Across the Courtyard: A Zukka AU Fanfiction

by prettyvacan1

Summary

Sokka couldn't keep his eyes off the secluded rich kid. But is he the one with the crush?
Chapter 1: Across the Courtyard

Sokka sat at the table with his friends. He was zoned out and half listening to Aang talk about how much he liked high school.

His eyes were fixed on a tall classmate who was standing across the courtyard. The boy stood alone under the shade of a tree. He was reading a book that was worn, as if it had been read over and over.

Sokka like the way the boys red plaid shirt stuck out at the bottom of his black sweater vest, the way he had rolled the sleeves were rolled up to his elbows and how the guy had left the two top bottom buttons of his shirt open. Sokka also strangely admired the dark scar the boy had across his left eye. He wondered how it got there, but none the less, he liked it.

"Sokka!" Aang shouted, startling Sokka and snapping him out of his secret thoughts of admiration. "It's time to go"

"Oh yeah" Sokka replied, still slightly zoned out.

"Sokka, you've been staring at that guy everyday" Katara said.

"Yeah! You must like him" Toph, a short blind girl, said teasing Sokka.

"Oh shut up" Sokka said annoyed. "You know I still like Suki" He added, looking at the girl at the other table next to her boyfriend, Jet. Sokka and his friends walked to their classes, saying their goodbyes in the A wing.

Truthfully, Sokka didn't have many friends in his grade. He was only -really- friends with Aang and Toph; two freshmen, and Katara; his sister, who was a sophomore. To most other juniors, this was pretty pathetic, but Sokka didn't mind. He'd rather have 3 close friends rather than 50 acquaintances.

Sokka turned into A2, his World Cultures class. He sat down at a desk next to the board, across from his teacher, Mr. Carson.

"Let's begin with a moment of silence" Mr. Carson said. This was always something Mr. Carson started his classes with. Sokka always used the time to quietly write in his planner.

He jolted his head up from his planner when he heard the sound of the door opening. In walked the boy Sokka aways saw in the courtyard. He wondered why the boy was in the room. "Hi, I just got a new schedule" The boy said, running a hand through a mop of his black hair.

"Hi, uhm.." The awkward teacher replied, not sure of the boys name.

"Zuko" The boy said, filling in Mr. Carson's blank.

"Zuko, I'm Mr. Carson. You can take the empty seat next to Sokka" Mr. Carson said, gesturing a hand to Sokka. He blushed and looked back down at his planner. In the back of his mind he was taking a note of how much he liked the name Zuko.

Zuko sat down next to Sokka and Mr. Carson carried on with his class. Zuko would occasionally look ovar at Sokka, noticing how much attention he payed in class. He liked that Sokka knew all the answers to Mr. Carson's questions. Zuko, like Sokka, didn't have a lot of friends, in fact, Zuko
didn't have any friends really. He liked to read and drink tea, and he didn't mind not having friends.

But Zuko, despite noticing the boy 45 minutes ago and having never talked to him, had taken a liking to Sokka. He liked the way the tan guy carried himself. He also liked the ponytail that Sokka wore tightly.

So when the bell rang, Zuko thought maybe he'd say something to Sokka. "Uh, you're Sokka right?"

Sokka snapped his head up and looked at Zuko. He liked how scratchy and deep his voice was. "Uhm, yeah..." The brown haired boy said, pausing nervously. "And you're Zuko?" Sokka asked this, despite full knowing what the tall, pale kid was named.

"Yeah. Do you know where the -team- room is?" Zuko asked hesitantly. "I just transferred here and I have never been there. Do you mind showing me where it is?" Zuko was shocked at the words that were coming out of his mouth. He could probably figure out where the room is but he wanted to have a reason to talk to Sokka. Zuko was usually shy and secluded, so he was a little surprised he was able to muster the courage to ask this.

"Yeah, I'm actually going there now. Are you with Mr. McKay?" Sokka replied, some what cheerfully and surprised.

