Night

Adora tried to ignore how Catra's tail curled tight around her in the darkness as Glimmer finished telling whatever horror story that she had heard.

Even in the dim light, Adora could see the bored look on the feline's face.

"You okay, Cat?"

She asked, causing Catra to bristle slightly.

"I'm fine but I hate it when you call me that."

Adora could hear the amusement in Catra voice as the feline leaned against her.

Catra thought this whole thing was dumb.

But at least Rai had taken a liking to Frosta and drug a still way to awkward around people Scorpia in on whatever mischief that they were up to.

Which would probably be a good thing since Catra knew for a fact that half the stories everyone was exchanging would have kept Rai awake that night.

"Everyone's went besides you, catra. You can't tell me that the Magi-Cats doesn't have scary urban legends!" Now stated, earning a sigh from Catra who just rolled her eyes.

"Fine…Just because I know if I don't say something Adora's going to probably going to annoy me about it until next year."
She ignored the elbow to her side as she curled her tail a bit tighter around Adora before casting an illusion upon the room, making it seem even darker.

"This Evidently happened back in the time of the first ones and there are some that swears it is true." She began, trying to make her voice the same eerie tone that Tora had adopted when he had told her and her sister the same story months before.

"There was a king who was cunning and cruel...He craved power all for himself...to the point that he sacrificed servants in many brutal ways just to use their blood and magic into some kind of twisted spell to grow his own power."

Catra grinned slightly as she made the illusion play out shadows of different sights that had become common in the fright zone...the discomfort in the princesses—and Bow's—faces told her that they definitely weren't used to the visuals.

She proceeded to describe the atrocities of this king, before the story changed

"Then a prince, barely more than a boy had enough and sought help from a sorceress who gave him a great sword, which was rumored to have the power to destroy a whole planet. The prince then set out, in disguise to collect allies." She paused again to change the illusion to a specimen of every species.

They are literally freaking out over a folk tale? Like Claudius and the Prince were real people but this whole tale is an exaggeration that anyone would know if they read the history of the war.

Catra thought, grinning slyly.

As she continued the story, which soon drew to a close with

"The blast from the Prince's sword was so powerful, it ripped the flesh from the king and sent him hurling into a rip in space and time itself, although some say that he didn't die but is biding his time in the mountains of Etheria, waiting to strike!"
With that she used her magic to cause a flash and a loud noise like thunder, earning a collective help from everyone in the area.

"Catra, I think I liked you better without magic."

She heard Adora mutter although Catra didn't care, she was laughing too hard.

"Adora, I love you but if you squash my tail one more time,"

LCatra grumbled as she shoved the sleeping girl onto her side so that she could pull the furry appendage from beneath the blonde.

*Note to self….Ask someone who isn’t my mom or dad how the hell to cuddle with my girlfriend without getting my tail broken.*

She thought, shaking out the appendage before standing and casting a light spell in the palm of her hand.

*I may as well go see how Dad’s doing. Shadow Weaver and Hordak can torture me all the hell they want to but they are leaving my family and kingdom out of it.* She decided, the thought turning bitter and her mind raced toward the idea of the training that Silver Storm had given her.

Did she really want to go down that path?

She wasn't sure, but she also knew that she wanted Shadow Weaver to feel the same pain that she had caused her. She wanted Shadow Weaver to feel afraid and hopeless, her life at the mercy of someone more powerful.

But most of all she wanted her to feel the same pain Tora must have felt during his nearly
sacrificial decision for his kingdom.

Forcing the thoughts from her mind, Catra headed into her parents' room, finding them curled up together on the bed, both sleeping soundly.

She stood there for a while, just listening to the dull thud of their hearts before she made up her mind.

_They deserve nights like this ...together without worry. So does Micah and Angella ...And everyone else. Who cares how we get it as long as we kick the damned horde back where it came from?_

"She refuses to eat...I've sent word back to beast island but unless she starts eating ...I don't know. Angella doesn't want to have a medical team to force feed her and even I couldn't bring myself to mentally control a child. It's hard enough to search brains for answers."

Prima sighed as she sank down beside Micah, who was nursing a cup of coffee.

"Is it really a good idea to keep this hidden from the kids? I mean...Adora and Catra were both from the Horde..."

Micah sighed and shook his head.

"Those emotions would complicate things, especially since this force captain was injured during the squemish. I know injuries are unavoidable but I don't want to make any of those formerly allied with the horde to feel threatened."
The desire to protect

Catra walked into the gardens, eyes scanning the skies as she tried to see if Storm was flying around somewhere outside the magical barrier that the more powerful magic users had put up to keep the civilians safe.

Finding no sign of him Catra edged toward the whispering woods where she had been training before with the help of Silver Storm, Clawdeen flanking her.

"You shouldn't be here...I could accidentally hurt you because let's face it, girl. I have no idea what I'm doing." Catra whispered, pausing as she heard the voices of Anu and Elder Cloudfeather close to her.

*I can't let either of them know.... they'll just tell Mom and Dad and they have enough to worry about*. She thought, pausing as she watched tophe two elder Magi-Cats stalk toward the wall, having not heard her.

However what she saw surprised her, because this was the first time that she had seen Any without his Cleric robes, and although she had held suspicion, now it was quite clear that his left arm was completely missing with not even a stump in its place.

*How could it be taken clean off like that?*

She wondered, remembering how she had practically been thrown across the room by the muscular yet older man during training multiple times before.

he was beyond strong and he had to work for it, she knew.

So who was to say that she couldn't become as strong as even Hordak if she wanted?
Sneaking out was easy with her sensitive hearing.

However once she was in the cover of the trees she removed the vial containing a strange reddish brown liquid mixture from where she had buried it.

Sitting on the ground she began to focus her magic, imagining fingers of energy reaching from her and latching onto the liquid.

She could practically feel the moisture as she felt the strain in her own badly, as if she was going to pass out.

Then the vial broke.

"Shit...Too much." She panted aloud, sinking back against Clawdeen and closing her eyes.

"I want to be able to make Shadow Weaver pay...Not give her an instant death." Catra grumbled aloud to the large feline, who just snorted in response.

Catra hated how feral she felt as she watched the rabbit's blood coat her hands, it's breathing labored.

*I can't do this to a living thing. This makes me just as bad as the horde.*

She thought, watching in amazement as the crimson liquid seemed to crawl—as if it were living—back inside the rabbit's opened wounds.

*Wait I can....Whoa....*

She though as Silver Storm came walking out of the forest.
"Go ahead and heal it….it's life force is weak but stable."

The winged horse stated, earning a sigh from Catra who began to focus on another kind of energy.

"How can I use this without killing? Not everyone in the horde deserves to die….not in such a cruel way."

"You need to learn how to control it. But if you want to gain control....you must know first hand how it works, but are you willing to do that?"

Catra felt her stomach twist at the implication of the Pegasus's words but yet she nodded.

"Anything to end this war. The horde has hurt people long enough."

Adora woke up to the sound of the window sliding open, only to see a blood soaked Catra coming through the door.

"Catra! What happened?"

She couldn't help but exclaim, earning a muttered curse from the feline.

"I'm fine Adora…it's not my blood. Go back to sleep."

