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GUARDIANS OF GRAYSKULL OUTLINE

ACT 1

- **He-Man Defends Castle Grayskull/Adam's Exposition:** We open on the planet of Eternia. This reintroduction to the main cast of *He-Man 1* will not only be Exposition in the sense that this scene demonstrates the status quo of Prince Adam/He-Man at this point in time of his life, but also demonstrates a much greater Exposition on a meta level. The status quo of any *He-Man* story is that Skeletor and his minions seek to discover the all-powerful secrets hidden in Castle Grayskull, yet He-Man and the Heroic Warriors continue to stand in his way and thwart his efforts at every turn. Now that Skeletor's attempts at seizing the throne of Eternos have been foiled twice in the timeline of this 80's CU, and now that a new player in the form of He-Man has entered the game, Skeletor has set his sights on evening out the playing field. He plans on doing this by storming Castle Grayskull to seize the same power that runs through He-Man's veins for himself. As a descendant of King Grayskull and a member of his bloodline, Skeletor creates an educational guess that the powers of Grayskull will answer his call. But he and his vanguard of Hordesmen arrive at the foreboding and ominous castle in the middle of a rainstorm only to be inconvenienced to find He-Man, Teela, Man-at-Arms and the rest of the Defenders of Eternos awaiting them at the castle's drawbridge. He-Man will raise his sword into the air and give out the battle cry, "For Grayskull!" just as thunder roars dramatically in the clouds. The two factions engage in a battle that is reminiscent of the classic skirmishes between the Heroic Warriors and Skeletor's Evil Warriors in the 80's cartoons. As the two parties duke it out onscreen in the middle of the rainstorm, the *He-Man* main theme can play epically in the background (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I58P8MDyhyg>) as He-Man and the Defenders push back the Horde and force Skeletor to retreat. Several of the characters on either side are wounded, but none of the major players are killed. Maybe a few of Skeletor's more obscure henchmen such as Spikor, or maybe even Goat Man or Strongarm can get killed off after having a moment to shine in this fight. Maybe they get flung over the edge of the chasm surrounding the castle and fall down to the spiky abyss below or something else like that. But there are no casualties on the Defenders' side. Plenty of fun character moments as the Defenders and Hordesmen exchange one-liners, talk shit, and roast each other in a very Spider-Man-like fashion while fighting. Classic heroic cheesiness. The heroes have scored another triumphant victory as the Horde pulls back. At this point in the 80's CU, the *He-Man* storyline has reached its classical status quo on a meta level, in a way checking off that final box of nostalgia while

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simultaneously progressing the story and setting the stage for this new chapter in the Eternian saga.

- **The Fall of Brightmoon/Adora's Ghost:** We cut to the planet of Etheria. The Castle of Brightmoon – a testament to the ideals of idyllic beauty and serene grace – is under siege. Fires burn throughout the outer defenses thanks to heavy artillery and fighter bombers from the Horde. Swarms of robotic Hordemen flood through the breached walls. This battle is a combination of the Siege of Minas Tirith and the Invasion of Kashyyyk from *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*, and the defenders are not holding up well. The invaders are routing the bronze-clad soldiers of Brightmoon with their superior firepower, forcing the rebels into a retreat as their only hope for salvation is to barricade each exit in an attempt to slow down the Horde's advance. At the head of the Horde vanguard is Force Captain Despera, accompanied by two warrioresses, a dark-armored human named Lohni, her second-in-command, and a Thunderian in red armor named Catra. The trio lead the push as they use a combination of their advanced weaponry and brutal fighting style to cut down any resistance that stands in their way. The Hordemen obey every order without question, regardless of how unorthodox or unconventional it might seem. They never falter, and we see that blind obedience proves to be an advantage for these mechanical soldiers. Especially when the instructions that Catra gives out seem to make no sense to the audience yet turn out to be the perfect trap for their enemies because the Hordemen followed their orders to the letter without hesitation. We see cameos of Princess Glimmer, Bow and Flutterina as they order the retreat. Bow will manage to get a lucky shot into Despera's shoulder, and bolstered by this minor victory, Flutterina defies orders and rushes forward against Despera. But to no avail, as Despera easily skewers the fairy and lifts her up like a kebob. "You should have listened to your master", Despera will tell Flutterina as she looks up at the impaled fairy and watches the life fade from her face, ignoring the blood dripping down her sword hand. With a thrust of her foot, Despera kicks the fairy's corpse off of her blade. There is a flicker of something in Despera's countenance. Could it be disappointment? Regret? Whatever it is, it disappears in an instant as Despera immediately checks back into the battle and presses forward. While the survivors flee, Queen Angella, the leader of the defense, stays behind to buy her people time to escape.
- **Despera vs Queen Angella:** Smoke curls from the shattered stained-glass windows and flames flicker along the edges of torn banners as Despera strides through the broken doors of the throne room with Catra and Lohni flanking her like shadows. Queen Angella stands amid the wreckage, regal despite her exhaustion as piles of Hordemen lay about her, destroyed by her hand. Silence falls as the rebel leader and the Horde officers face each other, the crackling of the flames echoing ominously. In a steady and cold voice, the Queen of Brightmoon breaks the silence, "so...the Horde sends its phantom to finish what the armies could not. I wondered if you'd lead this siege yourself." Despera, calm

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and composed, responds, "Brightmoon was never meant to stand. You delayed the inevitable. I'm simply here to conclude it." In a taunting voice, Catra asks, "is this the part where she offers us some noble last words?". "Three against one. Hardly seems fair –", Lohni says as she takes aim with her rifle, "– for her." "No", Despera says as she raises a hand, the firmness in her voice halting her comrades, who turn to her questioningly. The Force Captain steps forward, "I will face her alone." Catra begins to protest, "You're kidding, right? She's just a –", Despera cuts her off curtly, "I said *alone*", she then turns to Angella, "a ruler deserves the courtesy of falling by the blade of her equal. Unless, of course...you're not." Angella narrows her eyes before lifting her chin with pride, defiance in her bearing, "you speak of honor as if it means something, cloaked in Horde steel. You're nothing but a slave of darkness." The two begin to circle each other in anticipation. "Call me what you will. You'll still kneel all the same", Despera says with tranquil intensity. "Brightmoon will rise again...long after your name is forgotten", Angella vows as she brandishes her staff. Despera slowly assumes her fighting stance with her own sword poised, her composure the perfect definition of stoicness. The two charge at each other – light against dark – as Catra and Lohni watch tensely, waiting to see if they'll be called into the fray. Queen Angella and Despera engage in a swift and adrenaline-fueled melee, with Angella displaying her agility, her experience and elegance in her fighting style (exemplifying the [Lady of War](#) archetype). She also has the advantage of flight and uses combos against Despera that incorporates some parkour flips, wall kicks, and bounding leaps, blinding her opponent with her wings by flashing them in Despera's face while also using them to propel herself backwards and dodge strikes. Overall, I imagine Angella's choreography being very similar to Hawkgirl's from the *Injustice* games (Click here to see an example of Hawkgirl's combos and moves <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Vs9x3dt6P4>). Meanwhile, Despera's sword work is much more methodical, disciplined, and militaristic, her expression unreadable throughout the duel. Their strikes glance off one another's armor harmlessly and they seem evenly matched. But Angella is tiring and Despera begins to gain the advantage as she puts the queen on the defensive. Despera even disarms Angella – but the Queen of Brightmoon begins to glow with divine light as etheric energy pulses through her. She summons a burst of radiant force with her hands just as Despera lunges for the finishing blow, knocking Despera into a collapsed pillar. Despera slowly rises, stunned. Her armor is scorched and ruined. Angella advances, levitating with her wings flared wide as she casts golden light throughout the ruined throne room. "Your sword is strong, dark one. But you fight with a hollow soul", she declares imperiously. Just as Angella charges for the final blow, Catra lunges in, coiling her whip around Angella's forearm. Lohni strikes from the flank, knocking Angella back with a shot to the shoulder. Angella fights valiantly – wings slicing the air, magical bursts fending them off briefly but the lieutenants manage to wear her down as Despera rejoins the fight. Catra's claws slice through a wing, Lohni slams

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the queen into a pillar and Despera drives her sword down, pinning Angella's other wing to the stone as she yells in agony. Angella glares up at them rebelliously, trying to restrain from hyperventilating as she breathes through the pain. Despera removes her helm, revealing the face of a cold warrior beneath, "As I said, unworthy". The queen clenches her teeth in a stubborn attempt to reach for Despera but gives up when the tear in her wing becomes too much. "Queen Angella, matriarch of Brightmoon and leader of the Great Rebellion...you are under arrest by the authority of the Horde for your crimes against Lord Hordak, whom you will face judgement." With blood trailing down her face, Angella stares up at Despera with hate. "Then let him come himself next time...if he dares", she says with a rasp. Despera gives no answer as she signals for the Hordesmen to rush in and secure the throne room.

- **Adora's Exposition/Adora's Lie:** While escorting the imprisoned Angella outside of Brightmoon, Despera observes her Hordesmen rounding up the survivors for execution, lining them up against a wall as a firing squad forms up. She notices a terrified mother holding a wailing child to her chest. Despera abruptly belays the execution and orders for the prisoners to be sent back to HQ for indoctrination. The Hordesmen obey without pause. Back at the Fright Zone, Despera delivers her prize – Queen Angella – to her superior, Shadow Weaver. Once Queen Angella is escorted away, Despera debriefs the Fall of Brightmoon and the Force Captain shares with Shadow Weaver in private that the sight of the Brightmoon mother holding her child made Despera hesitate. We see that Despera has a close relationship with Shadow Weaver, trusting her, as she confides in the dark sorceress and divulges that she is troubled by a recent set of disturbing dreams haunting her sleep. Shadow Weaver reassures Despera that she is on the right path, reminding Despera that she is her favorite amongst all her adopted children, offending Catra and Lohani as they overhear the conversation nearby. Once she dismisses the Horde officers, Shadow Weaver then reports the Fall of Brightmoon to Lord Hordak in his chambers. Cloaked in shadow, Hordak and Shadow Weaver discuss Despera's fate and her need for readjustment. Hordak questions Shadow Weaver's efficiency, prodding to see if the witch is starting to lose her touch in her old age. But Shadow Weaver reminds Hordak that even dark magic has its limits. The spells Shadow Weaver has cast on Despera are wavering, and they must be reapplied. Hordak asks if their project is complete, and Shadow Weaver assures her master that the Shadow Nexus is nearly repaired. This satisfies Hordak, and he broodingly dismisses Shadow Weaver from his throne room. At the barracks, the rest of the Force Captains (Grizzlor, Mantenna, Leech, Scorpia, etc.) voice their opinions of Despera's success at Brightmoon. The Horde's longtime foe – the Great Rebellion – has been dealt a deadly blow. The war is nearly over thanks to Despera's glorious actions. The other Force Captains have heard that Despera is going to be promoted to a higher station for her performance. Some of the other Force Captains envy Despera, while others put no effort into concealing their jealousy. This is when