"Yep" Zuko said.

So the boys walked to Mr. Kay's phys ed class together. They didn't talk much and it was a little awkward, but Sokka felt comfortable around Zuko, almost as if they knew each other. The two juniors quickly figured out they had the same schedule after chatting awkwardly.

Sokka also walked Zuko to Dr. Koyle's biology class. In that class they sat across the room from each other and didn't talk.

"Okay, well I'll see you in Philosophy tomorrow" Zuko said, walking out of the room with Sokka.

"Yep" Sokka replied. "It's cool that we have the same schedule" He added awkwardly.

With that the boys parted ways and Sokka quickly found his friends.

"Sokka you're face is red" Toph teased. "I bet you were talking to SUKI!" She yelled in between giggles.

"Or that guy" Katara added, laughing.

"Shut up! It's just hot in this damn school" Sokka said, trying to defend himself.

Sokka fell asleep easily that night. He was excited to see Zuko tomorrow.
"Fuck" Zuko groaned whilst rolling out of bed. He walked into the kitchen, Iroh was already up and making tea. Moving in with his Uncle had been a tough transition. Not to mention the fact that it took him couple months to get over the fact that his Dad kicked him out, disowned his -own- flesh and blood.

At first Zuko was slightly rude towards Iroh. But after a few months he grew to love him. Uncle's unconditional support and love had truly helped Zuko get through the tough times. "Good morning Nephew" Iroh said, snapping Zuko out of his thoughts.

"Good morning Uncle" Zuko said, his voice still thick with sleep. Iroh slid him a cup of tea, Zuko took a long sip.

"You should get ready for school" Iroh said calmly, gesturing towards the clock, Zuko was running late.

Zuko sighed and stood up reluctantly. He dragged himself to his room and pulled on a pair of black jeans. Then threw on a red zip up hoodie, wondering if it was a good idea to not wear anything under it.

"See you after school Uncle" The pale boy said, walking out onto the street. He turned right and made his way towards Sozin Hills High School. Normally Zuko didn't want to go to school, but today he really did not want to go.

He walked into A16, his Philosophy class. He threw his stuff down on his desk and sat down. Mr. Zayney sat at his desk and drank a cup of coffee. Zuko looked at him for a moment as his mind wandered. The bell rang loudly and a girl sat down next to him. She was dresed in something rather provocative. Zuko looked at her and she smiled flirtatiously, her pink lip gloss shimmering. Zuko scoffed. "Heyy" She said.

"Hi" Zuko said harshly, unimpressed with the girls slutty outfit. He turned away from her and began taking notes. It wasn't the first time this had happened to him since he transfered to Sozin. In fact, he was surprised so many people were interested him despite the dark scar across his left eye. He didn't necessarily mind girls throwing themselves at him, but most of them were sluts and it got annoying. He missed his ex-girlfriend, Mai, a lot. None of the girls that showing intrest in him at Sozin were like her.

Sokka looked up from his notes for a moment. Zuko caught his eye across the classroom. Sokka easily picked up how pissed off Zuko looked. Then he noticed the blonde girl sitting next to him, she was wearing a really low cut shirt and tight jeans. She was clearly trying to get the guy's attention. Sokka put two and two together and figured the girl was annoying Zuko.

Sokka laughed quietly at the scene. Zuko sat with his back turned toward her and he frowned harshly. He was pushing his pen really hard onto the paper as he took notes. The blonde chick was leaning over towards him, she twirled a peice of blonde hair in one finger. She was also obnoxiously chewing a peice of gum.

When the girl had concluded that Zuko really was't going to give her any attention, she huffed out a sigh and leaned back into her desk. Clearly she was shocked that Zuko hadn't shown an ounce of intrest in her. Sokka smiled and then continued to take notes.
"Hi Sokka" Aang shouted excitedly. Sokka looked down at Aang. He had a huge smile draped across his face. Aang continued to smile and adjusted his orange beanie, it had a blue arrow running down the front.