Catra retorted, quickly undressing and heading toward the bathroom, leaving Adora confused.

When the Magi-Cat returned she was dressed in what could only be described as a smaller version
"What happened?" Adora couldn't help but ask once the Magi-Cat curled back up on the bed.

"Couldn't sleep...went hunting rabbit and may have accidentally mauled a few. None died though." Catra answered, stretching before wrapping her tail around Adora's wrist.

"Go back to sleep."

Adora didn't know why she felt the way she did but something inside of her seemed to be telling her something was wrong.

"Catra?"

She tried again after several minutes, earning a sigh.

"Yeah?"

"You know you can tell me anything right?"

The only answer she got was a tail lash to the face, making her sneeze.

"Yeah, I know. I also know that I want to get strong enough to protect everyone that I care about.....But I think that is something I need to do on my own. I mean, you train as She-Ra....I need to train as a Magi-Cat."

Adora wanted to argue.

To tell Catra that they could do it together but something about Catra's tone made her keep her mouth shut.
Movie to wrap her arms around the feline instead, she was surprised when Catra didn't stiffen at the touch but instead turned to face her, resting her forehead against hers.

"I enjoyed tonight…But that doesn't mean I want to be a part of the alliance." She stated, earning a nod.

"I get it. It was kinda nice seeing you getting along with some of my friends though." Adora answered, although something about the feline's words caused her heart to twist painfully, especially as they pulled apart.

*What is up with me?*

Adora couldn't help but wonder.

"I think I can work with them….Even if Perfuma did murder my nose when she decided to braid my hair….with flowers."

Adora laughed at that.

"You looked so cute though!"

Catra glared at her.

"I'm not cute for the twentieth time tonight. I am a warrior...warriors aren't cute."
Catra bit her lip as she watched the blood drain from her hand into the small glass bottles. There was no denying that it hurt but what was a bit of pain if it meant gaining enough strength to defeat the people that nearly killed her hole kingdom.

Using her magic to stem the blood flow she noticed how quickly that she could get the blood to clot.

"Wait….I was bleeding pretty badly a second ago. What if….

Sinking her claws back into her palm and watching the fresh wave of blood, Catra focused her magic into it again, watching as it slowed to a stop.

"Combine this with a healing spell and there wouldn't be need for so many transfusions." She said allowed to Storm, who was lying behind her with wings spread, protecting both her and Clawdeen from the light rain that had begun to fall that morning.

"You are probably the first one to use biological manipulation who ever thought of that. Just because something is labeled evil does not always make it so. Magic yields to it's user's will. This black magic for a dark mage, White magic for a regular one are just labels." Silver storm said as she finished healing herself.

"So you're saying that Blood magic could be used for healing?"

She questioned, earning a snort.

"You can use biological manipulation to separate blood from any contaminants, such as the dirt on the battlefield. Yet no one within known history has thought of teaching it as a part of battlefield medicine."
Storm's reply surprised her.

"Wait, really? Do you think I'll ever get to that point?"

She questioned and she could swear she heard him laugh.

"You thought to test blood magic's effect on clotting rate. Pretty sure you're one of the only people smart enough to figure it out."

They sat there in silence, watching as the darkness of night finally begin to fade into morning.

"Storm? You said that no magic is truly evil….Does that also mean memory magic and...Shadow manifestation?" She asked after a while, feeling the feathery appendage drop down on top of her as the Pegasus let out a huff.

"It is all in how you use them. The only magic truly condemnable is necromancy. Shadow Manifestation is a mere subtype of illusion spell. As for memory magic, it does hurt its target but can be used in cases of memory loss in order to help figure out if trauma is the culprit."

Catra bit her lip as she leaned back against his side.

"Sometimes I feel like I'm turning into a fucking monster like….Sha….like the horde commander's."

She confessed.

"Monsters don't worry about being monsters themselves Catra, remember that."
Adora groaned as she looked around the room at the multitude of destroyed training dummies. She shouldn't let it get to her, it was just a dream.

Then again it had felt so real.

White hot energy digging into her skin, holding her in place on the ice cold metal as a mental fog took her over. She had felt as though she was drowning, like she would die if she didn't get up.

"You okay kid?"

The sudden voice caused Adora to nearly drop her sword in surprise, having assumed that she would be the only one awake at this hour since even Angella tended to wake up a bit later than people presumed.

"Queen Cyra! Ma'am, what are you doing up at this hour?"

The Magi-Cat queen just smirked.

"Could ask you the same question…. Besides what did I tell you about formalities?"

Cyra asked, leaping upon one of the benches and sitting crouched, golden eyes narrowed at her as if reading her mind.

"Sorry, force of habit. I just...couldn't sleep. I mean, when Catra is there the nightmares doesn't seem so bad but this morning I woke up and she was gone."

Adora said, meantly kicking herself for showing weakness however C'yla just chuckled.

"Typical Catra, But just so you know, if you want to talk about the nightmares...I'm a pretty good listener."

Adora really wanted to tell her no, to really say that she could handle it but it wasn't like she could bother Angella with this sort of thing and Glimmer and Bow didn't understand.
"I don't even know where to begin. It's just this weird, strange dream. I've been having it a lot recently. Sometimes I'm in total darkness and it feels like a thousand needles are lashing into me, other times I'm strapped to a metal table or something and it feels like I'm being electrocuted." Adora finally said after a few minutes, only to nearly jump out of her skin when a large hand suddenly cupped her shoulder.

"How long has it been since you've had a good night's sleep?"

Adora was caught off guard by the concern.

"Uh ...Dunno?" She barely managed to respond, only to feel a sense of deja vu as a warm crackling glow began to surround her.

Why don't suddenly want to hit her? I know she isn't going to hurt me.

She wondered, feeling herself untransform from her She-Ra state as her tired muscles began to relax.

"Go back to bed... I'll bring you something that'll help you sleep without nightmares for once."
"And where have you been?"

Catra nearly tripped on her own tail when she heard her mother's voice.

"Shit! Oh hey Mom! I've just been out on Storm!"

Catra really hoped her mom believed the lie because she really didn't need the lecture. As her mother leapt from the tree, landing in front of her Catra couldn't help but stiffen at the annoyed look.

"You reek of your own blood and your shirt is ruined. Mind to try that again?"

Catra sighed then, glancing down at the path before steeling herself.

"Fine I was training ...practicing magic because we're going to need all the advantages we can get on the horde."

She didn't dare look up when she heard her mother approach her.

"Then why are you covered in blood?"

Catra felt herself go rigid at the tone in her mother's voice.

*Shit.... She'll figure it out either way.*

"You probably wouldn't believe me if I told you or you'd just hear what you wanted to and freak out."
Catra retorted, earning a snarl from Cyra—which made her flinch back.

"Catra, the past couple of days you just seem to vanish! Even your scent vanishes and Adora said you came home covered in blood...and now *this*. What is going on? If you are in any kind of trouble…"

The snarl may have startled Catra but the concern in her mother's tone caused her to relax somewhat.

"I'm not...Look. Shadow Weaver sent a scout party to half Moon because of me! If I had never fallen in your kingdom... I'm not going to sit aside and watch everyone fight something that they don't know how! Shadow weaver is vicious! She will get inside people's heads and use their fears against them! If we don't find A way to stop her then no one will get near Hordak, leaving him free to attack!"