Commented [MV1]: The room is cloaked in steel and silence. The only light comes from red interface glyphs flickering across the walls. Shadow Weaver kneels before Lord Hordak, who looms on his throne like a statue carved from armor and shadow. His voice cold and metallic, Hordak addresses his servant, "Brightmoon has fallen". It wasn't a question, but a statement. A fact. Shadow Weaver rises, hood drawn, "yes, my lord. The queen has been secured. Despera performed her task with precision". Hordak pauses, "and yet...she hesitated". Shadow Weaver slightly flinches, "a momentary lapse. The spellwork on her mind is intricate - but not invulnerable. The Brightmoon child...stirred something buried". Hordak turns slightly, the red glow in his eyes intensifying, "buried things tend to grow if left unchecked. Like rot beneath steel". "That is why I brought it to your attention. I will reweave the bindings. A deeper seal. Stronger enchantments", Shadow Weaver promises. Hordak stands slowly, looming over the witch, "you speak of control as if it is art. But control is not delicate, Shadow Weaver. It is total. Immutable." The red-cloaked witch meets his gaze, "and even totality cracks under strain. You of all beings should understand that. Wasn't it strain that made you...break free?" A tense pause. Hordak does not move, but the room seems colder. Hordak, "careful", he threatens. Shadow Weaver continues, unafraid, "I serve only to remind you, my lord, that will is a beast that bites - especially in those we raise as weapons." Hordak studies her, then steps closer, "you were once sharper. There was a time your whispers turned planets. Now your spells flicker. Your pet questions her orders. Your voice...trembles". Shadow Weaver's voice hardens, "every shadow has limits. You bred Despera for conquest, but I carved her mind. I poured darkness into her veins when she was still a child. You task me to shape fire and expect it not to burn". Hordak turns his back to her, snarling slightly, "you promised me a blade without fracture. Not a question with armor". Shadow Weaver straightens, "Despera will be that blade. The Shadow Nexus is nearly repaired. We will send her out in the Horde's name and she will honor our legacy". Hordak pauses, "see to it. If she fails, it is not only her that will be replaced". He motions with a mechanical hand. Dismissal. Shadow Weaver bows, her voice low, "yes, my lord". She turns and exits, her cloak trailing like smoke. Behind her, the throne pulses in silent crimson.

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Catra will speak up and defend her friend Despera, and in response, she is mocked and ridiculed by the other Force Captains, who laugh off her fiery temper. This enrages Catra to the point where she attacks one of the Force Captains, and the fight is broken up by Despera. Shadow Weaver enters and immobilizes everyone with her magic, reminding her children that infighting within the Horde is strictly forbidden. She goes on to lecture them all that it just takes one spark of defiance, one independent thought, to trigger division, and through it, uncontrolled chaos. It is this same division that their enemies embody and as the recent victory at Brightmoon has proven, it has been the Rebellion's downfall. That same division *cannot* be allowed to seep into the Horde, lest they risk becoming just like the disorganized and pitiful rebels. They must remain united. Shadow Weaver bemoans her disappointment in Catra for forgetting this lesson. "Since you seek division with such fervor, it will be granted to you...in solitary confinement", Catra reacts with fear and the rest of the officers get uncomfortable at the mention of solitary confinement. "It appears you are in need of another lesson, my dear", Shadow Weaver says. The rest of the Force Captains beg their mother for forgiveness, and it is only until they swear to never stray from the path again that she releases them from her immobilization spell. Shadow Weaver will then speak to Despera in private, where Shadow Weaver replays the bodycam footage of Despera besting Flutterina in combat and asks her daughter if she knows why she won that duel. Despera answers it is because Flutterina disobeyed her betters. If Flutterina had listened to Queen Angella's orders, the fairy would probably still be alive, just like the rest of the rebel cowards who escaped. Despera then confidently repeats the Horde's motto with firm resoluteness, "defiance is the death of order". Shadow Weaver praises Despera for making the Horde proud and credits her success to her impeccable obedience.

- **Man-at-Arms Comforts Adam/Adam's Ghost:** We cut to the inside of Man-at-Arm's workshop, where Duncan is tinkering away while Adam and Cringer lounge about lazily. Meanwhile, Orko, who is also present, allows his curiosity to get the better of him as he fiddles with some devices and prototypes on Duncan's shelves, accidentally yet humorously injuring himself. Agitated, Duncan kicks Orko out of his shop. While laying across one of the tables, Adam complains to his mentor about how much he dislikes the national holiday Victory Day. Which is today. We learn through Adam's venting to Duncan that Victory Day signifies the anniversary of the Great Unrest's ending. But while the rest of the kingdom gets to take a day off, it's a bittersweet holiday for Adam and his family. Every year on Victory Day, King Randor and his wife become consumed with melancholy while the rest of Eternos celebrates, as is usually the case around this time every year. Adam and the rest of the royal court know that it is because of what happened on the day the war was won. How Hordak had stolen Adam's twin sister when they were both still babies, and disappeared with her through a portal, never to be seen again. Many assume that the baby girl did not survive.

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This is why Adam always makes it a point to be on his best behavior during this time of the year, as he knows the tremendous grief his parents live with weighs heavy on them, and he doesn't want them to regret still having *one* of their children around. Adam admits to Man-at-Arms that the last time he had upset his father on Victory Day, the king had told him in a fit of rage that he wondered if he would've been better off with Adam being taken away rather than Adora. Duncan assures the prince that was only grief talking, which Adam relents may be true, but the young prince confesses that the jab still hurt him deeply, nonetheless. Their conversation is interrupted when King Randor enters the workshop and asks Duncan to ride with him.

- **Despera is Reconditioned:** We cut back to the Fright Zone for a brief scene where we see Shadow Weaver performing a dark ritual akin to blood magic as she reapplies the spells of compliance on Despera. This could happen one of two ways:

- **Option 1:** Shadow Weaver performs this spell without Despera's knowledge or consent. Despera can be sleeping in the barracks, and Shadow Weaver will stealthily sneak into them in the middle of the night, creepily going from bunk to bunk as she casts her compliance spells on the Force Captains while they sleep. The Force Captains will be dreaming of their pasts, remembering their childhoods and when the Horde came to kidnap them. Shadow Weaver will ensure to erase those memories as well while performing the spell, ensuring complete ignorance in her foster children.
- **Option 2:** Shadow Weaver casts the enchantment while Despera is awake and willing. The witch can lie and order Despera to follow her instructions as she casts spells of protection and endurance over her daughter. Shadow Weaver will say that these spells are gifts meant to help Despera in her role as Force Captain, granting her a stronger will and clear mind, shaping her to be the perfect soldier. When the reality is that Shadow Weaver is reconditioning Despera to be more compliant, wiping away any doubts or questions she might have about the Horde or its modus operandi. The spell is painful for Despera, even torturous, but Despera endures and pushes through as a result of Shadow Weaver's coaching and words of encouragement throughout the spellbinding process. By the end of the spell, smoke will trail off of Despera as she kneels in exhaustion. But after a moment's rest, we see Despera rise back on her feet, her face set and stern as she regains her full strength and we can see that her resolve is steeled. This scene will somewhat resemble the scene where Bucky's mind is wiped after his encounter with Steve in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, as a part of his reconditioning as HYDRA's secret weapon.

After the spell is complete, Shadow Weaver will test out Despera's loyalty by asking her, "who are you", and "whom do you serve?" Once Shadow Weaver is

Commented [MV2]: The workshop hums softly with the sounds of machinery. Duncan tightens a bolt on a half-disassembled vehicle. Adam lounges across a workbench, legs dangling off the side. Cringer snoozes in the corner, tail twitching in his sleep. Orko, floating near a cluttered shelf, inspects a blinking device curiously. "Hey, Man-at-Arms - what's this thing do?" "It explodes", Duncan replies curtly as he continues working. "Oh," Orko gulps. A beat later - ZAP! - a burst of blue smoke engulfs Orko, sending him spinning into a wall. Duncan's voice rises in irritation, "Out. Now." Orko coughs, "sheesh, ok, ok..." Orko sulks as he floats out the door. The workshop quiets again. Adam sighs and stares at the ceiling, "you ever wonder why they call it 'Victory Day' when it doesn't feel like a win?" Duncan keeps on working, his eyes on his work, "it was the end of the Great Unrest, Adam. Peace returned to the kingdom. That's something worth honoring". Adam sits up, "maybe for everyone else. My parents spend the day in silence, locked behind smiles and old stories. And me? I get to pretend it doesn't bother me either", a pause, "but it does", he sighs. Duncan stops tinkering to give Adam his full attention, "you're not alone in feeling that. Your parents lost something...someone...that day". "Adora", the prince murmurs softly, "sometimes I think...maybe if I'd been taken instead, they'd still have a reason to celebrate today". "Don't say that", Duncan replies with disapproval. "Why not? Dad practically said it himself, a few years back. I broke curfew - snuck out to a skyball game - and he just snapped. Said maybe Hordak took the wrong child". Duncan exhales deeply, "he didn't mean that. Grief speaks in ways the heart never would. You were just the nearest target he could reach". Adam looks up at Duncan, "still hurt though" he says quietly. Duncan walks over and places a hand on the prince's shoulder, "you're not some kind of silver medal, Adam. You're their son. You matter - every day, not just the ones marked in gold on a calendar". Before Adam can respond, the door hisses and slides open. King Randor steps inside, regal even in his quiet sadness. A long beat as father and son exchange a glance neither knows how to hold. Randor finally turns to Duncan, "Man-at-Arms. Come, I'd like you to ride with me". "Of course, Your Majesty", Duncan gives Adam one last reassuring look before grabbing his helmet and heading out. After the king and Duncan leave, Adam remains seated in silence. He runs a hand through his hair, frustration lingering. From the workshop ceiling, Orko peeks back in upside-down, phasing through a beam and floating down toward Adam sheepishly. Adam looks up admonishingly, "how much did you hear?" "All of it", Orko answers in embarrassment. "Of course you did", sighs Adam. Orko flips back upright and hovers next to the prince, "look, I know I'm not great at this whole 'emotional support' thing - but...", Orko fishes around in his big sleeves and pulls out a small, glowing crystal - charred and humming. "I found this in Duncans' junk pile. It's broken, but it still hums when it's close to magic - thought it kinda reminded me of you". Adam raises an ...

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reassured and satisfied with Despera's answers, she informs her daughter that she is aware of the rumors around the barracks concerning Despera's possible promotion. Shadow Weaver explains that even though she was bidden to not speak of it, it is true. Despera is to be named Hordak's Right Hand, supreme leader over the Horde's armies. She praises Despera for her performance as their best Force Captain and verbally prepares for what lies ahead as the Horde's champion.

