

Of Summer Rains And Songs Of Old

On this calm and warm summer evening, big heavy raindrops danced joyfully from the skies, sparkling like little silvery fireworks as they dropped onto the grass, the pavement, the bushes, and the trees, while the cool breeze refreshed the air with scents of earth and rain. Finn and Catra were sitting on the front porch, watching the droplets mingle and play as they fell. It was a welcome cool after the hot summer sun they had enjoyed during the day.

Catra had been cleaning up after dinner when the rain started. The downpour came without hesitation, without a slow start that crescendoed into a heavy fall. It arrived as if determined to clear out the summer heat that very instant. After a brief look through the window once it had started, Catra had given it no further thought and continued with her work. With the leftovers packed up neatly and stashed away in the refrigerator, the washing up was due. Elbow-deep in the sink with both hands, Catra was just about halfway finished when she noticed a suspicious lack of noises her four-year-old should've been producing playing or just generally being a four-year-old. So she put down the sponge after she finished the plate she had been holding, dried her hands on the tea towel hanging by the oven handle, and went to the living room to check on Finn, whom she found gazing silently out of the window.

"Hey, honey, what are you looking at?" Catra carefully asked as she approached her toddler.

"The rain."

"The rain?" Having arrived behind Finn, Catra took a look through the window. There was, unsurprisingly, rain, and nothing remarkable or out of the ordinary to be seen.

“Yes, Mama, the rain. It’s raining.”

“It’s raining indeed, honey. Quite heavily.”

“Yes.”

They stood quietly by the window and looked at the rain. Some droplets stuck to the glass and slowly made their way downward, merging into bigger ones when they touched others and leaving behind a thin watery trail as they descended.

Catra had seen countless rains so far. There was nothing special or noteworthy about this particular downpour. And yet, something deep and urging told her unmistakably that the dishes in the kitchen sink could wait. After all, who knew how long the rain would keep up? Somehow, today’s rain felt a bit different nevertheless. As if it came with a sprinkle of nameless wonder and magic. There was certainly no sprinkle of nameless wonder and magic in doing the dishes. So they could wait.

“Honey, how about we go out the front door and watch the rain from the porch?”

Finn took a moment to think. “Yes.”

And so they found themselves sitting on the front porch, entranced by the mundane spectacle of a summer rain and the monotone choir of noise drizzling along with it. Every once in a while a cool breeze would caress their cheeks, dancing playfully along their skin, the blades of grass, and the leaves on the trees. Despite sitting under the roof, they could feel faint sprinkles of raindrops landing on their legs, arms, and faces, cooling and refreshing them. They watched the drops fall and glisten, they watched the clouds float by, they watched the trees and the grass bend in the breeze.

As it grew dark, the usual sunset’s fiery skies remained hidden behind the persisting heavy clouds. By now Finn had grown tired and had laid their head on Mama Catra’s lap, enjoying gentle caresses and scratches behind their ears. Their yawn betrayed what Mama Catra had suspected already.

"Honey, it's time for bed."

"But Mommy hasn't come home yet."

"She'll be back soon, love. Maybe even in time to kiss you good night."

"Can't I stay up a bit longer?"

"No, honey. You're nearly falling asleep already. It's time for bed. Now."

"Okay."

Finn didn't move.

"Now, honey. Off we go to brush your teeth." Catra lifted Finn's head gently.

"Okay."

Reluctantly, Finn got up and staggered towards the bathroom, and Catra followed.

Having just tucked Finn in, Catra was about to lean over to give them a kiss, when Finn asked, "Mama, can you sing me a lullaby?"

Catra gave it a quick thought.

"All right, fine. But you go straight to sleep afterwards. You promise?"

"Yes, I promise."

"Ok then. Let's see. Oh, I know. How about

Once upon a time, a Sapphire came to-

"No, Mama, not that one."

"Not that one?"

"No."

"Which one do you want, then?"

“Dunno. Some other one.”

“Then, how about

Let’s go in the garden, you’ll find some-

“No, Mama, not that one either. I know that one already.”