Catra finally said, a slight tremble in her voice.

"Catra...what are you talking about?"

C'yla questioned, earning a sigh.

"Blood magic. I know how to do blood magic. I've been practicing since Dad…"

She trailed off, watching C'yla's expression turn from shock to a cold, steely emotion that she didn't recognize.

"Then you need to come talk to your father...He can explain what you're dealing with more than I can."
"You what?"

That was the closest Catra had ever heard her father come to yelling and she hated it. She hated that she was the cause of all of their problems.

She was the one who practically lead the horde to half moon and now this.

"Do you not realize how dangerous that is for you? Catra people have died just using blood magic. Focus too much and your own body is torn apart!"

Catra couldn't keep from flinching at his tone before she responded.

"I'd rather die trying than see the horde kill everything I've wanted my whole life."

To Catra the whole room even felt cold, as if their anger and disgust drew the heat from around her.

"That's not the point Catra….how would you feel if you couldn't fight at all because you couldn't hear or see? I've seen far older and more advanced in magic blind themselves by using the magic. Only a few has ever risked learning it, the risks outweigh the rest."

Tora continued, closing his eyes and becoming deathly still.

"I get that but what is one death compared to thousands? Isn't that what you said Dad? Besides Blood magic could be useful for things other than combat or torture! Just because something can kill doesn't mean it has to! "

Catra demanded, only to feel her mother's hand on her shoulder.

"I don't think you understand…” C'yra began, only to watch in horror as Catra ran her claws over her own arm.
Almost instantly C'yra drew back, wide eyed as the blood began to bubble then retreat back into the wounds, clotting nearly instantly.

"Combined with a healing spell…it could be used to treat so much. I know I'm probably exiled from…"

Catra didn't finish the sentence, choking up slightly.

"We don't exile someone over wanting to protect those they love Catra."

C'yra responded, reaching out and gingerly taking the injured arm in one hand, casting a healing spell before adding

"At one point we had a group of clerics called blood mages. They were hand chosen and protectors of the throne. My mother was the one to forbid it's practice soon after it was discovered that it caused a weakening to some of the user's heart and lungs. There was no way to test their reactions to it and…"

Catra saw how her mother glanced toward Tora, who's expression was twisted into a silent snarl.

"I...I'm sorry I've worried you but I feel like I have to do this. Please understand."

Tora opened his eyes then and reached out to her, hands still gentle despite the sternness in his eyes.

"I will agree to let you train this ability only if you take your grandmother, Micah, or She-Ra with you….just in case…and you have to have a weekly physical. You're too much like both your grandmothers to listen to reason."

He stated before pulling her onto his lap and pressing his nose into her hair.
"I couldn't stand to lose anyone else to that cursed ability."
"I don't know why my parents have such a stick up their ass about it though...I mean. I get it's dangerous but it's not like I'm actually going to rely on it." Catra complained as she sparred with her grandmother, who dodged, catching her arm and bringing their movements to a standstill.

"Well you're grandmother was one of the strongest blood mages I had. When it started affecting her lungs everyone was devastated."

Prima explained before sweeping Catra's feet from under her.

"There was a vote to end its practice. However there are a lot of Magi-Cats that can still use it, should they want to. But as cruel as it is....Why would they?"

Prima retorted, eyes narrowing slightly as she lowered herself closer to Catra before asking

"Why are you so eager to learn the forbidden arts anyway?"

Catra hated explaining herself.

Hated the accusation that she heard—rather imagined or not—in her grandmother's voice.

"Because we're not going to be able to hold back anything with the horde starting to raid almost every day. They're not attacking small towns now for slaves ...Its a literal bloodbath. did you honestly think no one noticed that you and Micah took your own groups out to fight to give the alliance a break?"

Prima just sighed.

"Teenagers shouldn't be fighting in a war, Catra. Do you think you hid the fact that Cattulas's sword horrified you? I know you're willing to do anything to protect your people but you hate the thought of actually killing."
Her grandmother's words would be an insult if she had been with the horde but now—as it were—she knew it was true and there was no way to deny it.

"Yeah but we have to. It's our fight too! Our people we have to protect. Everyone seems to be waiting on a savior... Most painting She-Ra as that savior but nothing is going to change unless we stand and fight for ourselves besides hiding behind a single person. No amount of magic is going to stop this without man power behind it."

Catra could see Prima's expression cloud over.

"It's easy to forget that despite your age you are a fully trained soldier."

Prima said before letting Catra up, holding a hand out to help her up.

"Speaking of war... We took a captive the other night and she refuses to eat. Think you or Adora could convince her we didn't poison the food? Just don't threaten her... she already accused me of trying to eat her."

The cloud that seemed to longer over them broke then and catra began to laugh.

"Prim... You're covered in scars and you're definitely scarier than my mom, even if you are shorter." She stated, earning a growl from her grandmother who spun her into a headlock.

"Oh you're one to talk, brat. Kinda dumb badmouthing someone taller than you." Prima said playfully through a growl.

"You're finally awaken."
Adora flinched at the voice but there was no accusation in the tone.

"Queen Angella! I'm sorry, it's just."

The queen in question just held up a hand, smiling slightly.

"Adora, it's alright. After everything that you have been through and done, I'm surprised you have managed to not collapse." Angella responded before adding "are you alright?"

Adora sighed as she sank down onto one of the chairs.

"I don't know. Something feels wrong...like I should know things I don't. Catra remembers things I don't and...I keep seeing things in my sleep...Things I don't understand." Adora answered, flinching when she felt a hand touch her shoulder.

"What kinds of things? If you do not mind my asking?"

Adora closed her eyes, resisting the urge to lean into the touch.

"I can't really explain it because it doesn't make much sense. Sometimes it's like something is torturing me...other times, I find myself surrounded by fire and a pounding sound...then it's like I'm falling or being pushed."

She felt a wing drape over her, although the queen said nothing, allowing her to continue.

"it seems to be getting worse the more I wear this ring and it belonged to Tora so I know it's not some kind of evil charm and Catra isn't that good with magic yet."
Catra sighed as she glanced into the cell—if it could be called that—and wanted to roll her eyes.

*Their cells look as nice as the guest rooms do! Sure it's minimal but at least it's not like the barren cells in the fright zone!*

She thought then her eyes landed on the prisoner and her stomach turned to lead in an instant.

"Lonnie? How the hell did they catch you?" She asked, watching as Lonnie's eyes widened as she looked up.

"Catra! What the hell are you doing here? Don't tell me you betrayed us too!"

Catra bit her lip as she fought back a growl.

"Me betray them? What about them betraying the high ranking generals just because they failed a few missions? What about the lies they told everyone about how the horde rescued them?"

She retorted before sneering

"I wonder how many would have been executed on beast island had my grandmother's squad not have started an operation to save the!. Even General *Neo* was in beast island."

Catra smirked as Lonnie lurched at the bars.

"I don't believe you! You're just jealous that I became force captain when you'll never be anything but a low class idiot!"

Catra just grinned.
"No. The idiot is you. Willing to starve in order to please a boss who doesn't give two fucks if his pawns live nor die."