- Dressed as a common palace guard, the king pilots a sky-sled with his Man-at-Arms to Aridan, one of the kingdom's outlying villages on the border. There at the village, festivities are being held in celebration of the national holiday. But the two visitors ignore the merrymaking and continue on through Aridan and stop before a statue standing alone amidst the grass. The statue depicts a sleeping baby swaddled in a crib, a thin and delicate crown decorating its head. Candles, wreaths, bouquets, jewelry, ribbons, and other tokens adorn the base of the statue, where a plaque reads "In honor of Her Majesty, Princess Adora Grayskull". Randor and Duncan reverently pay their respects to the statue, with Duncan noting that the villagers are curiously observing them from a distance. He mentions to Randor that the disguise doesn't work anymore, as the two of them have been visiting this shrine for over 10 years, every anniversary and birthday of the princess. The people have caught on that their king and Man-at-Arms are trying to hide in plain sight among them. Randor sighs heavily and laments that he can add his poor disguise to his list of failures, losing Adora being chief among them. Man-at-Arms remains silent as Randor reminisces on how the statue was originally built in the royal palace but having to walk past it every day was too hard on Marlena, and so the king had the memorial relocated to this village. The fact that he and Marlena still have Adam is a blessing as it alleviates the pain of having lost one child. It doesn't make the twins' birthdays as hard knowing that one of their children remains alive and well. But even then, Randor still feels like a failure as he believes that Adam's notorious irresponsibility and immaturity is a reflection of his poor parenting. He falsely thinks that Adam is a bad prince because Randor is a bad father. Man-at-Arms speaks up and tells his liege that he does not give himself, nor his son, enough credit. His words are a disservice to them both. King Randor then clasps Duncan's shoulder and thanks him for always being there to support him throughout the years. He is a stalwart companion and a true friend that the king is grateful to have at his side.
- **Despera is Promoted to Right Hand:** The Horde is assembled for a ceremony. Rows of Hordesmen troops stand at rigid attention, flanked by Force Captains Grizzlor, Mantenna, Leech, and Scorpia – each watching from a raised platform. At the top of the blackened dais, Hordak looms. Despera kneels before him in silence, having traded her scorched and battle-damaged armor for a new suit of black armor adorned with a regal red cape. When Hordak speaks, his voice is amplified to address everyone present. "You have crushed resistance in the queendom of Thaymor. You have broken the gates of Brightmoon and brought

Commented [MV3]: A sky-sled hums low as it glides over the tall grass, drawing little attention in the noise of the **Victory Day** festivities behind them. Onboard are **KING RANDOR**, disguised in a weathered guard's cloak and helmet, and **DUNCAN**, his Man-at-Arms, also dressed plainly. They say nothing as the sky-sled touches down near the edge of the village.

They dismount. Before them stands a small **statue** nestled in the meadow—a **stone infant**, wrapped in eternal sleep, a delicate circlet on its brow. Offerings surround the base: **candles, flowers, tokens of mourning and remembrance**. The inscription reads: "In honor of Her Majesty, Princess Adora Grayskull." The wind stirs. Randor removes his helmet, gazing at the statue as if seeing it anew. Duncan does the same, standing silently at his side.

DUNCAN

(softly, glancing around)
They're watching us again.

RANDOR

(half-smiles)

Let them.

DUNCAN

They know it's you, sire.

After a decade of unannounced visits—same day, same hour—the disguise doesn't fool anyone anymore.

RANDOR

(sighs deeply)

Then add "terrible actor" to the list of my failures.

Right under "father who lost his daughter."

A silence stretches between them. The distant sounds of music and laughter are carried on the wind from the village.

RANDOR

She was only hours old. We'd barely held her. I remember Marlena clutching her to her chest like she could anchor her with love alone.

(beat)

And then... he took her. And she was gone.

DUNCAN

(quietly)

We searched every corner of the system. You gave the order yourself—no gate, no rift left unexplored.

RANDOR

And yet... nothing. No trace.

(gestures to the statue)

This was in the palace once, did you know that?

DUNCAN

I remember.

RANDOR

But Marlena... she couldn't pass it every day. Said it made the halls feel haunted.

So I had it moved here.

(beat)

This village lost people in the war. It seemed... fitting. A place where grief and hope live side by side.

Randor crouches, adjusting a wilted wreath on the base of the statue.

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their matriarch to her knees. You have prove that obedience is not weakness – but power”, Hordak descends the steps slowly, each metallic footstep echoing. “Kneel no longer, child of conquest. Rise...as my Right Hand.” Despera stands, back straight, eyes locked forward. “Let all who serve the Grand Design take heed”, Hordak turns sharply towards the Force Captains, “*this* is the ideal to which you must aspire. She is not merely stronger than you – she is more obedient, more precise, more disciplined.” Reaction shots of the Force Captains; Grizzlor and Leech are jealous, Mantenna is confused, and Scorpia bears a flicker of awe, then doubt, then something deeper...envy? Admiration? It’s unclear. Hordak continues as he turns back to Despera and his cybernetic hand transforms into a blowtorch, welding the insignia of the Right Hand into Despera’s pauldron. Red sparks fly off of Despera’s shoulder as an insert shot shows us a better look at her new badge (it is a crimson-red, stylized open right hand with angular blade-like fingers, the fingers ending in points that resemble both claws and circuit traces. The palm is turned downward and in the center of the palm is Hordak’s Horde emblem, while the wrist extends into a spear-like shaft or blade). “I name you: Despera, Right Hand of the Horde. Warden of the Grand Design. Herald of Order, and First Blade of Lord Hordak!” The Hordesmen slam their fists into their chests in unison. Red light flares from the walls like blood-stained lighting. Shadow Weaver watches with unreadable eyes – eyes that have seen greatness rise before, and fall.

- **Despera Visits Catra/Adora’s Want:** While observing the Brightmoon survivors being submitted to readjustment (which is really indoctrination), Despera sees the same child again and she is reminded of a time when she herself was a child of the same age, and she played with a young blond boy named Adam in a garden. Cut back to the present as Despera gets control of herself again. Despera then goes to visit Catra, who we can see bears the marks of torture and has been bloodied and burned badly. Clearly this was her discipline for attacking the Force Captain. Despera brings with her a medic and as the doctor begins applying fast-reacting medical treatment (could be instant ointment, a potion, etc.) to Catra’s body, Despera informs her friend that she missed her at the promotion and wished she could have been there. From there, the two friends will discuss Catra’s insubordinate actions. Catra, who is suffering more emotional pain than physical pain, asks Despera how she is able to be so obedient all the time. It is here that Despera admits her lifelong desire to be accepted by everyone. She wants to be a part of something bigger than herself and help make the galaxy a better place by providing order and structure. She feels like if she accomplishes that, then she will finally be accepted by the Force Captains, by Hordak, by everyone. Despera wants to please everyone because she believes that is how she will find her tribe. Catra is surprised to hear that Despera *doesn’t* already feel accepted, considering she is Shadow Weaver’s favorite. Despera denies this and Catra calls her oblivious. This leads to a brief argument before Despera catches herself and stops the debate, remembering that infighting is what got Catra in

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trouble in the first place. Despera updates Catra on the exciting news that the Shadow Nexus is repaired, and that she has a strong feeling that their battalion will be the first ones to go through it. Despera asks if Catra is ready to stand at her side in this next chapter of their lives. Catra has been fully healed and restored to perfect health. The medic backs away, concluding their work. Despera and Catra clasp arms and declare, “for the Horde” before embracing.

- **Queen Marlena Counsels Adam/Adam’s Want & Need:** Adam will be sulking in his room, silently looking at a holographic baby picture of his long-lost sister when Queen Marlena stops by to check in on him as she always does on Victory Day. In an instant, Marlena notices that there is something troubling her boy despite his insistence that nothing is wrong. Adam quickly submits, realizing that there is nothing he can ever hide from his mom, and he shares with Marlena his survivor’s guilt, admitting that he knows there’s nothing he can do about Adora because he had no control over what happened to her, but he still can’t help but feel like a burden on his father. This scene will be similar to the scene from *Avengers: Endgame* where Frigga comforts Thor, as Marlena will comfort Adam in much the same way, with the two of them getting emotional about the raw reminder of Victory Day. Adam wonders if having another child would help Randor and Marlena cope with the loss of Adora better, asks his mother if she ever considered having another baby. But Marlena shakes her head, enlightening her son that he won’t understand until he becomes a parent himself someday, but there is nothing that can replace the loss of a child. Not even another child. It’s not something that you can “get over” even with time, you just learn to live with it. Adam will share with his mother that he wants to earn his father’s forgiveness. Marlena counsels her son, telling the young prince that it’s taken her years, but she has learned this painful lesson the hard way. Marlena always felt guilty about what happened to Adora, especially because she – unlike Randor – was in the palace when the abduction took place. At least Randor can make the excuse that he wasn’t present when the theft happened, whereas Marlena cannot. Both Adam and Adora were taken from her right under her nose. Thankfully, Randor and the Defenders were at least able to save Adam. Marlena tells Adam that he won’t be able to accept his father’s forgiveness until he learns to forgive himself first. Adam absorbs her words as Marlena ends the conversation with a hug, telling her son that “duty calls” when her bracelet begins to beep. She reminds Adam to always come clean, shrewdly telling him that no matter how hard he tries, there is nothing he’ll ever be able to hide from his mother. This line is meant to subtly hint at the fact that Marlena is aware of Adam’s alter ego as He-Man before kisses his forehead and exits.
- **The Sorceress Warns Adam:** Adam will be startled when he notices the falcon Zoar sitting on his windowsill, sarcastically commenting on this is the second time today someone has eavesdropped on one of his private conversations. Speaking telepathically through Zoar, the Sorceress apologizes to Adam for intruding, but she comes with a warning. She senses that there is a threat on the

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horizon but cannot discern what it is yet because it is cleverly remaining out of her sight. At first, Adam believes it to be Skeletor, but the Sorceress disregards the theory, saying that this threat is bigger than Skeletor. Adam is puzzled as his current streak of missions has helped Eternia enjoy more peace and stability. He-Man's reputation as the slayer of Shadow Wing has helped discourage a lot of crime and war within Eternos. Nevertheless, the Sorceress warns Adam to be on his guard and to remain alert, as she feels that this threat will present itself very soon.

- **The Shadow Nexus is Restored:** Meanwhile, the Fright Zone's Shadow Nexus is restored, and the portal is opened to the planet of Eternia, where the other half of the Nexus rests inside a hollowed mountain peak in the Mystic Mountains known as Riftspire. Probes not unlike Tri-Klops' Doomseekers are deployed through the Nexus, disturbing the colony of Arachna that have nestled inside Riftspire and turned the abandoned gateway into their breeding ground. When the Nexus activates, the Arachna scatter and hide, skittering quietly to one another when they see the probes fly through before the Nexus deactivates once again. We see a brief montage of the probes scouting out the land of Eternia, collecting data on all of the territories, assessing population numbers as well as fuel sources and defenses of various factions. Much has changed since the Horde was last on Eternia. All of this is reported back to the Horde, and Shadow Weaver fears that sending Despera to Eternia may prove dangerous, as the chances of Despera relapsing are high. Nonetheless, Lord Hordak summons Despera, and he informs her that he is sending her as his champion in their new campaign of conquering Eternia. A world that is long overdue to be sorted under the Horde's dominion. Hordak prepares Despera for her trip to Eternia, filling her head with lies as he convinces Despera that she is only as successful as she is because of Hordak. This mission to Eternia will be her ultimate test. He warns Despera that leading his vanguard into this foreign world will be her greatest challenge and to not lose sight of who she is. So long as she remains loyal, Despera's endeavors will be rewarded. In time, she may even become his heir to the Horde and continue their virtuous work. Bolstered by this praise, Despera is eager to prove herself to her lord and please her adoptive father.
- **Inciting Incident/Despera Leads the Vanguard into Eternia:** Despera, accompanied by Catra, Lohani, and her battalions, will stand at the ready before the volcanic archway where Etheria's Shadow Nexus lies stationed in the Fright Zone. Behind Despera and her lieutenants are rows of Hordemen, intermixed with squadrons of Rotons and tanks. The Hordemen part as Shadow Weaver floats menacingly through their ranks until she reaches the front of the gateway. At her signal, the mechanical parts of the Nexus are activated, while Shadow Weaver finishes awaking the portal with her magic. The Nexus indicates that it is ready for use when a swirling vortex of nebulous liquid materializes within the gateway, awaiting for its user to provide a location. Chanting to herself in low tones, Shadow Weaver will draw a wicked-looking knife and ceremoniously cut