"Sup Aang?" Sokka said noncalantly, he sat down at the table and pulled out his sandwich. Sokka and Aang slipped into mindless conversation.

Zuko sat under the tree, the shade protecting him from the bright sun. He sighed and rested his head against the tree behind him. Nothing had been going well for him today. He woke up late, that girl had been following him around since Mr. Zayney's class, he forgot his brit lit homework, and now he had forgotten his lunch. He had, however, remembered his tea and he took a long sip and began reading his book.

All of the sudden, across the courtyard, something had caught his eye. Sokka was getting really animated over something. He was clearly yelling about something to his friends. They were all laughing at him. Eventually he sat down and angrily bit his sandwich. Zuko laughed to himself, the first time he had smiled or laughed all day.

"Hey Sokka" Zukko said awkwardly. He set his books down on his desk.

"Hey Zuko" Sokka said, he was staring at Mr. Carson intently. "Have you ever noticed how awkward Mr. Carson is?" Sokka continued, emptying out the thoughts on his mind.

Zuko laughed quietly, "Yeah.. Isn't he like 26?"

"I think so.." Sokka paused, wondering if it was okay to ask the question he was about to ask. "Anyway, I noticed you don't really sit with anyone at lunch" Sokka paused again and Zuko shifted in his seat. "You can sit with us if you want. I mean if not that's cool but I just thought I'd offer"

Zuko was slightly surprised by the question but it pleased him none the less. "Yeah, that'd be cool. Thanks man" Maybe my day is really turning around. Zuko thought to himself as he smiled.
"Katara, this is Zuko" Sokka said quietly to his sister.

"Hi" She said sassily as Zuko took a seat next to Sokka at the lunch table. Zuko smiled and waved his hand slightly. Maybe this wasn't such a good idea. Zuko had begun to think to himself.

"Hi Zuko! I'm Aang and this is Toph!" Aang shouted excitedly to Zuko, with a smile spreading ear to ear. Toph was looking Zuko up and down, judging him.

"Are you the Zuko Xia?" Toph asked skeptically.

"Uh.. yeah. I guess." Zuko said reluctantly. "Are you the Toph Beifong?" He asked sarcastically.

"Yep!" Toph said proudly. "So your great grandfather was Sozin?" She asked as she took a ferocious bite of her sandwich.

"Yeah" Zuko said. Sokka turned to him and gave him a confused look.

"Woah. As in like Sozin Hills Sozin, or like a different Sozin?" Sokka said, as he looked between Toph and Zuko. Zuko shifted uncomfortably on the bench and stirred his tea. He really did not like to think or talk about his family and his past. "Why didn't you tell me that!!" Sokka shouted, recalling multiple conversations Zuko and Sokka had over the past couple of days.

"It never came up?" Zuko said, raising an eyebrow at Sokka. "Besides, Toph's a Beifong" Zuko said attempting to get the conversation off of him. He only knew who Toph was because he vaguely remembered his father and Toph's father working together when they were young.

"True, I guess" Toph said, shrugging her shoulders. Zuko looked Toph up and down. She definitely did not dress like she belonged to a rich and powerful family. She was wearing a green sweatshirt, which was well worn. The black jeans she had on were ripped at the knees and various places around he thighs and shins. Zuko didn't really care that she didn't dress like she was rich, he just wasn't accustomed to it. He was used to how his sister, Azula, dressed. She was -always- concerned with the way she looked. Azula would never allow a single strand of hair to fall out of place or let a piece of clothing to be in disarray. She always had to look her best and would only wear designer clothes. She probably would be in utter shock if she saw Toph.

Zuko thought lunch was incredibly awkward and tense. He also found Sokka a little wild and crazy, a side of him that Zuko never saw during class. The small conversation about his family line made Zuko incredibly uncomfortable. He didn't like to think about his sister, father, or anyone from his family much. So when such a sensitive topic came up around strangers he was a little taken back.