She retorted, leaping back a good distance away from the cell before forming a ball of crimson energy in one hand.

"While I on the other hand...Have became so much stronger since leaving the fright zone. Guess it wasn't me holding everyone back...But Shadow Weaver."

Catra watched the fear in Lonnie's eyes before she distinguished the energy ball into a cloud of sparkles.

"But I guess we'll never figure out who is stronger between us...Since you're determined to die from starvation even when the food is always fresh when it is brought to you."
Adora's choice

Chapter Summary

Catra makes a choice to be nice and Adora makes a choice to face hell in order to understand everything.

"Come on Mace! You can do better than that! Even Shenya can hit me and she doesn't do magic!" Catra called while dodging a static blast from the other magicat, dodging a slash from Kis and Orion by leaping straight into the air.

Catra couldn't help but laugh at the disgruntled look from the other Magi-Cats as she landed into the tree, leering down at them as her tail lashed about behind her as she grinned as added "congratulations, you two are the slowest Magi-Cats in existence!"

She couldn't help but feel more at ease with training with her own people. No worrying about accidental scratches or people stepping on tails out of pure malice. No, Magi-Cats were used to sparring with one another and knew how to handle the roughness of it—without the targeting of sensitive areas below the belt.

"Oh shut up princess asshole!" Orion retorted. Hurling another—this time bigger—blast toward Catra, who dodged it once again with ease as she tapped into the power of the rune stone, increasing her speed so she could dodged it.

"Make me, fur-face!"

She knew that her retorts would just be countered and that there would be no hurt feelings between them. Magi-Cats were nearly as rough as she was and could handle it, in spite of her upbringing in the Fright zone.

However before anyone could form even a hint of a sentence, Catra found herself plummeting toward the ground and ice spreading across the back of her jacket, casing the fabric to freeze to her hair and fur.

"What the frilly hell?" She growled out, flaring the rune stone's aura just enough to melt the ice and free her fur that was being pulled by the motion of the fabric.
"Okay, that was not any of us." Shenya said, holding up both hands as if to show her innocence although Catra just sneered, shaking the water from herself.

"I know that, dork. But I think I may know who it was since the so called alliance were supposed to train today. I'll go check it out, kinda wanna wipe the smug look off of Adora and Sparkles face." Catra responded with a light huff before transforming into her large feline form and taking back tongue trees, heading toward the direction the blast had came from.

She was careful to remain quiet as she ended toward the direction, however it struck her odd that she didn't hear voices or laughter coming from the other side of the garden but could smell the scent of something floral mixed with salt and it dawned on her. Someone was crying.

But who? Who smelled like cherry scented bubble bath? Catra wondered as she peered through the leaves to find a certain blue haired princess in what looked to be some form of tantrum—blasting ice beams toward imaginary targets—while scent of salt seemed to increase.

*She's training?*

Catra mentally noted, which of course would have explained where the ball of ice had come from but why was the blue haired princess training alone? Where was the other princesses? Why was the princess of snows crying? There were too many questions that came to mind for Catra, however she didn't have time to think about it as a large, stray ball of ice hit her full in the face, causing to lose her balance and fall from the branch she was standing on.

Luckily she landed on her feet, sneezing as she tried to get the snow out of her nose.

"Holy crap! Where did you come from!" She heard Frosta exclaim. Causing her to really want to roll her eyes—or she would had it not been for pawing at her face and whiskers to dislodge bits of ice. After a few minutes however, she reverted to her humanoid form and glared down at the smaller girl—who had been trying to wipe away all trades of her tears.

"The sky and watch where you're aiming those things, some of us don't want to be frozen into a caticle." she retorted, taking in the way the girl was trembling with emotion—obviously still close to crying despite her best efforts. "Why aren't you with the others?"

She watched as Frosta's eyes welled again before the younger girl looked away.
"Because they said I'll just get in the way."

Catra felt the fur on the back of her neck raise as the words settled inside her head. Oh, she knew that feeling, after all, you'll get in the way was the same thing as you'll only slow us down. She felt the lead land in the pit of her stomach. Why the princesses told one of their own that? Weren't they supposed to be different from the horde?

"Well, you can throw those blasts pretty far...hit me all the way across the gardens. How about you come train with me and my friends?" Catra retorted after she snapped out of the shock of the girl's confession, however, whatever the response she was hoping for was not what she got as Frosta's expression just seemed to darken further.

"I'll only be in your way...Glimmer said I was too immature to train with them." Frosta responded and Catra had to bite back a growl at that. How could anyone say that to a kid willing to learn?

"Yeah, well, Cotton Candy Puff can be a jackass. Now, come on. I want to prove that I don't need Adora to be strong and you obviously need to prove to little miss sparkles that you are stronger than they think. Besides, Raiona can keep up in my sparring so I'm sure you can too."

«________★________»

Adora felt her heart pounding as she tried to remind herself that these three adults in front of her we're not like the commander's in the horde. No, Angella had taken the time out of her day to speak with her about what had been bothering her—although she did question how much truth was in the winged Queen's words—and C'yla was a very gentle, yet strong presence however the anger in their eyes at her request sapped ever ounce of courage she had out of her.

"There is no way in hell I am going to perform that kind of magic on a child!" Queen C'yla snarled as she brought her hand down onto the table in front of them, causing Adora to jump out of her skin at the sudden sound. "I watched Catra basically get ripped in two emotionally and mentally and I'll be damned if I allow another child put themselves through that!"

Adora wanted to say something to counter that, she wanted to argue with the woman however she saw the way that the Magi-Cat Queen's ears folded, the way her eyes sparkled dangerously. She knew that look from growing up with Catra, the look was one of concern or even fear and that gave her the courage to speak again.
"With all due respect, Queen C'yra, I don't remember anything that Catra does from us growing up and I know I have accidentally hurt her and I never want to hurt her again!" Adora said, hating the fact that her voice was shaking.

"I am sure that you mean well but memory magic….it has been forbidden in all kingdoms for the last twenty or so years." Angella began, hoping to remain the calm one of the four of them, even if Micah hadn't even spoken yet. "It makes you feel everything as you remember it."

Adora, however just closed her eyes and nodded.

"I know, but I have to have answers. I have to know what they did to me...why I keep having these nightmares." She began, opening her eyes and masking her emotions as she stared right at them "and if you don't want to do it, then I am sure I can find someone who will."

Everything was quite for some time after that and Adora couldn't help but feel that she had just done something stupid by defying them. However suddenly a voice overhead spoke, it's tones calm yet holding power.

"I will, however I warn you...you may regret your choices once we start."
Chapter Summary

In which Catra gets a confidence boost, Adora gets answers and Frosta gets stuck in a tree.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Come on guys! It's not that hard! Even the kid gets it!" Catra called, earning a scoff from Shenya.

"Yeah, well that kid froze my tail to the ground! What was I supposed to do?"

Catra glanced over at a snickering Frosta and smirked.

"Learn to dodge, duh!"

They were so caught up in their training and banter that none of them noticed Prima watching them from the shadows.

"Catra, I need you and your team to offset a horde army headed toward southern plains." Prima's voice boomed across the training ground, causing Catra's fur to stand on end.