Commented [MV4]: Vast and shrouded in darkness, save for the burning red glow of the throne. Hordak sits in shadow, his voice reverberating with mechanical resonance. Despera kneels before him, her new suit of armor gleaming, her breath steady but eager. Hordak rises from his throne, "you were forged in discipline...tempered in conquest...sharpened by my will", he steps down towards her, eyes glowing like smoldering suns. "You are no longer the lost thing I found in the ash. You are Despera – spear of the Horde. And now...your proving begins." Despera raises her head slightly, her voice low with anticipation, "command me, my lord". Hordak folds his hands behind his back, "Eternia. A fractured world clinging to illusion. They sing of balance and call it strength – but balance is stagnation. Stagnation invites decay. It is long overdue for sorting. They fear control because they fear clarity. But we...we bring clarity. Through structure. Through certainty. Through you." Despera straightens, eyes blazing, "then I will bring order to them. I will show them the truth of your Grand Design" he begins to circle her like a predator, "lead my vanguard through the Shadow Nexus. Strike swift. Strike deep. All that you are – your strength, your will, your fire – it is mine. A reflection of my design. You kneel not as a child of flesh, but as the product of vision.". Now Despera raises her head completely to look up at her master, "I live to serve, my lord. You gave me form. You gave me purpose." Hordak comes to a stop as he stands right in front of Despera, looking down at her imperiously, "purpose is earned, not given". He lifts her chin – not gently – and studies her with something almost akin to pride. "Hear me well: this world will test you. This world will lie to you. It will whisper to the part of you that still...questions. The part that hesitates." Despera flinches, barely. Hordak continues, "that part is a flaw. A scar left by those who failed you before I saved you. You rose not through talent – but through loyalty. Through surrender. Obedience has sculpted you, where chaos once clawed for meaning. Never forget what I have taught you. Stray from that truth...and you will fail", he releases her chin and steps back into shadow, eyes still fixed on her, "prove that obedience is strength. And they will call you salvation. And when Eternia kneels, you will not just serve the Horde. You will *inherit* it." Despera's breath hitches. A flicker of emotion crosses her face – ambition, awe, perhaps even pride. She stands tall, armored and alight with grim purpose, "then I will bring Eternia to its knees...and lay its crown at your feet." Hordak smiles darkly, "go, my daughter of ruin. Make them *remember* you", he utters with silken menace. Despera turns, cape billowing. The chamber doors hiss open. A blood-red corridor beyond leads to her destiny, and Despera walks into it.

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the palm of her blackened hand before closing it into a fist and inserting her fist into hovering liquid. "Eternia", she rasps ominously, and the liquid gives way to an image of Riftspire's interior, where Eternia's other half of the Shadow Nexus resides. Despera looks on, eager. Shadow Weaver turns to her. "Go now, my child. The hour of reclamation is upon us. Do not falter. Do not feel", Shadow Weaver utters as she reaches out, her crimson magic flickering like dying embers around Despera's helm, "let Eternia remember fear". Despera's face is set with determination as she marches forward into the portal. Despera and the rest of her vanguard will emerge from the Shadow Nexus and into the hollowed interior of Riftspire. The colony of Arachna are once again disturbed and without hesitation or remorse, Despera orders the area to be purged of the vermin so as to prepare the way for Lord Hordak. The Hordesmen open fire on the Arachna, stomping on the spiderfolk's eggs and burning their nests with flamethrowers. The camera pans upwards to Despera's mask as the red lights of the Horde's blasters flash on her stoic face, unphased as the sounds of slaughter continue in the background.

ACT 2

- **The Horde Visits Snake Mountain:** Using the intel gathered by the probes, Despera's vanguard begins marching to Snake Mountain. Skeletor's scouts inform the warlord of the unknown approaching force, and when the scouts are unable to identify their banner, Skeletor orders them to show him a visual. Over hologram, Skeletor recognizes his master's sigil on the banner. "No...no. No! No! No! How?! What?! No!! Absolutely not! NO!!", Skeletor shouts in enraged disbelief. We cut to Despera and her entourage entering the throne room of Snake Mountain, where Skeletor sits proud and aloof, surrounded by his throng of minions, and flanked by his lieutenants. He's definitely acting like a peacock and trying to put on an impressive show. But the effect seems lost on the Hordesmen. Lohni steps forward and proudly announces, "all rise! Despera, Right Hand of the Horde, Warden of the Grand Design, Herald of Order, and First Blade of Lord Hordak stands before you!" A tense beat as Skeletor remains seated, unimpressed, fingers steepled beneath his chin, "well, that was dramatic. Shame it didn't come with a fanfare. Or at least a parade". "Hordesmen don't do parades", grins Beast-Man. Ignoring their attitude, Despera gestures and a team of Hordesmen roll in a large, humming device. They assemble it quickly, and a holographic table whirs to life, casting a harsh red light across the room. Skeletor leans forward, intrigued – then freezes. A flickering red hologram resolves into the towering form of Hordak, reuniting Hordak and Skeletor virtually. Skeletor's demeanor changes entirely at the sight of his old master as he leaves his throne to kneel before his former teacher. The rest of Skeletor's lieutenants glance uncomfortably at each other before awkwardly following his example. Hordak tilts his head, puzzled, "Keldor?" "Once...but no longer...Master", Skeletor answers coldly, reassuring his identity. "Your shape is unfamiliar...yet I recognize your voice...your face...magic?". "*Randor*", Skeletor spits with a hateful growl.

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“So the king endured. Then we both misjudged the Line of Grayskull. A costly mistake...but it has tempered us. Forged our strength in exile. I detect that neither of us are what we once were. My time away was not wasted. The Horde has risen again, and soon, our enemies will fall beneath its heel. They are not prepared for what I have in store for them”. Skeletor raises his head, “you speak of time as if it served us. I fought tooth and claw to hold this mountain! But the Dark Hemisphere became my prison for over a decade while you vanished into myth, Master”. Hordak nods, unfazed, “nineteen years in exile. Obstacles. Setbacks. Yet every starless night, we rebuilt. The Horde did not die. It evolved. And now, apprentice, it will rise again, and the galaxy will remember our names”. “And what of Snake Mountain?”, Skeletor replies with unease in his tone, “I held this stronghold without your legions through fire and famine, standing alone against Grayskull’s guardian. My banner flew when yours did not”. “Which is why Snake Mountain shall serve as our first staging ground. Your efforts are noted. But they were not enough. You have a stronghold. I have a war machine. You held the gate. She will lead the charge”, Hordak says as he gestures to Despera, “My Right Hand, Despera. She brings with her my vanguard, a force unlike any you’ve commanded. What you could not achieve alone, you may now accomplish together. We strike not one blow, but a dozen – a storm across their lands.” Skeletor bristles as he rises, his voice curt with pride, “I have sacrificed much for our cause, my lord”. Hordak’s voice flattens at his student’s impudence, “and yet, victory remains beyond your reach. Despera has shown results. You have shown resolve. Both are required. Neither is sufficient alone.” Skeletor clenches his fists. Despera meets his gaze, calm and unreadable. “You will share command. Equal in authority. Neither above the other”, Hordak adds sternly. A heavy silence falls as Skeletor’s body language twists with disdain. “You would do well to heed my words, acolyte. The arm cannot swing the sword unless the mind commands it so. I am that mind. And you – you were nothing before the Horde found you. A stray. A shade. Do not forget who gave you purpose, Keldor”, a moment of silence. Then Hordak softens, just enough to make it sting, “a new age dawns. I suggest you survive long enough to witness it”, Hordak warns as his hologram fades. Skeletor’s eyes blaze as he sharply turns to his minions, “Beast-Man! Trap-Jaw! Show *our* guests to their quarters. See that they are made comfortable.” As he exits, Skeletor will stop beside Despera, almost nose to nose, and tell her, “try not to redecorate”. To which she responds, “only if the décor proves...inadequate”. They stare each other down before Despera turns and walks past him, her cloak trailing like a shadow. We then cut to Skeletor ranting to Lynn in their private chambers. While Skeletor tries to decompress by drinking wine while sitting inside a spa (heated by the lava pools within Snake Mountain), Lynn observes the newcomers through the castle’s security cameras that are shaped like gargoyles. She studies their new rivals closely, calling Despera an “uptight shrew” whom she doubts has ever felt the warmth of a man. “After all these years, after all the agony and torment I

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endured, he thinks he can just waltz in here, into *my* fortress, and take everything I've secured. Who does that dusty old cabbage think he is?", Skeletor grumbles.

- **The Horde Attack Aridan/He-Man Aids the Fantos:** The next day, on the outskirts of Eternos' territory, Aridan will suddenly be overrun by Despera's battalion, as they begin their conquest by slaying a family of innocent farmers before continuing on with their mission. Several other battalions report that they have engaged the enemy at various locations on Eternos' border. The blitzkrieg has begun. At the exact same time, we see that the Vine Jungle is experiencing another heated conflict. A raiding party of Beast-Men surround the village belonging to a clan of human barbarians known as the Fantos Tribe. But the raiders are perplexed to find the village empty. It's been completely abandoned. To their surprise, He-Man suddenly appears on the back of Battle-Cat, calling out to the Beast-Men and giving them one chance to turn back and leave the village in peace. Moment of comedy as the Beast-Men begin to bicker and argue, some are wary after hearing of Shadow Wing's demise at He-Man's hand. While others are eager to seize the opportunity of having He-Man outnumbered. He-Man begins to pressure the Beast-Men into making a decision by counting down, "3...2...1...". He-Man gives the signal, and the Fantos warriors emerge from various hiding spots all around the village, taking the Beast-Men by surprise. At the exact same time, the Horde engage the Eternian outpost tower stationed to protect Aridan, and we intercut between both He-Man and Despera fighting their separate battles. Despera stops when she sees the memorial for Princess Adora. Something about it entralls her, and she can't help but be drawn towards it, studying it curiously. She kneels down and reads the plaque, seeing her true name inscribed upon the stone.
- **Knighting Ceremony:** A public ceremony is hosted at the Temple of the Goddess in Virelia City, where King Randor welcomes three new recruits into the Defenders of Eternos, knighting these honorary new additions before an entire crowd. These recruits include Moss Man – whose motivation to join is to avenge the destruction of the Skytree – and an Andreenid champion named Buzz-Off, as well as Orius (but everyone refers to him by his rather insulting nickname 'Mekaneck'), a soldier who has served for years within Eternos' military and is now being promoted to the Defenders after proving himself through years of service. In a classic Peter Parker-like move, Prince Adam is late to the ceremony. But this time, it's not for lack of trying. As He-Man, Adam is just returning from aiding the Fantos tribe, having earned a kiss on the cheek from Chief Merlo's daughter Podi for his heroic actions. Adam frantically rushes back to the capital city of Virelia on a hovercar he had stashed away earlier, with Cringer clumsily being thrown and tossed around in the back seat thanks to Adam's reckless driving and sharp turns. Adam wonders aloud to Cringer if the Beast-Men raid was the looming threat the Sorceress warned him of. If so, then thankfully it's been taken care of. Eager to make it to the ceremony on time, Adam causes