"Shit" Sokka said under his breath. Zuko snapped his head up from his desk and looked over at the tan boy. His hair tie had broken while Sokka been attempting to put his hair up. He put his head back in frustration, long strands of hair flowing back with the motion.

Subconsciously, Zuko thought it looked good. He admired the way Sokka's long strands of hair complimented is cheek bones and brought out the bright blue color of his eyes. Sokka looked over at Zuko and caught him staring. Sokka raised an eyebrow and Zuko's cheeks grew pink. "It looks..... fine" Zuko said attempting to lighten the awkward moment.

"Ah.. thanks?" Sokka whispered back. "I hate when this happens" He said, waving the broken hair
"Boys. Since you two can't seem to stop talking right now, maybe you'd like to spend some time with me after school today?" Mr. Carson said, the two boys snapped their heads up.

"Sorry" the both muttered in unison. Sokka turned to Zuko and discretely mouthed sorry to him. Zuko shrugged and then went back to taking his notes.

Zuko looked away from the whiteboard he was cleaning for a second, to steal a quick glance at Sokka. Sokka looked up from the papers he was organizing for Mr. Carson. The two teenagers made eye contact for a moment before Zuko pulled his gaze off of Sokka. Sokka gave him a suspicious look, but then shook it off.

"Zuko, why did you transfer here?" Sokka blurted out shyly, his eyes fixated on the papers in his hands. Eventually he looked up at Zuko, who stood with his back tense, weight shifting awkwardly between his feet. Zuko was startled by the question, and was unsure if he was ready to share such sensitive info with someone he knew for a short week. But Zuko desperately needed to share it with someone. He was utterly tired of keeping it all bottled up inside. He never got a chance to tell anyone about it besides Iroh. He also wanted to finally have some true friends and wanted to prove to Sokka that he trusted him.

"Uh..." Zuko stuttered awkwardly. "Well, my Dad..." He was unsure of how to put the words that were about to come out his mouth. What if Sokka won't talk to me anymore? Or what if he doesn't like people like me?

"It's cool if you don't want to tell me man" Sokka said hesitantly, not wanting Zuko to feel pressured.

"No. No. Ok so my Dad is really strict and stuff" Zuko finally choked out. "And I used to attend the private school on the Upper side. I tried really hard to be the perfect student and son" Sokka nodded and listened carefully to him. "My Dad cares about loyalty and honor and I was so concerned with making sure I kept honor and that I was loyal to him" Zuko paused and braced himself. "But I finally told him something.... something that had been troubling me for a while and I had only recently decided was official"

Sokka sat up and tried to listen to Zuko. "I finally told him I was......" Zuko's voice came to a whisper. "I was gay" Zuko winced as he said the words. Sokka's eyes widened but he just shook his head in understanding. He honestly didn't care that Zuko was gay. He just found it slightly surprising.

Zuko swallowed hard. "So I don't know he kicked me out and I moved in with my Uncle Iroh. He lives on the west side of town, too far of a drive to get to my old private school, which he can't afford anyway" Zuko paused, slightly surprised that Sokka took the whole gay thing so well. "Long story short, I had to be transferred here" Even though Zuko had only shed a sliver of light on what had truly had happened, it felt good to finally tell someone about it. He could feel a weight begin lifted off of his shoulders.

"That sucks dude" Were the only words Sokka could muster. Zuko sighed, glad to get the news off his chest and then he turned back to the white board.
Chapter 4: You Work Here?

"No, I'm just gonna stop by the Jasmine Dragon for some tea and then I'll be home" Sokka said into his phone. "Ok...... I know..... Bye.... Yep..... Okay..... Bye" Sokka sighed and finally flipped his phone shut. He pushed his way into the tea shop and walked up to the counter.