"Sure thing, but usually Adora and the prissy squad goes out." Catra responded, earning a laugh as her grandmother, who suddenly seemed to remember something and go very solemn.

"Adora is needed elsewhere today...So all the combat falls on you and your troops. Think you can handle it, commander?"

Catra's eyes widened a bit at the title before she managed to say
"Wait ... commander? You mean I get to lead? I thought Princesses..."

Had she heard her grandmother correctly?

Was this mission really being interested to her?

Prima just grinned and nodded, tail swishing around behind her lightly.

"Yes. It is not uncommon for rulers to fight alongside their people. Besides, if anyone can rival the power of She-Ra, it's you."

Catra felt something rise into her chest at those words, but she swallowed it back.

"I promise, I won't let you down."

She managed to say, only to feel a rough and nearly—but not quite—too tight grip on her shoulder.

"I know you won't...You're my granddaughter and the child of two very strong warriors...Hell, I would even say you're stronger than they are in some ways."

Adora couldn't remember shaking as much as she did as she sat in front of King Tora, eyes closed as she tried not to be sick. Was this a good idea? What if she found out something horrible about where she came from? Who she was? What if Mara and She-Ra was evil? What if she was a monster all along and that's why she couldn't control her powers?

"Adora, you need to breath." Tora practically purred as he reached across the space in front of them and gingerly placed a hand on her shoulder. "Whatever you see...it doesn't mean anything about who you are."

Adora knew that he was trying to make her feel better, but something about those words made her dread this even more.
"Yeah, I know but….what if I was part of the problems Catra faced? I could never forgive myself because she was my best friend and now…." Adora began, hating how pathetic her voice sounded.

"Then cross that bridge when you get to it."

Turning toward the sudden voice, Adora was surprised to see that Prima was standing behind her. When had she come in? How long had she been standing there and why hadn't Adora noticed?

"I thought you said Tora would have to...help me? That you had stuff to do?" The teenager practically muttered, earning a sigh.

"Change of plans...I sent out one of the better teams. Now when you're ready we'll start, but know that once we start, it can not be stopped until it's finished."

________★________

"Come on! You said it yourself! I can fight just as well as you guys and I'm not a baby!" Frosta exclaimed as Catra tightened the last bit of Magi-Cat Armor about herself, eyes focused on the jeweled sword that was once again at her side.

Would she be able to force herself to use the blast of energy again if she had to? Would her friends see her as a monster if she did? Her mind was racing and she was trying hard to fight the bile that was rising in her throat as she recalled the blood soaked hallway in beast Island.

She knew war was hell but she never imagined seeing people ripped to dust by her own hand.

Shaking the thoughts away, catra turned toward Frosta, who was looking at her expectedly and sighed.

"If I let you come, will you actually do whatever I say because this is no game and the last thing I need is people saying I murdered the monarch of the ice nation's." Catra retorted, smirking at the suddenly excited look on Frosta's face.
"I promise!"

The eleven year old's response caused Catra to let out a sound of amusement, rolling her eyes. Why does she suddenly remind me of the kids still training under the horde? All of them are just as eager... Evidently the horde and rebellion aren't so different. She thought as she placed a hand on the hilt of the sword at her side, glancing over at the other Magi-Cats and Scorpia, who would be joining her.

"You guys ready?"

Adora couldn't believe it. She was back in the fright zone, however something was different, off. There was a sound of crying coming from outside the door and yet Adora's body refused to move, as if she was frozen in place.

What was going on? Why was Catra crying? Why couldn't she move? She wondered, however no sooner did the thought cross her mind did the door open and the aforementioned feline limped back into the Hall, not daring to look at Adora as she made her way toward the barracks.

"Adora! Now do you see what this childish foolishness causes? You're responsible for Catra... She's not like you ...not like any of us. If you keep encouraging her foolishness, you'll just keep getting her hurt." Shadow Weaver's voice came suddenly from behind her, causing her blood to freeze in her veins.

Was it her fault Catra had been hurt for so long?

However, as soon as the thought entered her mind the scene seemed to change and she stood before Shadow Weaver, but this time, this time when she heard her own voice, it sounded angry.

"You don't want people to leave the compound but you beat Catra until she can't walk! Then you degrade her for her slow timing, don't you think it's connected! Who would even want to be in the horde with how you treat people! This Is wrong and you know it!"
Adora could only watch as a red mist surrounded her, Shadow Weaver's posture stiffening as she glided over to her, a hand extended with electrical energy.

"Looks like I'll have to treat you the same way that I did the others ...Except Catra of course ...Let her remember ...maybe this will finally separate you from that filth."

No sooner did Shadow Weaver say this did memories come flooding back, as if being played in rewind. She felt the bite of electricity from the collars they were sometimes forced into, she felt heavy handed blows from her mentor. She remembered in clear detail the argument that lead to one of the worst fights that she and Catra had when they were children.

Now hearing her own voice praise the Horde while Catra spoke the truth about Shadow Weaver and Hordak. The result, she had punched Catra for her traitorous words and got a claw to the face in return.

But then the scene changed once again and this time she found herself in a large, highly decorated room, something soft and warm wrapped around her body and when she glanced down she saw her name, engraved in first ones writing before a light—that she thought was fire at first—began to grow and swirl with colors that blinded her briefly before she found herself in a large field, surrounded by Horde soldiers.

Adora gasped as the room the Magi-Cats had been staying in came into view once again. She could feel her whole body shaking as she tried to make sense of that last scene.

"Shadow Weaver...She ...She lied to all of us...She made us forget everything we questioned about the horde ...made me forget how terrible Catra had it. She pitted us against each other...hoping I would leave Catra alone."

She wheezed, closing her eyes as she tried to make sense of it all. But there were only two things she was sure of.

Shadow Weaver had lied to them and controlled her via magic, not letting her think for herself and that she wasn't human...or from Etheria. Suddenly she felt like she couldn't breath, like the palace walls were closing in on her.
"Are you sure it was a good choice putting Princess Snowball on watch duty...In a tree? I mean she's what? Seven?" Mace asked, earning a smirk from Catra.

"Horde won't go that way, it's too close to Brightmoon and they'll expect She-Ra. So killing two birds with one stone, keep the shrimp out of the way and not dealing with a preteen temper tantrum." Catra retorted as she crouched low into the underbrush, watching the horde camp just meters away.

"What's the plan chief?" Scorpia asked, earning a smirk.

"First Shenya can take her bag of magic tricks and go up ahead and cause some chaos, I've seen someone I have a score to settle with tentacle-face over there." Catra retorted, nodding toward the tall, green skinned figure wearing an eyepatch.

Within the next few minutes there were a group of loud explosions as horde tanks exploded, followed by a thick, static fog that Catra knew would cause radio interference, and that's when she decided to act.

Leaping from her hiding spot she aimed a fire blast directly at Octavia's back, sending the young woman tumbling face forward into the ground.

"Look who's eating dirt now, Freak-face."

Catra stated, easily dodging a kick that the woman sent toward her.

"Catra, you traitor!"

Octavia snarled, earning a smirk from the feline who just snickered.
"Ooh, resulting to name calling...So mature." She stated before getting an idea "and you always said I was the weak one...well guess what....You lose."