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some chaos as he and Cringer ride through the streets, stumbling and bumping into multiple market stalls and civilians passing by. Nearly resulting in a hovercraft wreck when weaving through traffic, forcing several drivers to panic and dodge the roaring hovercar, with Adam hollering apologies left and right. Adam is compelled to stop and help an old woman he sees struggling to carry her groceries and she kindly thanks him for his assistance, but the act of generosity makes Adam tardy. Out of breath, he none too subtly arrives at the temple and timidly takes his place alongside Teela, earning reactions of disapproval, frustration and disappointment from his parents, the Defenders, and everyone else present. Even Orko face palms in embarrassment. As they stand at attention throughout the ceremony, Teela distracts the humiliated Adam by mocking the newly anointed Mekaneck under her breath. She doesn't understand what value there is in being able to stretch your own neck. Out of literally anyone else, why did her father pick Mekaneck as a recruit for the Defenders? As the ceremony goes on, Adam notices Stratos nonchalantly silencing his commlink multiple times as its light repeatedly blinks, indicating multiple calls. Adam winces as he suddenly hears the Sorceress' voice yelling, "PRINCE ADAM!" in his head. He looks up to see Zoar soaring in circles up above. She ominously warns Adam that the threat has arrived, and he is needed immediately. Stratos whispers to Duncan and excuses himself to answer the persistent commlink. He quickly returns and mutters to the Man-at-Arms in distress, just as Duncan's own commlink blinks repeatedly. Adam sees the two speaking low tones before Duncan interrupts Randor's speech to mumble in his ear. The proceeding is interrupted when King Randor announces that he has received news of an emergency and must depart, instructing everyone to calmly yet quickly seek shelter until they receive the signal to return. The alarm is sounded, the civilians – huddling together in concern – are escorted safely to bunkers by soldiers and Queen Marlana, and the city's defenses are prepared. AA cannons are manned, pilots are boarding Wind Raiders and Sky-sleds, and the capital's force field is activated, enveloping the entire city in a protective bubble. "What's going on?", Teela wonders in concern to Adam as Duncan they join the Defenders in a circle around King Randor and Duncan. Emergency reports have come in that multiple outposts have been overrun by an enemy force, and that multiple battalions are on their way, converging on the capital city. King Randor, Duncan, and several of the older Defenders like Stratos recognize with horror that the Horde has returned. Adam hears scattered reactions from the Defenders, "The Horde?", "Hordak?", "they're back", "but how?" It dawns on Adam that the Horde was the threat the Sorceress warned him about. Each of the Defenders split up to take separate battalions to face each invasion force spread out throughout the kingdom. Duncan prepares to take a battalion to the city of Drisdos, which is where the largest group of enemy forces is heading. In the chaos, King Randor suddenly asks where Adam is. He's gone. Duncan smirks.

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- **The Siege of Drisdos:** Cut to He-Man and Battle-Cat riding for the city of Drisdos. As they gallop and pound through the Fields of Evermore, a fleet of Sky Tyrants and Storm Chariots will crest the hills behind He-Man, flanking him. The Sky Tyrants will eventually pass He-Man and Battle-Cat up as the ships soar over them with a “VREEEEM” sound. Aboard the lead ship is Duncan and Teela, while Clamp Champ, Buzz-Off and Orko are in the neighboring Sky Tyrant. Over commlink, Duncan will give out instructions to everyone, making the evacuation of Drisdos’ population their highest priority. While Duncan and Buzz-Off focus on evacuating the people of Drisdos via ship, Clamp Champ will do the same but from the ground level while Teela will direct a team of gunners on the city walls in holding off squadrons of Rotons with AA cannons. It’s evident that the enemy pilots are stopping the evacuation by blasting the unprotected civilian vehicles and ships like fish in a barrel. Dozens of destroyed civilian vehicles already litter the outside of the city walls. Clamp Champ will point out that even with the combined storage of the Sky Tyrants and Storm Chariots they still won’t have enough space to load up all 2,000 citizens of Drisdos. “Once the troops are deployed, we’ll load up for evac. Anyone left behind who doesn’t fit will have to leave the city in any civilian vehicles that are left. Driftcarts, hoverbikes, skyrails, anything you can find. Pack in as many people as you can and make sure that they stay within formation. Remember, protecting the people and getting them out of here in one piece is our first priority!” The Attack Traks and Wind Raiders will be deployed, engaging with the Horde vanguard’s infantry and Rotons in tank battles and dogfights over Drisdos while He-Man charges right down the middle of the Horde’s ranks in a one-man frontal assault. Buzz-Off will get a chance to shine as a new addition to the Defenders of Eternos as he leads the Wind Raiders in aerial assaults, calling out flight formations and patterns while single-handedly taking on enemy Rotons. He may even rescue some pilots by scooping them out of their downed Wind Raiders before they can crash. Clamp Champ will do the same but from the ground level, converting one of the Storm Chariot’s modular troop bays into a mobile command center to coordinate both the Attack Traks and Road Rippers with the soldiers escorting the terrified city folk out of the gates of Drisdos. Several other Storm Chariots convert their modular troop bays into medical bays, allowing search and rescue teams led by Clamp Champ to pull any wounded survivors out of the wreckage of the crashed vehicles and carry them back to the perimeter for medical treatment. Clamp Champ’s cybernetic hand will transform into a metal clamp, allowing him to lift and tear apart pieces of broken debris trapping the injured drivers before having his troops pull the injured out. Orko will do his best to defend Teela and her team up on the walls with magical barriers but his lack of self-confidence results in his spells failing and Teela having to tend to the court jester once he’s injured. A moment of comedy as Orko dramatically tells the others to go on without him, insisting that he won’t make it and he’ll only slow them down as a medic escorts Orko off the walls and onto a transport. He-Man and Teela share a quick glance

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of longing and desire at one another before He-Man charges into battle. He valiantly makes a last stand at the gates of the city as he takes on the entire Horde battalion by himself in an attempt to buy the Defenders enough time to evacuate the citizens to Virelia. And it works. The Storm Chariots and Sky Tyrants – fully-loaded with survivors – are able to escort the civilian vehicles to safety. Squadrons of Rotons will try to swarm the Sky Tyrants and overwhelm them, bombarding them with missiles. But thanks to the Sky Tyrants' rear shields, they are able to absorb the energy from the missile impacts and channel to the pulse arrays, carefully distancing themselves from the other friendly vehicles before firing EMP waves that disable the Rotons can cause them to plummet to the ground and explode. Civilians and troops alike cheer and applaud as the successful evacuation goes underway. Meanwhile, over intercom He-Man promises to rendezvous with Duncan and the other soldiers at Point Dread once his work here is done. At first, He-Man is cracking one-liners while taking the Horde's vanguard on with only Battle-Cat by his side, but as the battle gets more intense, he stops wisecracking altogether as he's forced to focus and take things seriously. In a scene similar to Optimus Prime's forest battle with the Decepticons in *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*, He-Man and Battle-Cat go on a glorious and godlike kill streak as He-Man breaks out into a berserk state and becomes an unstoppable force of nature, intimidating Catra and Lohani and causing them pause, but impressing Force Captain Despera. All three of them are watching the siege take place from their command center at the back of the vanguard's legion. Between He-Man and his pet familiar, they decimate Despera's battalion, leaving nothing but dismantled droids in their wake. But despite all of his supernatural strength, He-Man is not immune to fatigue, and Despera picks up on this. Once her last trooper has been cut down, Despera commands Catra and Lohani to stay back. She challenges He-Man to single combat, and even though he still gives her a run for her money and makes her work hard for the victory – beating her up several times – she manages to best He-Man solely because she is fresh for the fight and He-Man is slow and tired from having defeated an entire army by himself. She picks up the Sword of Power, claiming it for herself as a trophy, but she is distracted by the vision the Sword grants her upon physical contact. She sees quick glimpses of Eternians and Hordesmen battling, the Riftspire Shadow Nexus, all the while hearing the wailing cries of a newborn baby. Catra and Lohani call out a warning to their leader, but they are too late as Battle-Cat pounces on the distracted Despera and begins to maul her and thrash her around. Battle-Cat refuses to release Despera until he is shot and wounded multiple times by Catra and Lohani, who call in air support to chase Battle-Cat away from the battlefield. Lohani seizes the unconscious He-Man while Catra tends to Despera, and Battle-Cat will attempt to come to his master's rescue, but the Rotons keep him from reaching He-Man. With a furious roar, Battle-Cat turns and bolts away to Point Dread, leaving the Horde to ferry both Despera and He-Man away to Snake Mountain. All the while,

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the falcon Zoar watches from the skies above. Through Zoar's eyes, the Sorceress studies Despera, sensing something about her.

- **Point Dread:** Point Dread has become the staging ground for the Eternian defense against the Horde invasion. King Randor, the rest of the Defenders, and their corresponding units have all rendezvoused at the fortress after successfully evacuating the people of Eternos from its border settlements. All of the surviving refugees are safely protected within the capital city of Virelia. Yet, these evacuations came at a cost, as all of the border settlements and their people have been decimated. Aridan included. King Randor wants to know how the Horde was able to return to Eternia without anyone receiving word of their coming. How did they slip past everyone? Stratos and Buzz-Off share reports that they've received from their people, confirming that the Horde entered Eternia through the abandoned Shadow Nexus gate in Mount Riftspire only a couple of days ago. They didn't engage with the Avionians or Adreenids, as their scouts reported that the Horde vanguard travelled straight for Snake Mountain as soon as they crossed the threshold. "Skeletor", growls Randor bitterly as he punches the war table. All in one fell swoop, the Horde has the army of Eternos backed into a corner. The Defenders are forced to admit that the Horde's invasion strategy was well-planned and executed. Cut to Battle-Cat limping up to the gates of Point Dread, and the gates are opened for him when Teela recognizes him. Yet Battle-Cat's wounds and the absence of He-Man cause great concern not only for Teela, but for the Defenders as well as she interrupts the war council by bringing Battle-Cat to the meeting. Zoar appears and through telepathy with the Sorceress, Duncan informs the others that He-Man has been taken captive by the Horde. Teela is the most worried about He-Man, as it becomes evident to both the audience and the rest of the characters that she has a crush on him. Suddenly, they receive an incoming transmission from the Horde. King Randor answers, only for a red hologram of Skeletor to appear. Gloating his newfound victory, Skeletor will comment how much he enjoys this game of back-and-forth he's played with Randor for the past two decades where the scales of power are constantly tipping in and out of each other's favor. Smoldering at his bastard half-brother, King Randor demands that Skeletor stop wasting his time. Skeletor cuts right to the chase as he lists off the Horde's terms of surrender. If Randor cooperates, then less innocent people will be needlessly sacrificed for the sake of this war. "A situation they wouldn't be in at all if it weren't for you and your damned Horde!", King Randor retorts. "Such fire! Such spirit! Oho...I love it. So invigorating!", Skeletor cackles. He admits that he knows Randor all too well and knows that his brother's pride and stubbornness will prevent him from surrendering, but perhaps he would consider after learning that his greatest guardian, He-Man, has been defeated and taken into custody. Eternos has lost its greatest weapon. There is no hope left for them. It is only a matter of time before they too fall to the Horde. King Randor refuses to submit, hanging up on Skeletor. The war council erupts in a heated debate as everyone begins arguing

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about their next course of action. Some want to rescue He-Man. Others believe they need to pull back their forces and mobilize at Virelia. Others think they need to prioritize reaching out to the other kingdoms for support. But while all of this is happening, Teela kneels beside Battle-Cat and whispers, “can you take me to him?” Battle-Cat acknowledges that he can, and Teela decides to sneak away from the war council. She gears up at her tent and has Orko tend to Battle-Cat’s wounds before preparing to head out and rescue He-Man on her own, insisting that she’ll move quicker alone. But just as she prepares to sneak out, Teela is intercepted by Mekaneck, who catches her red-handed. But, instead of trying to stop her, Mekaneck wants to join her. He prefers not wasting his time, as he believes that he’d do more good watching Teela’s back than staying at Point Dread and waiting for the others to come to an agreement. Teela supposes that she misjudged Mekaneck and accepts his offer, admitting he’s not that bad after all. Orko rides with Mekaneck on a sky-sled while Teela rides Battle-Cat as they venture forth out of Point Dread towards the Dark Hemisphere.