"Good afternoon Iroh" Sokka said greeting the old man who was standing near the cash register. He had come to know Iroh fairly well after Sokka had wandered in after soccer practice one day. They had bonded over a mutual love for Pai Sho.

"Hello Sokka, what can I get you this fine afternoon" Iroh bellowed. Zuko looked up from the cappuccino machine, Sokka? he thought to himself. He looked over at his Uncle and sure enough there was Sokka. He was standing there, laughing with his Uncle, a hand running through his hair. The blue cut off he was wearing hung on his skinny frame, and it allowed Zuko to get a look at Sokka's slightly defined abs. Holy shit I never realized how hot he is.

"You work here?" Sokka said, startling Zuko, who had been staring at Sokka. Despite the fact that he had been staring he hadn't even realized that Sokka had walked over to him. Zuko started blushing, as if Sokka had heard his thoughts.

"Uh.. yeah" Zuko said, looking up at Sokka. "Iroh is my Uncle" Sokka's eyes widened.

"Really? That's weird we've never ran into each other. I come here all the time" Sokka said, looking at the tea cup he had a death grip on. "Can you take a break to sit for a few minutes?" He asked all of the sudden.

"Sure" Zuko said, and then he took off his apron and followed Sokka over to a small table. "I didn't know you liked tea"

"Oh I don't really, but it's a nice place to come after soccer and relax before I have to go home" Sokka replied.

"You play soccer?"

"Yeah, how about you?"

"I don't really play any sports" Zuko said, his voice shy and scratchy. "When I lived with my Dad I used to do swordsmanship though"

"That's sweet! So you live with Iroh?" Sokka said energetically, surprising Zuko.

"Oh yeah.." He answered, he had actually become comfortable around Sokka. After he told Sokka about is sexuality he was able to trust Sokka a lot more. They would talk between classes and at lunch.

"I used to come here with Suki too...." Sokka said his voice drifting off. "But now it's just me" Sokka laughed awkwardly. Zuko flashed a small smile to lighten the mood.

"Speaking of girlfriends and stuff, did you ever have one?" Sokka asked out of the blue. Zuko was startled by the question, but instantly commanded his body to relax.

"Yeah, when I went to private school, I used to go out with a family friend. Mai" Zuko replied is voice a little shaky. "I quickly realized I wasn't..... ya know.... attracted to her but.." He trailed off.
Gathering his thoughts. "I liked her personality though, like a friend. She was a good person"
Sokka nodded his head in understanding. He gave a faint smile, Zuko looked at him with sad eyes, but he smiled back.

"I used to go out with Suki, but now she's with Jet" Sokka said, in an attempt to open up to Zuko some. "I guess I still like her, but I don't know, and before that I was with a girl named Yue" Then Sokka's eyes grew very sad. Something Zuko had never seen. To Zuko, Sokka was the sarcasm and meat guy, and the somewhat shy, smart guy in class. He never saw this sensitive side of him. Zuko appreciated it, that Sokka was finally opening up. "She passed away though"

"That's rough buddy" Zuko said, he patted Sokka on the shoulder across the table. Sokka looked off to the right and took one last sip of is tea.

"Well you should probably go back to work, I gotta go do that World Cultures homework" Sokka said, then he turned to Iroh and waved good bye to him.

"Bye" Zuko said.

Zuko laid in his bed, tossing and turning. He could not get Sokka out of his mind for the life of him. It had been two solid weeks since he realized how attractive Sokka was at the tea shop and now he couldn't get the tan teenager off his mind.

It did not help that Sokka and him had grown close over the past couple of weeks. He was also starting to get comfortable around Sokka's friends. Everyone was really nice, Zuko was happy to finally have some friends (besides Katara who was still cold towards him for no specific reason). To have escaped most of the darkness his father had cast over him.

Zuko groaned loudly. He had fallen for a straight guy. As much as he tried to deny it he knew that he liked Sokka. There was no way they could ever be a thing. Worst of all, tomorrow Sokka was supposed to come over tomorrow to work on a project.