One part of Catra wanted to toy with Octavia for a bit, make Octavia pay for bullying her when they were younger. However, there was something inside of she that told her to wrap it up, that even if her team was not having any difficulty with the fight that *something* was off. But what, She didn't know.

And so she did something she knew she wasn't ready to do, she casted a paralysis spell, smirking as the once charging hordesman froze mid step.

Please work.

She mentalky pleaded before focusing on one particular set of internal components, watching as the stoic force captain's knees buckled beneath her, causing her to fall once more—this time not to get up.

"What the hell? Did You just kill her?"

Catra nearly jumped at her friend's voice before she sighed. "She's not dead Kis, I just overloaded her pain receptors....she won't wake up for a while. Long enough for us to take her back to Bright Moon. She's a force captain...She'll know more about the Horde's plans than anyone of lower rank"

________★_____

"Catra!"

She had just turned the prisoner over to her grandmother when she suddenly had someone teleport behind her, nearly knocking her to the ground in the process.

"What the hell? Glimmer, I don't know why you're panicking but don't you know the meaning of
personal space?" The feline yelled, glancing around at the scared looking princess, who ignored the question and just responded

"Adora's ran off, we can't find her and the Whispering woods are too confusing to go through at night…"

Catra felt herself bristle at those words.

"I'll go...I do have night vision after all and if push comes to shove...I can climb trees to find my way around. Don't worry…. I'll make sure she gets back safely."

Chapter End Notes

So was waiting on Season 3 to see if there was any answers to what Adora's heritage was in this version. So now that blank is filled, the story can continue as planned.
Catra could hear Adora before she could see her. She could hear the angry mumbling and the occasional sob coming from the usually either stoic or happy-go-lucky blonde, which—she knew—meant something was wrong, badly wrong.

Catra moved quickly, careful not to make any noise as she landed on all fours behind her girlfriend. She listened to the muttered curses that came from the broken blonde.

"Adora?"

Catra watched as her girlfriend jolted from her thoughts, although she left the sword implanted into the ground, instead of drawing it on her—as Catra half expected. However, even after so many years of living together did Catra expect to suddenly find herself half tackled into a hug.

"I'm so sorry Catra."

Catra stiffened at the sudden touch before relaxing somewhat, putting an arm around her still shaking girlfriend.

"For what?"

She was confused to say the lease, especially since she didn't have a clue about what it was that her girlfriend was so upset.

"Before ...shadow weaver ...you were right and I ...My memories."
Catra let out a sigh then and guided Adora toward a flat rock, forcing her to sit down.

"Hey, we were kids. Was I bitter about it before? Sure, but honestly? What were you meant to do? You were basically in the same boat as I was. That was something I realized in half moon." Catra retorted, glancing up at the raising moons before sighing again and adding "now you're shaking, what's going on with you?"

She saw the blonde's gaze drift down toward the sword, expressing darkening.

"I finally got the answers I wanted, Catra and i found out I literally would have had no choice when it came to becoming She-Ra! That's all I was born for."

Catra felt a growl grow in her throat at those words, her grip on Adora tightening.

"That's bullshit and whoever told you that is a damned idiot. You are more than just some kind of golden warrior or whatever. You care about people, hell...you care about people more than you do yourself and that's Adora, not She-Ra."

She didn't think as she wrapped her tail around her girlfriend's waist, pulling her closer to her side.

"Let me tell you what my dad told me about destiny. you may be born with power and responsibilities, but you ultimately decide rather or not to follow through. I mean, I'm technically a princess of the Magi-Cats but it's my choice rather or not I take the throne or not. Just because you're She-Ra doesn't mean that's all you have to be."

Catra moved to sit behind Adora, putting her arms around the blonde and pulling her back against her armor clad chest so that it was much more comfortable for the blonde.

"I'm not from Etheria, Catra! You get to have a family and learn about where you come from. I can't ever go home! Doing so would destroy the planet!" Adora sobbed, earning a sigh from Catra who tightened her grip on her slightly.

"Family doesn't always mean blood, Adora. I would dare say you had a family already here on
She just sat, letting Adora cry it out. She couldn't imagine how she would have felt at finding such a thing out about herself. That she literally didn't belong anywhere on the planet and she couldn't return home even if she wanted to.

I need to be alone for a while.

Adora's words echoed in Catra's mind as she tried to maneuver through the overgrown forest, glowing flowers releasing spores into the air as she brushed against them. She wanted nothing more but to stay with Adora but she also had to respect her girlfriend's wishes.

After all, Adora would respect hers.

Sighing she sniffed at the air, the smell of smoke catching her attention. Was the Horde trying to rest the forest? She wondered, fur raising on the back of her neck as she tightened her grip on the sword's hilt, taking a step toward the scent.

Only to get hit on the head by something falling out of a tree overhead.

"Ow! What the hell?" She snarled, looking up only to see a silhouette sitting in the tree.

"Come down here and fight fair besides throwing things like a coward!" She growled, only to hear a giggle in response.

Catra relaxed slightly when she heard the sound, although she didn't remove her hand from the sword, until she heard a voice say:

"Mia, come on. Stop being stupid! She has a sword!"
Glancing around, she saw a young goat-like boy who was partially hidden behind a tree, downwind from her.

"Great... I'm lost and I have to deal with little brats." She muttered, allowing her guard to drop completely as a human-like figure scurried down the tree.

"You're no fun Quill! She isn't wearing Horde armor so she won't hurt us!" The girl—whom Catra was going to assume was Mia—retorted, causing her to smirk.

"Don't be so sure that I'm not some lunatic with a weapon, kid. But what the hell were you two doing out here climbing trees anyway?" She asked, although as if to answer the question the girl's stomach growled, causing her to double over.

Catra knew that feeling all too well...Shadow Weaver would lock her in a cell without food sometimes for the worst offenses—which was never really clear.

"You're hungry? I have some rations from the Brightmoon army...they're not exactly the best but...." Catra trailed off, producing two sweet smelling bars from a back at her side and handing it to the pair before asking "where are your parents?"

You could have cut the silence with a knife.

"We...The horde attack our village....Our Dad was too weak to run and....They..."

Catra growled when she heard the young girl's voice break.

"You two have been out here all this time? Alone?" She thought, thinking back to the Magi-Cat Cubs she sometimes got suckered into babysitting. Children outside the horde were fragile, innocent and yet, these two were alone.

"Look, My name is Catra and my battalion is working with Brightmoon...Come with me and I'll get you somewhere safe."

With that she closed her eyes, trying to sense Silver Storm and upon finding their connection
thought to him

"When I send a blast into the air...Come get us...There's two kids here that need medical."

Then, with one swift motion she drew the sword and summoned the power she swore she would never use again, causing a large, blood red beam to shoot up into the sky.

When she looked around, she saw that the kids were staring at her with starry eyes.

"That is so cool!" Mia said, earning a smirk from the magicat.

"Well ...While we're waiting on my friend ...why don't I show you why we're called Magi-Cats?"

The smile that spread across their muddy faces were worth it.

"You can do more cool stuff?"

"Ooh! Can you do magic?"

Catra responded by sending up a blast that split into a shower of Sparks.

"What do you think?"