- **The Horde Standoff:** When the Hordesmen return to Snake Mountain with their prized captive, Skeletor is absolutely guffawed. When he jealously asks Despera – who is still wounded from her fight with Battle-Cat – how she managed to achieve such a feat, she roasts Skeletor and tells him that she is not pathetic like the rest of Skeletor’s lackeys. Bristling, Skeletor prepares to execute He-Man right then and there, eager for the delicious taste of revenge. But Despera intervenes and informs Skeletor that He-Man is Hordak’s property now, and their master will determine his fate. It is not their place to decide as his servants what they should do with their lord’s belongings. After all, He-Man may still be of use to them. Lord Hordak has been known to not waste a worthy advisory’s skill by killing them if reconditioning them to serve the Horde is a viable option. Skeletor objects, as he insists that He-Man is too great of a threat to allow him to live. He’ll foil the Horde’s plans if they spare him. Despera insists that He-Man is no longer a threat now that she possesses his Sword of Power, and he is cut off from his allies. One prisoner may be too much for Skeletor’s incompetent Hordesmen to handle, but her troopers are more than capable of restraining a single unarmed captive. Their pride wounded, Skeletor’s lieutenants draw their weapons on Despera and her troops, who likewise match their colleague’s hostility. A standoff ensues over the custody of He-Man. Despera rubs it in Skeletor’s face that the conquest of Eternia is not about his own personal glory. It’s about the greater good of the Horde, reaffirming that defiance is the death of order. The fact that Skeletor and his men are impetuous enough to raise their arms up against Despera proves that Skeletor’s divisiveness and his failure to uphold the Horde’s values are the reasons behind his continued failures. The two factions are about to come to blows when they are interrupted by an incoming message from Hordak. Everyone lowers their weapons and kneels before the hologram. Despera reports her recent success at breaking Eternos’ outer defenses and the capture of its greatest champion, He-Man. Between the

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hologram of He-Man and the Sword of Power, Hordak recognizes He-Man must be a guardian of Grayskull, and is quite impressed with his daughter's prowess. Skeletor reacts with alarm upon hearing Hordak refer to Despera as his "daughter", and with clear scrutiny, he shrewdly studies her as she speaks to their master. Hordak warns Despera to be wary of the Sword of Power, as its magic is known to addle the minds of its bearers and drive them mad. He instructs her to lock the Sword away and to not touch it or even look at it until Shadow Weaver comes to retrieve it. It is a cursed relic that will only haunt Despera. Hordak informs both Despera and Skeletor that he will be coming to Eternia with the rest of the Horde's armies soon, to personally lead the final stage of the invasion and sack the royal palace as well as eliminate the Line of Grayskull. Hordak orders Skeletor to assist Despera in whatever she needs, as he officially promotes her to be his new heir to the Horde empire, and to add salt to the wound of Skeletor's injured pride, he commands his former protégé to personally see to Despera's wounds.

- **Seeds of Doubt:** Grumbling, Skeletor takes Despera to Tri-Klops' laboratory, barking at Tri-Klops to vacate the lab as Skeletor begins administering healing spells to the Force Captain's injuries. Here, Skeletor nosily asks Despera probing questions about her childhood and what it was like being raised by their mighty overlord. Despera is at first taken back by Skeletor's interest in her, mistaking it for romantic attraction. With a snide rebuke, Skeletor corrects her as he explains how he had once been Hordak's apprentice and was once called Keldor. Before his deformity. Back in those days, *Keldor* had been Hordak's heir to his empire. It seems Lord Hordak trades out heirs and goes through apprentices like dirty laundry. He also tells her that Hordak lied about the Sword of Power. It is not a cursed artifact, but rather an ancient and magical superweapon that Hordak is too afraid to see his underlings wield, for fear of supplanting him. He fears the power of Grayskull because he knows it can potentially destroy him. Skeletor begins sowing seeds of doubt into Despera's mind, trying to twist her against Hordak and corrupt her loyalty. Despera will deflect it, as she recognizes that Skeletor is jealous of her success and Hordak's favor, just like the rest of the Force Captains. She'll leap off Tri-Klop's surgical table, grab Skeletor by the throat and pin him up against the wall. She growls through grit teeth that Hordak warned her that she would be challenged when she came to Eternia, and Skeletor is proving him right. Despera threatens to finish what Skeletor's deformity started and flay him alive until his body is nothing but bones. She doesn't want to hear another slandered lie about their master ever again. She drops Skeletor and storms out of the lab just as Tri-Klops comes in to check on them. Massaging his throat, Skeletor chuckles darkly as he enlightens the concerned Tri-Klops that Despera doesn't know her true identity, revealing to his scientist that Despera is in fact the missing daughter of King Randor. Despera's true identity is Princess Adora Grayskull. Skeletor comments on the irony of Hordak's promise to wipe out the Line of Grayskull, using a descendant of

Commented [MV5]: *The doors to the throne room slam open. Marching through the gloom come Despera and her elite Hordemen, flanking a bruised and chained prisoner—HE-MAN. The air is heavy with tension. Skeletor lounges on his throne, draped in shadows, but upon seeing the captive, he bursts into a harsh, incredulous laugh.*

SKELETOR

(cackling)

By the bones of Serpos... *you* brought me *this*?

I could weep from joy — or rage!

Tell me, Despera, how did you manage such a feat?

A stroke of luck? A fluke? Divine pity?

Despera steps forward, blood still seeping from the gash on her shoulder. She doesn't flinch.

DESPERA

(flatly)

I'm not one of your sniveling pets, Skeletor.

I don't beg, I don't bungle, and I don't lose.

That's how I did it.

The insult lands. Skeletor rises from his throne, fury in his eyes. He stalks toward He-Man, venom thick in his voice.

SKELETOR

Then allow me the pleasure of finishing what you started.

A final gift — from one failure to another.

I'll carve the name Grayskull from his bones and feed it to

the snakes!

He raises his Havoc Staff. The room crackles with

anticipation — and danger.

DESPERA

(interrupting, firm)

No.

He-Man is *not* yours to kill.

He belongs to Lord Hordak now.

Skeletor stops mid-swing. The words hang like iron

chains.

DESPERA (CONT'D)

We are servants, not sovereigns.

And our master decides the fate of what is his.

He may yet have use for this one.

Lord Hordak doesn't waste valuable assets — not when

they can be broken and reshaped.

SKELETOR

(spitting)

You think *he* can be reconditioned? That thing is a *blade*!

Keep it sheathed and it will still cut you in your sleep!

DESPERA

(steps between them, coolly)

He no longer holds the Sword.

He's cut off, alone, and unarmed.

A single prisoner — manageable.

At least... for a competent force.

Behind Skeletor, his lieutenants bristle. Trap Jaw growls.

Beast Man snarls. Evil-Lyn's eyes narrow. They draw

weapons. Despera's Hordemen immediately respond in

kind. The air turns to glass — brittle, ready to shatter.

DESPERA (CONT'D)

(eyes locked on Skeletor)

...

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Grayskull as his weapon. As Despera marches down the halls of Snake Mountain, we can see that she is visibly upset by Skeletor's words and is having trouble processing them.

- **The King Repays His Debt:** To his dismay, Duncan learns that Teela and Mekaneck have gone AWOL, coming to the conclusion that they must've foolishly left to rescue He-Man by themselves. Duncan curses his daughter's stubborn impatience and when he informs King Randor of the recklessness, the king comments on Teela's boldness, ruminating on the fact that when Randor found himself in the bowels of Snake Mountain, He-Man had come and rescued him. Randor had always wondered if he'd get the chance to repay the favor and today has given him that answer. He commands the rest of the Defenders to mount up. When the Defenders ask where they are going, the king proudly answers that they are going to live up to their oaths as protectors snatch He-Man out of the jaws of death itself.
- **Despera Interrogates He-Man:** In the dungeons of Snake Mountain, Despera will visit He-Man as he awakens and finds himself in a prison crafted from both magic and machinery. With Tri-Klops present, she questions He-Man about weaknesses in Eternos' defenses and what strategies King Randor and his Defenders would use. But he refuses to talk, even when he is tortured by Tri-Klops. Despera anticipated this, so she switches to the topic to the Sword of Power. She has questions about the vision she saw and tries to figure out for herself if the Sword has already driven He-Man mad. Or if the blade is even truly capable of such a curse. She does it mostly just to prove to herself that Skeletor is a liar. But He-Man doesn't respond. Instead, he studies her closely, remarking on how there is something oddly familiar about her. As if he has met her before but can't quite place when and where. He suddenly recognizes Despera as his childhood imaginary friend and is so bewildered to find out that she was a real person this entire time. Despera is completely taken aback by this comment, chilling her to the bone as the champion of Grayskull continues. For years, He-Man believed his imaginary friend to be some kind of spirit, and he begins speaking to Despera as if she is an old friend, asking her how she ended up with the Horde and if she needs help to escape. Despera is caught off-guard by He-Man's sincerity. Unsure how to respond to He-Man's words, Despera departs. Cut to a flashback montage of Adam and Despera playing alone as toddlers in the plazas and gardens of the royal palace but every time someone else comes into the plaza or calls out to Adam, Despera mysteriously vanishes from Adam's sight. Whenever this happens, we cut back to little Despera in the Fright Zone, where she is welcomed back from her astral projection by Shadow Weaver. Through their dialogue, we learn that it is Shadow Weaver's little secret to reward Despera with a treat. If Despera behaves herself and performs her studies well, Shadow Weaver projects the child's astral form to Eternia to visit and play with her "friend". We cut back to the present as an adult Despera is reeling from this discovery, frantically racking her brain.

Commented [MV6]: INT. SNAKE MOUNTAIN – TRI-KLOPS' LAB – NIGHT

The sterile glow of dim red lights and humming machinery fills the chamber. Despera winces as she sits on a slab, blood drying across her armor. Skeletor storms in behind her, annoyed but dutiful.

SKELETOR

Tri-Klops!

Out. Now. Go tinker with your toys somewhere else.