I better not fuck this up. Zuko thought to himself. Then he rolled over and pressed his face into his pillow and begged for sleep to come.
Chapter 5: Jet's Baked Goods

"Well that took forever" Sokka said leaning back into the couch. Zuko laughed and leaned back too. It was Saturday, around 5, they had just finished their project.

"I'm really hungry" Zuko said, "and Uncle doesn't come home until 11" Sokka sat up and grabbed his back pack. He pulled out a paper bag.

"I have these brownies" Sokka said. "Jet gave them to me" He said as he took a bite.

"I thought you hated Jet?" Zuko said, thoroughly confused, but he took a brownie from Sokka anyway.

"I know, but I love food more than I hate him" Sokka replied his mouth full of brownie. He sighed as he took the final bite.

"These are good, but they have a weird after taste" Zuko said. "Anyway, wanna watch a movie or something?"

"Sure"

- 1 hour later -

"Duuuuddee" Sokka said. "Do you fe-"

"Yes. Yes. I feel it" Zuko said, his voice shaky. He looked over at Sokka, his eyes were extremely red. "Oh, shit. Jet drugged those"

"What? Nahhh.." Sokka said. "Jet's soooo niceeee he wouldn't do that to meee"

"Oh I think he would" Zuko said he looked into the reflection of his phone. His eyes were also extremely red. Sokka pulled his shirt off. Zuko blushed and looked away. "Whatcha doin' Sokka?"

"It's just sooo hott in here Zuuukoo" Sokka said, Zuko giggled and tried to keep his eyes off Sokka But, he let his eyes win and he looked at Sokka. Despite the fact that he was so skinny, he still had lean muscles. Zuko sighed as he admired the boys tan body.

"Zuko, do you like anyone?" Sokka asked out of no where.

"I'm not sure" Zuko said, lying through his teeth. He was still admiring Sokka as he pulled his hair out of the ponytail. Sokka sighed and turned his head over so they were looking directly at each other.

"Ya know, I'm kinda done with girls for a while" He said happily, running a and through his hair. "They're soo annoyinggg" Sokka looked at Zuko and made eye contact with him. "You're so cute when you blush Zuko" Soka giggled and put his hand on Zuko's knee.

Zuko sat up straight. His eyes widened and he blushed even harder. "S-Sokka" The part of Zuko's mind that was still competent was protesting. But Zuko's judgment was seriously clouded and Sokka would not stop moving his hand up Zuko's leg. Don't take advantage of him. You know better than that Zuko. Part of Zuko's mind argued.

But, Zuko couldn't handle it any longer. He crashed his lips into Sokka's. Sokka, to Zuko's surprise, didn't argue in anyway. So, Zuko pulled him into his lap so the other was straddling him.
Sokka broke the kiss and gasped for air. "I didn't mean I swore of girllsss thaatt way, silly" Sokka giggled. Zuko blushed and looked away. "But it's okay" Sokka said. He resumed the kiss and Zuko moaned loudly. Zuko bit Sokka's bottom lip, begging for permission to enter. Sokka opened his mouth immediately. The paler of the two prodded Sokka's warm mouth with his tongue. Zuko fought for dominance and their tongues danced. He eventually won and Sokka gave up holding in his gasps and moans. He grabbed the hood of Zuko's sweatshirt and pulled him deeper into the kiss.

They fell off the couch with a loud thud. Sokka's back hit the floor and Zuko straddled him. He looked down at Sokka. He looked gorgeous. He was gasping for air, his tan cheeks were a rosy pink. His brunette hair fell on the floor around him, a few pieces sticking to his forehead with sweat. The sight of Sokka was enough to send Zuko over the edge, but he was to contain himself.