“Hm. Which one do you want me to sing then?”

“A new one.”

“A new one?”

“Yes, Mama. A new one.”

“Hm. I don’t know any new lullabies, honey.”

“Pleeeeeease?”

“I’m sorry, honey, but I don’t know any new ones. Why don’t you pick one I know?”

“But I’d like a new one. It doesn’t have to be a lullaby. Any song. Please, Mama.”

“But honey...”

“Pleeeeeeeeeeeeeeease!”

A gust of wind slammed some cheeky raindrops against the window glass. Which was lucky for Catra, giving her an idea.

“Okay. I just remembered an old song. But it’s not a lullaby.”

“That doesn’t matter, Mama. Please?”

“Fine. But remember you promised to go to sleep right afterwards, right?”

“Yes, Mama.”

So Catra cleared her throat and began.

The rain, the rain keeps falling dear

*The drops won't stop, the skies won't clear
The sun has not appeared in weeks
A cold wind blows, our old roof leaks
Yet there's no place I'd rather be
Than here, where you are close to me*

*I don't know what tomorrow brings
I only know that you're my light
That you're the wind beneath my wings
To you, my love, I give my hand
If you'll have me, as I here stand*

—

*The leaves have fallen from the trees
Few weeks remain until it's here
With ice and snow and chilling freeze
Yet I don't fear cold winter's bite
While we have us, we'll be alright*

*Whatever might tomorrow bring
Through summer, winter, fall, and spring
For all the time, come rain or shine,
You'll always have this heart of mine.
You ask, will I take you, my dear?
With you I'll spend all of my years!*

*My love, my love, I have to leave
The ship is setting sail this eve*

*The sea is calm, a good wind blows
Where to? Only the Captain knows
We sail away to distant shores
I might be gone some months or more*

*I don't know what lies past this night
I don't know what tomorrow brings
I only know that you're my light
That you're the wind beneath my wings
To you, my love, I give my hand
If you'll have me, as I here stand*

—

*I know, love, you set sail this night
While I need stay here on dry lands
Each day in sunset's crimson light
You'll find me on the beaches' sands
For those white sails I'll search the sea
Which carry back my love to me*

*Whatever might tomorrow bring
Through summer, winter, fall, and spring
For all the time, come rain or shine,
You'll always have this heart of mine.
You ask, will I take you, my dear?
With you I'll spend all of my years!*

They told me if I wanted gold

*I should come conquer kingdoms old
In war, they claimed, lies wealth and fame
I said "go back from whence you came"
The only thing that I'd fight for
Is to love you forevermore*

*I don't know what lies past this night
I don't know what tomorrow brings
I only know that you're my light
That you're the wind beneath my wings
To you, my love, I give my hand
If you'll have me, as I here stand*

—

*Let's hunt the beast, let's storm its cave
Come slay the dragon, take its loot
They said, in search for fools so brave
But all I gave them was the boot
The only quest I'd set out for
Is to love you forevermore*

*Whatever might tomorrow bring
Through summer, winter, fall, and spring
For all the time, come rain or shine,
You'll always have this heart of mine.
You ask, will I take you, my dear?
With you I'll spend all of my years!*

*The birds, they chirp, the sun shines bright
The bees, they buzz, no cloud in sight
Adventure calls, love, let us go
Tread paths unwalked, into unknowns
To forests deep and mountains tall
While you're with me, I'll brave it all*

*I don't know what lies past this night
I don't know what tomorrow brings
I only know that you're my light
That you're the wind beneath my wings
To you, my love, I give my hand
If you'll have me, as I here stand*

—

*I hear the call, love, take my hand
Let's go as far as we can walk
Adventure calls to distant lands
Past meadows green and hardened rock
There's nothing that will slow my stride
As long as you are by my side*

*Whatever might tomorrow bring
Through summer, winter, fall, and spring
For all the time, come rain or shine,
You'll always have this heart of mine.
You ask, will I take you, my dear?
With you I'll spend all of my years!*

“There you go. Now off to sleep,” Catra said as she tucked Finn back in and planted

a soft kiss on their forehead. But Finn had other plans.