Tri-Klops looks up from a vat of glowing circuits.

TRI-KLOPS

But I'm calibrating the ocular—

SKELETOR

I said OUT!

Grumbling, Tri-Klops trudges off. Skeletor raises a glowing claw, whispering ancient incantations. A sickly green aura begins knitting Despera's shoulder wound closed.

SKELETOR

(chuckling to himself)

The heir apparent, crippled by a house cat. How poetic.

DESPERA

(flatly)

Save the commentary and do your job.

Skeletor tilts his head as he continues the spell, studying her.

SKELETOR

So... what was it like?

Growing up in the great Lord Hordak's shadow?

Did he sing you lullabies from Despondos?

Tuck you in beneath stormclouds?

DESPERA

(suspicious)

What is this, Skeletor? Curiosity... or courtship?

Skeletor scoffs — a sharp, barking laugh as he waves his hand, sealing another wound.

SKELETOR

Please. You'd sooner kiss a stun-lizard.

I'm not *interested*, Force Captain.

Only... intrigued.

I was once where you are now.

Before the skull. Before the rot.

Back when I was called... Keldor.

Despera raises an eyebrow.

DESPERA

That name means nothing to me.

SKELETOR

It meant everything once.

I was his heir, his champion, his *favorite*.

Until I displeased him.

Until I bled for him.

And when I fell — he didn't lift me up.

He *replaced* me.

Just as he'll replace you.

Despera says nothing. Skeletor leans closer, voice quieter now.

...

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- **Shadow Weaver Comes:** Despera will exit the dungeon, coming upon Catra along the way as her lieutenant was looking for her to inform Despera that Shadow Weaver has arrived at Snake Mountain. “Good, I want a word with her”, Despera says grimly. Catra asks if everything is ok, noting through very specific details in Despera’s body language that she is upset. Despera reassures Catra that she is fine, even though Catra can tell this is a lie, but she submits when Despera explains that there is something urgent she needs to take care of. Cut to the corridors of Snake Mountain, where Skeletor is guiding Shadow Weaver to the armory where the Sword of Power awaits her. Some snarky and spiteful banter is thrown back and forth between Skeletor and Shadow Weaver as they are reunited from the old days of working alongside each other as the Right and Left Hands of the Horde during the Great Unrest. Skeletor is none too pleased that once again, Hordak has come to collect what rightfully belongs to Skeletor since the bone-faced warlord quotes that since the blood of Grayskull runs through his veins, he has a birthright to the Sword of Power. But Shadow Weaver puts Skeletor in his place, reminding him that Skeletor’s failures are his own fault. She tried to take Keldor under her wing back when he was Hordak’s acolyte, but apparently the lessons of subtlety, wordcraft, and manipulation that Shadow Weaver tried teaching him didn’t stick. Otherwise, he’d still be in Hordak’s favor, just as Shadow Weaver is, since her tenure as the Left Hand has gone on uninterrupted for decades. They arrive at the armory to find Despera and Catra waiting inside for them, along with a body of guards to protect the Sword.
- **Reckoning:** Shadow Weaver’s warm greetings to her daughter are met with coldhearted rebuke. The witch is taken aback by this and asks Despera for the meaning behind the Right Hands’ callous behavior. Despera sternly dismisses everyone from the room except for Shadow Weaver. Outside, Catra will stand guard, sharing a glance of contempt when the jealous Skeletor makes a snide comment to her. Skeletor’s attempt to get under Catra’s skin backfires as she roasts him with a comeback, prompting Skeletor to trudge off grumpily. Once they’re alone, Despera asks Shadow Weaver about her childhood memories of playing with the boy with Adam. Shadow Weaver confirms this to be true, to which Despera asks why Shadow Weaver would allow such a thing to happen. Why would she torment Despera like that by dangling the truth in front of her, just enough for it to be out of her reach. This is where Shadow Weaver grudgingly admits that she has always wanted to be a mother but never could because her descent into black magic has rendered her sterile. So, when Hordak began indoctrinating one child tribute from every species that he conquered in an attempt to prove his Grand Design was efficient, Shadow Weaver took it as an opportunity to raise these orphans as her own children, providing each of them with a surrogate relationship that benefitted all parties. Despera demands to know why Shadow Weaver allowed her the privilege of imaginary friends but denied that freedom to the others. “Do you really have to hear me say it?”,

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Shadow Weaver asks, proceeding to admit that she has always favored Despera because of how much Despera reminded Shadow Weaver of herself when she was young. Before she became the empty and lifeless husk she is now. Despera realizes that this is manipulation, that Hordak *stole* all of his Force Captains when they were children. He did not adopt them or save them from destruction as he said he did. Despera keeps her responses to her adoptive mother short and curt as she tries to restrain her anger. Until Despera finally decides to leave, storming out of the armory despite Shadow Weaver's attempt to talk to her. Catra follows the fuming Despera to her quarters where Despera erupts in a fit of rage as she begins smashing anything in sight with her bare hands and armored boots. Once she is done taking her frustration out on the décor, that is when Despera explains the truth to Catra about their lineage as orphans. Despera and Catra realize that their families might still be out there, and that their parents might even be alive. Possibly even looking for them, if Hordak hasn't killed them already. "What else have they lied about? What other secrets are they hiding?", Catra asks warily, voicing that they need to tell Lohni about this, but Despera insists that they need to keep this between themselves until they have more answers. Despera reveals that her childhood imaginary friend is He-Man, to which Catra playfully gets offended that Despera had other friends aside from her. In light of this revelation, Despera wonders if He-Man really is their enemy.

- **Teela x Mekaneck:**
- **Clash of Wills:** Despera will return alone to visit He-Man in the dungeon, asking him about how he remembers her and what ideals Eternos truly stands for. He-Man answers her questions, explaining that Eternos stands for truth, justice, honor, and goodwill. He-Man sees a newfound vulnerability in her countenance – this crack in her armor that is her hard exterior – and presses his advantage, doubling down on his empathy. He-Man and Despera engage in a debate that is a clash of wills and ideologies, with He-Man questioning Despera on how she can be so blind to the evil the Horde is inflicting. She counters that the universe needs correcting and that it needs order, explaining the Grand Design to He-Man in attempt to get him to understand her point of view. But He-Man challenges the doctrine of the Grand Design with his defense of free will and that while the universe may be at peace if the Horde succeeds, life in the universe won't be prosperous. Sure, if Hordak wins, the benefit of the Grand Design is that he'd be able to control everyone and everything in the galaxy and thereby put a stop to all of the wars and chaos that free will brings. But the drawback is that by controlling everyone, you take away what makes a sentient being special. Their spirit. Their humanity. Their ability to choose and be better. The Grand Design fundamentally ignores the potential that people can change for the better and that through that change, peace and order can be restored. The Grand Design refuses to take hope into account, and because of that, it is ultimately wrong to rip free will away from people. He-Man implores Despera to change and become

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better, reminding her that despite all of the brainwashing has done to her, she still has a choice. She still has a chance to bring light into this world.

- **Webstor's Petition:** Webstor informs Skeletor of the Horde's massacre of the Riftspire colony of Arachna, demanding Despera's blood. Skeletor coaxes Webstor into patiently biding his time and quietly assassinating Despera in the middle of the next battle so as to not draw suspicion from Hordak. Webstor's vengeance is appeased for now as he leaves to prepare his trap.
- **Adora's Memories are Restored:**

ACT 3

- **The Battle of Riftspire Mountain:** The final battle at the Riftspire Shadow Nexus is meant to be one giant action set piece. Which is unique in that the location of Riftspire provides interesting new challenges and variables for our combatants, while also providing some interesting and creative visuals similar to the picturesque battles seen in the *Star Wars* prequel trilogy such as the Battles of Kashyyyk, Geonosis & Utapau. Since the cliffs and faces of the Mystic Mountains are so steep and jagged, it makes it impossible for a large army to scale it on foot. Hence why only fliers like Avionians and Andreenids are able to live up in a location so high. So, that means an aerial assault is the only way for the army of Eternos and the Defenders to attack. I think it would be really cool for the army of Eternos to arrive in a fleet of Wind Raiders and sky-sleds, flanked by the Avionians and Andreenids. The Defenders and the Eternos soldiers not piloting aircraft would launch themselves out of said aircraft and use jetpacks to fly down through the crater and inside Riftspire to destroy the Nexus gateway. But the Hordesmen are equipped with their own jetpacks, leading to an airborne battle similar to the one between the Mandalorians and the Empire in season 3 of *The Mandalorian*. Some Eternians and Hordesmen would veer away from the main skirmish in the middle of the aerial arena where the more advanced fliers like Andreenids and Avionians are engaging Hordesmen in close-quarter combat (tackling one another from the air, jumping down and ambushing fliers below, etc.) and the outliers will latch onto the walls of Riftspire to support their comrades by taking potshots at the enemy. But when the Hordesmen catch on to this tactic, they mimic it, which leads to a competitive firefight between the two squads of climbers. Meanwhile, a handful of other fliers would essentially do drive-byes with grenades and missile launchers to destabilize the cliff wall and bury the climbers in debris. Plus, this Riftspire battlefield location would make for a killer play set for Mattel to sell as part of the movie's toy line.
- **Webstor's Trap:** In the midst of the battle, Webstor will lure She-Ra into his snare with a distress signal he stole from Catra. Believing Catra to be in trouble, She-Ra follows the call but finds herself isolated and trapped by webs. Webstor ambushes her, screaming for vengeance. The two trade blows in a duel until She-Ra breaks multiple bones in Webstor's body and rather than kill him, she spares him. She admits that enough blood has been spilt by her hands, forswearing her old ways of fighting for domination. She now chooses to fight to protect, rather

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than destroy, and in an ironic way, she now honors her ideal of maintaining order now as She-Ra than she did as a member of the Horde. She-Ra leaves Webstor broken and battered as she returns to the battle at hand.