Silver storm could feel his partner's sadness even though they weren't even close to each other, a sadness that even he hadn't thought the prideful teenager was capable of. Then he froze mid air, eyes training on the familiar glint of golden armor and jeweled blade.

Catra had just got done levitating dirt into a hole, a glowing symbol carved with magic into a piece
of wood laying over it. He could sense her power, roaring to life just below the surface as she rose from where she was knelt on the ground, a hand gingerly laying over each of the children's heads.

"I promise you ...you will be alright. The horde won't ever get to you again ...By sword or flame i won't let it!" She said, beginning low but her voice growing to a near roar by the end of it.

Storm kept his distance for a few minutes longer, watching as she glanced up toward the twin moons that glowed at half light that night as she added, nearly too low for even him to hear:

"The horde raised me ...Hurt me ...all of us ...breaking and shaping us into perfect pawns for Hordak's cause ...I will not let anyone else fall to that same fate...I will not let them win even one more battle."

When silver storm finally landed, he noticed that her emotions had cooled somewhat as the kids hugged her around the legs, and he understood instantly.

They were very young, no more than seven years old and already on their own.

"Guys...This is Silver Storm, Prince of the Pegasi and my closest confident...Next to my mountain cat of course. He'll fly us to bright moon."

________★________

"Dad!"

Tora jolted upright in his chair, dropping his book on the floor as he glanced around to see who had shouted, only to see a serious looking Catra standing in the doorway.

"What is it kitten? Is everything okay?" He asked, trying not to look embarrassed at being caught dozing off—much to Catra's amusement.
"Dad, I need you to teach me all you know about magic and Mom's sword...Hell I'll gather the materials myself to make one to rival it if you will help me." She stated, walking closer as her eyes narrowed slightly in thought.

"I thought you said you didn't need magic or the sword?" Tora questioned, although he could tell something was bothering his oldest.

"I'll need to be stronger if I want to lead in the battle against the horde. I'm the princess of the Magi-Cats, which makes me the commander. I know you and mom would rather that I not fight but I'm not a cub, I'm a trained soldier...and I have people I have to protect too."

Tora was about to question the girl even farther about the sudden change of heart about her title and rank when Scorpia came bursting into the room.

"Umm...Catra, I don't mean to alarm you but there are two strange kids in your bed and I thought you should know." She panted, earning a sigh from Catra.

"Leave them alone ...They've had a rough life these past few weeks ...and Tell your dad I want to have a word with him about his battalion and how the red waste's alliance with my kingdom is going to work….I want all stops pulled out against the Horde...It's time to end this."

Once Scorpia left the room Catra turned back toward Tora, who wasn't sure just what was going on.

"Dad...I buried a village today and watched two kids younger than ten try to carry their father's body. I listened to them talk about how their family was mixed but happy until the horde's troops cut off supplies and their mother died of fever. How their dad bought them time to run and hide by giving up his own life."

Tora watched as tears stung at the corners of his oldest daughter's eyes.

"They could have ended up like me ...Like Adora or Lonnie. They could have been taken and brainwashed into killing their own people. I always knew the horde was evil but until now i never felt a personal reason to fight them outside of my own shitty life...but these kids...They need someone to fight for them...They need what I wish I had...and I want to be that. Please, help me
become that because you and mom are the strongest people I know."
Tora watched as Catra leaped between enchanted targets, the faint blue glow never leaving her as she struggled under the pressure that he had enchanted the room with. She was heavy, clumsy even but yet she still managed to wield the heavy sword.

*She is far stronger than she would like herself to believe ...her mother couldn't even stand up under atmosphere manipulation like this until she was in her mid twenties.* Tora thought, watching as a flying clay disk shattered upon contact with her blade.

He couldn't help but smirk as he watched her movements and how her body positioned itself so naturally to task. Her eyes were dilated, her sweat coated fur bristled, and every inch of muscle seemed to tremble as she tried to deny the more primal urges that he as sure she felt at the sight of so many moving targets. However, she wasn't even using her magic or the sword's own power.

No, she was relying on her pure strength out of reflex, her subconsciousness still weary of magic from the years of abuse she had faced. The realization disgusted the bangle coated Magi-Cat. For a child to hold instinctive fear over something that came so natural to some species?

"Good! But I want you to try to use the sword...Or at the very least your own powers." He instructed, prompting her eyes and ears to flick over in his direction before she offered a half of a nod before the blade seemed to burst to lift with an electric current.

"Yeah, well I want you to turn it up a notch old man...I want to test myself, not stay at the same level the Horde cadets are at. I want to be strong enough to take on a force captain on my own ...or even Shadow Weaver." Catra responded before charging at the targets, shattering them in a flurry of speed and energy.

*I think she's ready to face the trials that would mark her as the heir...But that will have to wait until C'yla can go out with her. Even I don't know what the trials are.*

He thought as he electrically charged the targets and added even more speed to them. If Catra wanted to take it up a level, he would.

He was surprised to see her send him a smirk before sending a blast of magic toward the targets, shattering them.
Adora was in and out of sleep that night, her thoughts running wild and when she finally found sleep, she seemed to only be woken up again as of a heavy mass of fur flopped down across her feet.

"Ugh...Catra? What the hell?" She mumbled, earning a murmured groan.

"Sorry but gravity just got heavier ...literally. my whole body hurts and my bed is preoccupied so I'm not moving...just kick me out of your way." Catra muttered, muffled by the covers and Adora couldn't help but laugh.

"What in the world have you been doing this evening? I mean you just vanished." She asked, sitting up and running a hand through Catra's hair, noticing that the feline didn't have her mask on for some reason.

"Training with my dad."

Catra mumbled, leaning into the touch as she added in a jumbled purr

"Next time someone says people with disabilities are weak...I'm going to personally kick their ass ...Because I've watched Anu and my dad spar and both of them are kick ass...Not to mention my aunt who can fight just as well as anyone even if she can't hear. Hordak is stupid."

Adora hummed in agreement as Catra curled herself into the touch, her whole body vibrating with the noise now.

"Your family I really something, you know? I wonder if..." Adora began, stopping herself from voicing that thought, however a tail wrapped tight around her wrist as her girlfriend sleepily muttered

"M' family 's your family Adora."
With that, Catra slowly scooted on all fours towards the top of the bed, pushing Adora down against the mattress before curling closer to the blonde, arm and tail draping themselves tightly around Adora's waist as Catra's rumbling seemed to vibrate through Adora as well.

★

Glimmer couldn't believe what she heard at breakfast the next morning, or the fact that two very unfamiliar kids were sitting in their dining hall.

"And this was Catra? Like, the sarcastic asshole cat that keeps tripping me in the halls, Catra?" Glimmer asked How as she glanced across the table at the two small children who was sitting with the other Magi-Cats.

"It's not Catra's fault you didn't see her tail and fell over it and maybe Catra is more bark than bite?" Bow retorted, trying to hide his amusement at the look Glimmer gave him for defending the feline.

"Compare me to a dog again, Arrow boy and I will show you just how hard I can bite."

They turned to see Catra walk in, dressed in a black tunic of sorts and pants that fit snug to her form. It was a lot different than her usual red attire, however what was even more shocking was the least jacket she wore, especially as it had the emblem of the Magi-Cats on the back.