"More, Mama, sing more!"

"That's a song I haven't heard in a while," a voice behind her said.

Catra's head spun around, towards Adora, who was leaning in the door frame.

"Mommy! You're back!" Finn squealed, untucking themselves in the process.

"I didn't hear you come in, love," Catra said, trying to regain some sort of composure for reasons she didn't really comprehend herself.

"I tried to be quiet. I thought you two might be in bed already," Adora said, joining Catra at Finn's bedside. She gave Catra a quick kiss on top of her head before taking a seat on the edge of the bed.

"Did you like the song, Finn?" Adora asked.

"Yes. It was nice. A little strange. I don't really understand it. But I liked it. I liked the sailing bit. Setting sail to sea. That sounds good. I like it when Mama sings."

"I like it too," Adora replied. "It's a very special song."

"How come, Mommy? Why is it special?"

"That's a story for some other time," Catra said "Tomorrow, maybe. Now it's time to go to sleep. That was the deal. You promised."

"But..."

"If you promised, you promised," Adora agreed. "We'll tell you all about it tomorrow, honey. But now it's time to say good night." She leaned over and gave Finn a kiss on the forehead. As Adora leaned back and stood up, Catra gave Finn another kiss as well and wished them a good night.

Catra closed the door to Finn's room upon exiting and checked both sides of the corridor for signs of Adora, who was nowhere to be seen. The sound of her footsteps and running water betrayed she had made it into the kitchen, where Catra was headed anyway. The dishes in the sink were still waiting for her. She found

Adora there, putting on the kettle.

“How was the meeting?” Catra inquired, leaning back on the counter.

“Not too bad. We didn’t get much done either, though. Everybody comes up with new urgent ideas and wishes all the time, and instead of getting some actual planning and organising done, they keep talking about what else would be nice and cool and spectacular and romantic and classy and... You know how they are when it comes to the Princess Ball,” she sighed.

“I can only imagine,” Catra smirked. “Are you hungry? There are some leftovers in the fridge.”

“No, thanks. Glimmer ordered takeout for everybody. Didn’t I tell you I’d have dinner with them?”

“You did. I was asking just in case.”

“Thanks, love. I was just gonna make myself a cup of tea. Would you like some too?”

“Perhaps later. I should get those dishes done now.” Catra went over to the sink and grabbed the sponge and a plate.

“Want some help with that?” Adora asked while pouring the boiled water into her mug.

“No, that’s fine. I’m nearly finished anyway,” Catra replied between putting away the cleaned plate in her hand on the dish rack and getting hold of the next one.

“Was Frosta there tonight? How is she doing?”

“Oh, she’s doing fine for herself. Keeps pestering us about making one ballroom a ‘metal chamber of eternal doom’ and letting her band put on a show.”

“Are you going to?”

“Maybe. I don’t know. Personally, I wouldn’t mind, but some other princesses feel that ‘brutal blackened grindcore with death metal influences’ is not the most danceable type of music while wearing dresses. And I think they might have a point

there.”

“Dresses aren’t great for mosh pits, that much’s true.”

“Yeah. We’ll see.”

“Heh. Death metal at the Princess Ball. That actually kinda sounds like fun,” Catra smiled. Adora did too and took a sip of her tea. She was leaning on the door frame again, lest she bumped into Catra cleaning up.

“Say, honey...” Adora began hesitantly.

“Hmm?”

“Just out of curiosity... Before, when you were singing *My Heart For Your Hand*, why did you leave out the last two verses?”

Catra stiffened her neck, trying not to look away from the final plate she currently held in her hands, but couldn’t suppress a smile forming across her lips. “Busted,” she thought. She was hoping Adora wouldn’t notice. Okay, maybe she was hoping a little Adora *would* notice. And then not bring it up. Okay, maybe bring it up, but not like this. She had hoped only a little. Barely even at all. You couldn’t even call it hoping, so little did she hope it would happen. Or Adora noticing.

“Hm. I dunno... Just because, I guess. No real reason.”