- **He-Man & She-Ra Team Up:** Aiming the Sword of Power at his sister in the same manner that Adam does to Cringer, he summons the Power of Grayskull to transform himself into He-Man and Adora as She-Ra. With He-Man wielding the Sword of Power and She-Ra picking up an Eternian sword and shield, the two charge into an army of Hordemen separating them from the Dimensional Gate, leading to an epic one similar to the scene where Deadpool and Wolverine fight the Deadpool Corps in *Deadpool & Wolverine*. An epic version of *Brother and Sister* by Erasur (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGfCml2NYyl>) needs to play over this awesome scene of pure fan service. At one point, She-Ra will break her regular sword, and she resorts to using her shield Captain America-style. But her super strength causes her to absolutely trash the shield until its nothing but rubble, forcing her to keep on fighting with her bare fists until He-Man notices her and tosses her the Sword of Power. Catching it, she will bring the sword down in an overhead cut, casting a volatile wave of energy/electricity that cuts through a swath of Hordemen while He-Man busies himself dismantling a Roton and the pilots inside with his bare hands, letting out a victorious war cry after doing so before chucking the debris at incoming fliers. All the while Catra and Lohani watch this from across the battlefield, struck with disbelief.
- **Lynn vs Shadow Weaver:**
- **Final Boss Fight:** Eager to be rid of his former master, Skeletor aids Adora by helping free He-Man and fighting alongside them against Hordak. When Hordak addresses his former apprentice's treachery, Skeletor will shout out, "Eternia is mine to rule! Mine! Take your rags and rot elsewhere, you relic of failure!" Hordak will glare at Skeletor with seething contempt, "rule Eternia? So the jester thinks he's a king now? Betrayal suits you, Skeletor. So does failure. Enjoy your throne of lies while it lasts. You've traded a master for a grave." Hordak will then fight both He-Man and Skeletor together and despite them managing to wound the overlord, Hordak ultimately defeats them both. He has Skeletor in his grasp and is about to slay him until he is interrupted by She-Ra, who challenges him to single combat, mirroring the previous duel she initiated with Queen Angella at the beginning of the film. The two engage in a one-on-one bout. But Hordak likewise manages to best She-Ra too. Very similar to the two duels Count Dooku engages in back-to-back in the climax of *Attack of the Clones*. Both Grayskull twins are eventually bloodied, beaten and reverted back to their normal forms by Hordak, but when Hordak raises the killing blow for Adora, Adam stops her. Summoning the Power of Grayskull back to himself and his sister right as Hordak was about to strike, propelling Hordak backwards. Both He-Man and She-Ra fail to defeat Hordak alone and it is only when the twins stand together that they manage to push back the technomancer. Reinvigorated and filled with a new burst of confidence and power, the Guardians of Grayskull defeated Hordak and

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forced him and all his minions (including Catra and Lohani) back through the Dimensional Gate into Etheria. Leaving Skeletor in unmasked awe as he watched on from the sidelines before making good his escape with the rest of his Horde.

- **Denouement:** When Adam and Adora return to Eternia, they can have a reunion with their parents where King Randor and Queen Marlena can fill in both Adora and the audience on the events surrounding her kidnapping. This will be told through a flashback. In the final battle of the Great Unrest, King Randor led his forces in an assault on Hordak's flagship – The *Velvet Glove* – yet their quick and easy victory was all too suspicious. Even though they seized the ship, there was no sign of Hordak, Shadow Weaver, or any of the children from the Horde's orphanage. Instead, what they found was a recorded holographic message from Hordak aboard The *Glove's* bridge. In that message, Hordak coldly revealed that by the time his enemies viewed this message, it would have already been too late. Hordak states that King Randor can be allowed to temporarily keep Eternia for now. But Hordak is going to keep Randor's legacy in exchange. At that moment, Randor received a transmission from his wife Marlena, hysterically informing her husband that the palace had been invaded and their children stolen by Hordak. King Randor and his men immediately returned to the palace, where they apprehended Hordak's apprentice Keldor and interrogated him on the whereabouts of his master. It didn't take much for Keldor to betray his superiors, and he revealed the location of the magical gate known as the Shadow Nexus that Hordak was going to rendezvous at to teleport himself and his hostages to a secret world that the Horde used as a hideout. With the coordinates, Randor led an ambush on the Shadow Nexus, where a desperate battle broke out between the royal Defenders of Eternos and the Horde's remaining ground battalion. (The roster of the Defenders during the Great Unrest will include Duncan's father Dekker as the acting Man-at-Arms, Extendar, Rio Blast, Snout Spout, Gwildor, and younger versions of Duncan and Stratos). King Randor managed to rescue his son Adam, but his daughter Adora was spirited away through the Gate by Hordak before he destroyed the portal behind him. The doorway between Eternia and Etheria was shut, and no matter how hard and long the Sorceress and the Defenders searched, they could not discern where Hordak had gone. He could have traveled to any planet, dimension, or universe for all they knew. Princess Adora was lost. The royal family held out hope for a while, but after a couple of years, they finally admitted that they would never see their daughter again and a funeral was held for the princess, as they presumed Adora to be dead. The guilt of having failed as a father to protect his daughter has eaten away at Randor for 18 years, and to this day, he still considers the loss of Adora to be his greatest failure and source of shame. As a king, he has been able to protect his people from threats both within and without. But as a father, he could not do the same for his children.
- **Adora Makes Her Decision:** After Adora has spent a few weeks in Eternia reunited with her biological family, she decides to return back to Etheria after

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paying a visit to the Sorceress and witnessing the Rebellion continue to struggle against the Horde. Adora will meet with her family in the throne room and share with them her desire to return to Etheria. She expresses that her honor compels her to right the wrongs that she committed. It's not fair that Adora gets to experience a life of privilege, luxury, and convenience – even if it is her birthright – when so many others are suffering. Especially when she caused said suffering. She has an obligation that she must fulfill. She cannot rest knowing that the Horde – along with its corrupting influence – continues to threaten the citizens of Etheria. She intends to go back and atone for her sins by aiding the Rebellion in dethroning Hordak. King Randor offers to send a battalion of soldiers with his daughter to support her in this noble quest. But Adora insists that the kingdom of Eternos needs her soldiers more than she does. Skeletor is still at Eternos' doorstep, and it cannot afford to lose even one of its protectors. Randor tries to compromise by dispatching a small team instead, even if it is just one of the Defenders, just so Adora is not alone and can at least have *someone* watching her back. But the young princess graciously denies her father's gift, explaining that this is a task she must complete alone. It is not right for anyone else to perish on Adora's behalf, regardless of her station or title. She could never ask someone to risk their lives for her. It just isn't right. Marlena can't help but smile as she comments with amusement how Randor has met his match in stubbornness, a quality Adam did not inherit. "I always knew Adam took after me, but at least we now know which of us you took after, Adora", Queen Marlena says, reaching out for her husband's hand and holding it warmly. Randor grudgingly submits and agrees to not send anyone – not even royal bodyguards – with Adora to Etheria. But, only on the condition that she keeps in contact with them, and she promises to return home to them in one piece. Randor refuses to lose his daughter a second time. With a genuflect, Adora swears to do her best to uphold that promise. Queen Marlena likewise makes her daughter promise to keep in touch, and as preparations are made for Adora's departure over the next couple of days, Marlena reaches out to the Sorceress. The queen arranges for a set of magical mirrors to be made, with one being given to Adora, and the other to Randor and Marlena, allowing them to communicate with their daughter even while they are worlds apart from each other.

- **The Secrets of Castle Grayskull:** Adora will excitedly approach Duncan with an idea, and we see a montage of him drawing up designs and gathering materials before they both head out to Castle Grayskull with Adam astride sky-sleds. The Sorceress will reveal to everyone present that they are about to see something only a very few select people in history have had the privilege to witness. What they are about to see is the greatest honor Eternia has to offer. For centuries, dozens of people have tried to discover the secrets of Castle Grayskull and claim the legendary power for themselves. But they all failed hopelessly in vain. Today, The Sorceress is going to willingly show them the secrets of Grayskull, but on the

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condition that they never mention or speak of it to anyone. Once they all swear their oaths of silence, a secret passage suddenly materializes on the side of the wall, leading to a downwards staircase. They find themselves in a deep underground temple. The place is huge. It's almost like they are in the bowels of the planet itself, with rivers of lava flowing beneath them. On a grand altar rests a primitive yet sacred anvil, accompanied by smithing tools. This is the Forge of the Goddess. It is powered by a magnificent glowing celestial meteor known as the Starseed. The Starseed serves as the very source of all life on the planet Eternia, pulsing magic and life into the earth and lava itself. The Forge grants the user the power of the Goddess to shape and create whatever they wish. With the help of the Sorceress, Adora makes history as she uses the Forge of the Goddess and Duncan's materials (which includes the Sword of Protection's jewel) to craft herself a second Sword of Power. As Adora works, time itself becomes strange as past and present begin to blur. With each strike of the hammer, Adora relives her ancestor King Grayskull's life experience as he crafted himself the first Sword of Power all those years ago at the very same Forge. All the while, Adam and Duncan watch on in wonder while the Sorceress stands by her lover and supportively holds his hand. The Sorceress refers to Adora's new blade as the Sword of Protection, the twin to the Sword of Power, just as the wielders of the two swords are siblings themselves. The Sword of Protection, thanks to the materials and designs Duncan provided, not only has all of the magical capabilities as Adam's Sword of Power but can also shapeshift and transform into other weapons such as a lance, a shield, and an axe. Upon Adora's word, the Sword of Protection will become whatever she needs it to be. The perfect blend of divine, mystical power and technological ingenuity. "Imagine what we could if every soldier in Eternia had that kind of weapon", Duncan fantasizes aloud. The Sorceress sternly points out that such easy accessibility to godlike power would lead to genocide on a global scale. It would quite possibly even lead to the end of their world. The idea quickly sobers up Duncan and he agrees that for the greater good, the crafting of the Sword of Protection should only be a one-time thing.

- **Adora's Goodbye:** The royal family and the Defenders will be present to see Adora off at the Dimensional Gate. In the background, we see that a mixed group of humans, Andreenids and Avionians working together to build the foundations of what looks to be a fortress, with some of the Defenders lending their special talents like Ram-Man acting as a human bulldozer and crane while Roboto gives out very detail-specific directions like a foreman. King Randor explains to Adora that he, Stratos, and Buzz-Off were able to work out an agreement with the leaders of the Avionian and Andreenid nations and get them to agree that it would be mutually beneficial for all of them to have a fortress stationed here to stand watch over the Dimensional Gate. In time, Randor hopes to use the Dimensional Gate to their advantage to help liberate Etheria from Hordak's rule. But they must contend with Skeletor and the Horde forces on Eternia first and

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ensure that their borders are secure before they go out to aid other worlds. Adora will make her rounds as she says goodbye to everyone present. When it comes to Cringer's turn, Adora will kneel down and nuzzle the tiger's furry face as he licks her. Much to her surprise, Cringer will even wrap his arms around her shoulders in a warm embrace, purring softly. Adam will be the last one she speaks to. At the portal, Adora and Adam will share a farewell conversation. As the twins lightly tease each other, Adam asks his sister for dating advice (which she is horrible at), and they talk about Adam's crush on Teela. Adora tells her brother that he has good taste, and she loves him, but she still thinks that Teela is way out of his league. Before she leaves, Adam tells Adora that he will miss her and is sad to see her go. Adora replies that even though they will each be fighting their own battles separately and it may even be years before they see each other again; they will always have each other's back. The twins make a pact that if either of them ever calls upon the other, they will always answer. Adora will make one final joke about allowing Adam to resume his spoiled life as the only child before she turns to face the portal. She draws the Sword of Protection and holds it aloft. Reacting to the Sword's energy, the gateway of the Shadow Nexus activates and thrums to life. A swirling vortex of liquid materializes and Adora will insert the tip of the Sword into the vortex and says, "Etheria". An image of the Fright Zone's Shadow Nexus will appear. "I'm coming home, Catra", Adora will say in a low voice, almost like a promise, before crossing the threshold and returning to Etheria. While this final farewell is transpiring, this cover of *Hey Brother* will play (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwb5h2lb7K4>). Teela will come up to comfort Adam by teasing and playfully harassing him, all the while Duncan and Adam's parents stand at a distance and watch them in amusement. Randor comments to Marlana, "you were right, my love. They'd make a fine match". He then turns to Duncan and asks, "do you still want to go through with the arrangement?". Duncan reaffirms his decision to betroth Teela to Adam, but stresses that Teela will most likely be upset when she hears the news. So, in the meantime, Duncan believes it is best to keep the betrothal to themselves until an opportune moment presents itself.