"Should I have said hiss then?" Bow retorted, earning a snicker from Catra who took a seat near them, her arrival prompting the children that Glimmer had been asking about to rush to greet her.

"Hey Catra! Guess what! The white cat guy showed us some magic earlier!"

Glimmer watched in amusement as Catra's ears pricked up at that before she smirked.

"Yeah, I guess my cousin isn't a complete jerk."
Glimmer couldn't place it but something had changed about the Magi-Cat princess, or at least had seemed to when the kids came running over.

"So it's true, the mighty Catra rescued two orphans." She stated, earning a glare from Catra who tossed a grape at her.

"Shut up, as if you would have left them out there either. Just because I was raised to believe I am a monster doesn't mean I actually am." Catra retorted with a flick of her tail before she added "you two may want to take Adora a plate up later...she didn't get much sleep last night and I doubt she'll listen to me if I try to get her to eat....she did threaten to tie my tail in a knot this morning."

This, of course, alerted Glimmer that whatever was bugging Adora the previous day was worse than she had realized.

"Whats wrong with her? Is she sick?" She asked, earning a sigh from the half-feline.

"No but I think it isn't my place to say what happened yesterday. You'll have to ask her."
Making decisions

Cyra watched as her daughters sparred, her eyes darting between the pair of teenagers as they hurled magic at each other.

“I don’t know how we’re going to do this. Raiona has just as much of a right to the throne as Catra and…” the queen commented to Angella who just grinned slightly as she glanced over at the pair of magicats.

“How did you two come to get Raiona anyway? She is definitely a lion but Catra is a liger.” the queen of Brightmoon asked, earning a sigh.

“Do you remember Lyra and Riza?”

Cyra began, earning a shocked expression from Micah.

“That’s their daughter? I knew that Riza got killed in one of the first battles but I always assumed that Lyra survived.” he stated, causing Cyra to sigh and shake her head.

“She had the Immunodeficiency Virus. We didn’t know until Rai was a year old and by then it was too late.” Tora explained, taking his wife’s hand before his eyes darted back to where the younger kitten was deflecting Catra’s attacks.

“Why don’t you ask the girls what they want?”

Angella questioned, earning a sigh from Cyra.

“I don’t want to pressure either of them nor do I want to make either feel unworthy. I was pitted against my brother...I am not going to pit my girls against each other.”
Catra’s ears twitched as she listened to the adults talk across the field.

“Maybe this is something we should settle between ourselves?” she suggested to her sister, who just grinned mischievously.

“Too bad I never wanted the throne! I’d rather be a mage like Dad!”

This news caused Catra’s fur to stand on end.

“Wait… Really? Is that why you’ve been following around Micah and Prima? Because they knew magic?”

Catra deflected another blast, her aura glowing its golden-orange hue as she grinned.

“How about this...We both go with Grandma and do the challenges? Screw tradition, we’ll both be stronger by the time we get back and can kick the horde’s ass!”

Raiona couldn’t help but laugh at that.

“Okay, fine. But you figure out how to convince Mom to let me go.”

Catra just snickered, sweeping her sister’s feet from beneath her.

“It’s far easier to ask for forgiveness than permission, Kit.”
Adora sighed as she leaned back on Glimmer’s bed, her eyes closed as she thought about everything that had happened in the past few days. She was never going to be able to get to know her real family because if she even dared to try to make a wormhole or whatever, the whole planet would collapse.

Then there was the subject of Catra, who had taken her by surprise with how confident and open she had become after leaving the Horde.

Leaving Shadow Weaver’s Shadow.

“So you’re going to who knows where to do who knows what in order to figure out why you’re She-Ra?” Glimmer asked, earning a sigh from the blonde who forced herself to sit up.

“It’s more than that. I have no idea where I came from or who I really am. I need answers and I need to know where in the multiverse I came from as well as exactly what I can do.” Adora responded, earning a sigh.

“What does your girlfriend have to say about it?”

Adora closed her eyes once again before groaning.

“I don’t know how to tell her. I mean, what if she thinks that I’m abandoning her again? What if…”

Adora began, however before she could say anything a knock came at the door.

“I swear if that is my mom again I am going to shove a pillow into her face.”
Glimmer grumble before opening the door, only to find Princess Raiona standing there.

“Uh…Can I help you?”

Glimmer asked, earning a shy, nervous grin from the younger teen.

“I want to learn more about fighting via magic and if you can use light magic as an offensive weapon then you have to be talented. My parents, Anu and some of the other Magicats that teach me are the strongest but I don’t need to be handled with kid gloves. I need to be able to fight alongside my people!”

Catra sighed as she walked through the camps of refugees, eyes trailing over those she recognized from the rescue of Beast Island and seeing the condition they were in while healing, she was glad that she hadn't been forced to stick around.

She hated knowing the extent of her power but seeing people scarred from what had probably been torture? Made her skin crawl.

"Hey Prim, I need to talk to you."

Her grandmother glanced over from where she was bandaging a dog like person.

"Well, speak then."

Catra inhaled, glanced around then replied

"Grandmother, I want you to oversee my trials."
"Any luck with Sparkles?"

Catra laughed aloud at the look she got as her sister flopped backward on her bed.

"Why is it that everyone insists on treating me like a kid?"

Raiona retorted, earning a flick of the tail to the nose as Catra moved from the desk.

"Because you *are* still a kid. Now come on, go pack a bag of clothing because who knows how long we'll be gone...I need to go talk to Adora. She of all people should understand why I have to go."

Catra watched as her younger sister's eyes grew wide at that.

"Wait! Did grandmother agree? She didn't ask any questions?"

Her tail lashed about behind her and her eyes widened a bit.

"Yeah, Prim is a lot less...soft...than Mom and Dad are. Also, I may have spoken to our parents….They agree that we should do this together since we will both have our hands on the political side of the Magicat society."

Catra responded before grabbing a large tome from her dresser, shoving it in the sack she had been packing.

"Scorpia agreed to lead my squad until we get back but storm and Clawdeen are coming with us since you need to find a familiar and practicing on them would probably help."
Catra tried not to be amused when her sister suddenly looked even more enthusiastic.

"Wait, I get a familiar?"

"Hey, you're a princess of the Magicats. I don't see why you wouldn't."

"Catra, we need to talk."

Catra knew that look, it was the same one she saw in Adora's eyes at Thaymor.

"You're going to try to find out more about She-Ra and Eternia?" She guessed, watching as her girlfriend's eyes grew wide.

"Yeah, it's not like I want to leave everyone behind it's just....."

Catra didn't give Adora time to finish, cutting her off with a sigh.

"You feel that it's your duty. I get it...I'm leaving too ...Prima is taking my sister and I to Mystacor's Forbidden Zone for training. I don't know how long we'll be gone but I know we have to pull out all stops if we want to stop the horde."

She stated before wrapping her tail around Adora's wrist, squeezing slightly before adding

"Just promise me you'll come back in one piece."

She watched the slight smile come across Adra's face.
"I promise. Don't you do anything too reckless...I want you to come back unscathed." Adora retorted, surprising Catra by pulling her into an embrace.

"Hey, I have my kid sister to watch out for...There is no way I'm doing anything that could result in her getting hurt."

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!