But Adora had noticed. Adora had noticed as clear as day. And a mischievous, merciless plan had begun to take form in her mind’s eye.

“Is that so? It couldn’t be... that you forgot how they went, could it?” Adora teased.

Catra looked at her, her pride clearly bruised. “Of course not. Don’t be ridiculous. I’d never forget our vows. You sang them to me hundreds of times. Just on our honeymoon alone. And I to you.”

“I did, I did... So... why’d you skip them?” Despite them being far from their teenage years, Adora still couldn’t resist poking and teasing Catra every now and then. Especially when the latter was being shy.

Catra sighed and thought of what to say. Adora, on the other hand, wasn't waiting for her response in the first place. In preparation for her fiendish, fiendish plan, she quickly leaned back through the door and glanced towards Finn's room, ensuring their door was indeed closed. Then she hastily, yet quietly, closed the kitchen door too, put her mug on the counter, and silently approached Catra on her tippy toes. Catra, who just put away the last clean plate and turned off the faucet, didn't notice what was going on and was surprised to feel Adora's arms around her waist. Adora approached into a close hug and put her cheek on Catra's.

"It seems to me you could use a reminder, love," Adora whispered softly into her ear. She could feel Catra's cheek extending into a grin as she put her arms on Adora's. And so, Adora began to sing ever so quietly.

*Oh what a day, can this be true?
I get to sing and dance with you!
I want the world to see and hear
How much you mean to me, my dear
It's more than ever I dreamed of
Today's our day of joy and love*

By the third line, Adora had begun to move her shoulders up and down, following the song's rhythm. After the fourth, her hips followed suit. Catra too had joined into the timid dance. Now Adora released her hold on her and gently pulled on her hips, inviting her to turn around, which she did, laying her arms on Adora's shoulders and locking her hands behind her head, her gaze fixed on Adora's sparkling eyes and goofy grin, which she caught widening as soon as she spotted it. Adora, freshly encouraged, continued her verse with an ever-so-faint blush gracing her cheeks.

*Each day with you is shining bright
Each day with you makes my heart sing
Each day with you, it feels so right
Each day with you is everything
Oh what a day, I'll burst with pride*

For on this day, I am your bride!

Adora gave Catra a playful, expecting look. But Catra did not skip a beat, and began her part:

*You dance and sing of love with me
I can't believe we've come so far
Was our fate written in the stars?
It's more than ever I dreamed of
Today's our day of joy and love!*

*Each day with you is shining bright
Each day with you makes my heart sing
Each day with you, it feels so right
Each day with you is everything
Oh what a day, oh what a life
From this day on, I'll be your wife!*

Warm memories of times long past flooded Adora. Memories of their wedding day, memories of their honeymoon, memories of blissful days, together alone with Catra. Memories of the fresh spring morning, where Catra had woken her up with gentle caresses while singing this song, with golden sunshine permeating through the curtains. Memories of the walk back home from Bow's birthday party, where Adora and Catra, slightly buzzed with Salinean wine, sang and danced to this song in the middle of the night on the streets of Brightmoon, giggling, kissing, getting yelled at by some lady about how late it was and why they were making such a ruckus at that hour. Memories of their hiking trip in the Kingdom of Snows, where they spent a night in the cabin in the mountains, snuggled up in several blankets when Catra suddenly leaned on her shoulder and began singing. Memories of her chest so full of love and bliss it felt like it was about to burst.

Alas, Adora wasn't given much time to reminisce. As Catra began her verse, she took a side step, guiding Adora into a slow rotation as they danced along to the

song that had marked the beginning of their marriage, the exchange of their vows of love and devotion in the presence of all people they held dear.

*When we were kids, back in the day
I'd sometimes fall and scratch my knee
You sweet girl kissed the pain away
And now it's clear as day to me
That I've loved you back then the same
Long 'fore I knew love had a name*

*With these words, love, a vow I make
You as my cherished wife to take
With you I'll sing and dance and live
With you I'll laugh and cry and grieve
Wherever leads our road ahead
Together on it we will tread*

Adora felt her pulse pumping through her ears, her cheeks burning. Catra hadn't broken eye contact the entire time, unyielding, unrelenting, determined. Her disarmingly gorgeous gaze was burning holes through Adora's very soul. Adora's blood was beginning to boil. She hadn't anticipated it to become so intense. Has it always been this intense? Maybe? She couldn't recall. She barely could form a coherent thought. Luckily, she didn't need to think right now. Adora's lines, which she had written herself, were ingrained into her heart. For all the time, through rain or shine, she'd never ever forget her rhymes. And so she replied in song, breathing heavily, aching from having to sing with a whispery voice, aching for the kitchen not permitting enough space for the dance which should've accompanied these vows.

*I travell'd this world wide and far
Through mountains, deserts, 'mong the stars
I found no sky to be so blue
As when I'm sharing it with you*

*Please don't ask for my heart today
I can't give what's yours anyway*

Catra pulled her arms in, cradling Adora's cheeks, and moved her head in closer. Eventually, their foreheads were leaning against each other. Adora felt Catra's hot short breath on her face. She felt it was nearly impossible to focus on her final few lines. Their dancing, as much as the kitchen and their wish to keep quiet as to not disturb Finn had permitted, slowly decayed into a standstill. Adora braved on.

*With these words, love, a vow I make
You as my cherished wife to take
With you I'll sing and dance and live
With you I'll laugh and cry and grieve
Wherever leads our road ahead
Together on it we will tread*

As soon as the final words departed from Adora's lips, Catra pulled in hastily for a long kiss. "Thank the stars," Adora thought, as she had barely managed to hold it together herself until the end of the song not to devour Catra on the spot. She pulled Catra into a tight embrace, still kissing, breathing heavily.

"See, I told you I didn't forget," Catra whispered after their lips departed and they slowly caught their breath.

"I know, love. I was just teasing you." They eagerly shared more and more kisses, until Catra pulled back, holding onto Adora's collar.

"It's just... The last two verses. They're ours. They're special. We wrote them. By ourselves. For each other. I don't want to sing them to anyone but you. Not even Finn. Does that make any sense?"

"It does, love."

"I know it's selfish but I just... can't. Won't."

“It’s not selfish at all, Catra. It’s perfectly okay. I’m sorry I teased you about it. I didn’t mean to make you feel bad about it.”

Catra replied with a kiss. As she laid her head on Adora’s shoulder, still in a tight embrace, Catra noted, “It’s been ages since we last sang to each other like this.”

“It has.”

“This was... intense.”

“I know, right?” Adora confirmed hastily. “I thought my heart was going to jump out of my chest. It’s still beating like crazy. I feel like a teenager again.”

“Glad to know I still have that effect on you.”

“You still have many effects on me, love.” Adora pulled back so she could see Catra’s face and caress her cheek. She wanted to tell Catra that she loved her, and to kiss her again, but the sight of Catra tightening her lips and trying without success to suppress laughter made her giggle as well instead.

“I can’t believe we’re giggling like teenagers again,” Catra said between chuckles. “I thought we’d have outgrown that by now.”

“I’m glad we didn’t. Even though we’re Mommy Adora and Mama Catra now. This is nice.”

“I feel like I’m a blushing bride in my twenties again.”

“I loved my blushing bride in her twenties. But I wouldn’t trade my blushing wife in our kitchen for anything.”

“You’re such a dork.”

“I’m your dork and you love it.”

“Yes, I love it. I love you.”

They kissed again.

“Shall we go to bed too?” Adora proposed.

“In a minute. Let’s just... stay like this for a bit, yeah? It feels really nice. And special, somehow.”

“Yeah, let’s.”

They maintained their close embrace wordlessly. Were they so entranced with each other they didn’t notice time passing, or did the steady sound of rain drown out the kitchen clock’s ticks? Neither of them could tell. Not that either of them cared to even think about letting this moment end. And so they remained, drawing deep breaths of carefree bliss, as the summer rain’s big raindrops kept tapping cheerfully on the kitchen windows through the night.