Zuko giggled and the other boy reached a hand up and pulled Zuko down by the collar. Zuko kissed Sokka's neck and quickly found his sweet spot. Sokka moaned loudly and bucked his hips up into Zuko. He returned the gesture by grinding his hips into the tan boy. Sokka threw his head back in pleasure.

*beep beep*

"Shit" Sokka said, pulling out his phone. "Hey Katara" He said breathlessly. "Now?....... Okay, I'm coming" Zuko stood up reluctantly and sat on the couch.

"I gotta go home" Sokka said as he pulled himself off the floor. He couldn't even really walk with out wobbling. Jet had really loaded those brownies.

"What are you gonna do about your eyes?" Zuko said pointing to his own blood shot ones. He was attempting to stay level headed, despite the circumstances.

"Oh shit, I didn't think about that" Sokka said with a concerned tone of voice.

"I have contact solution that might draw out the redness" Zuko said, still trying to get his breath back.

"Can you tell?" Sokka asked looking into Zuko's eyes. He blushed but looked into his sapphire eyes anyway.

"Nope" Zuko replied honestly.

"Well thanks for..... everything Zuukoo" Sokka said awkwardly, as he walked out the door. Zuko flopped down onto the couch.

"How was Zuko's, Sokka?" Katara asked her brother. He was laying on his bed staring up at the ceiling. She walked over and sat next to him.

"Greeaat" Sokka replied, he had not come down from his high yet. "Katara," He said between giggles. "I loooovveee you, you're the best sister"

Katara looked at him. "Oh my god Sokka!" She shouted at him. "Are you high?" She slapped his thigh and he just groaned and burst into laughter.

"Nooooo" He paused. "Maybe...... yes" he said, still in a fit of laughter.

"Oh my god Sokka! I knew Zuko was a bad influence on you! I knew it the entire time! I told you! I can't believe you let him get you high!" Katara started yelling at Sokka, he was smiling like an
idiot.

He pulled Katara back down to the bed and wrapped an arm around her. "Shhhhhhh" He said putting a finger to her lips. "It was Jet" he giggled again. "He put weed in those brownies he gave meeeeee"

Katara sighed in frustration. "You don't have to lie to me"

"I'm not!" Sokka shouted. "I swear it was Jet. Don't tell grandmaaaaa it won't happen againnnn" Sokka whispered.

"Fine" Katara said, then she slapped Sokka's chest one more time before exiting the room, leaving Sokka in yet another fit of giggles.

"So hungry" Zuko said out loud, even though no one was home. The munchies were hitting him. Hard. He stood up and walked into the kitchen.

"Mmmm Fire Flakes" Zuko said as he put a handful of his favorite snack into his mouth. He ate the entire box and then walked into the bathroom.

He washed his face and then looked into the mirror. "Zuko" He said, staring into the eyes of his own reflection. "Weird" He said and then burst into a random fit of giggles.

When Zuko was no longer high as a kite, he did some left over homework. He was looking over the project that Sokka and him had worked on earlier. The memories came flooding back to him.

Oh shit. I fucked it up. He thought. He groaned loudly and put his hands over his face. He looked at the papers on the desk below him through his fingers. He could still feel his lips warm from where Sokka had kissed him. He remembered how soft Sokka's lips were. Honestly, he couldn't help but get aroused at the thought of the scene.

However, Zuko knew that it only happened because Sokka was stoned out of his mind, well they both were. He could still remember the taste of Sokka's tan skin on his tongue. What had been a small crush had turn into a full blown infatuation with the tan teenager.

Yep. Definitely fucked that up. He thought to himself.
"So how were those brownies Sokka?" Jet said, trying to hold back his laughter. Zuko looked up from his gym locker and over to the scene that was unfolding a few feet away from him in the locker room. He held his t-shirt tightly in his hand. He could feel anger boiling in the pit of his stomach. Jet is such a jerk. He thought to himself.

"Fuck you Jet" Sokka said, pulling his T-shirt over his head in an angry manor. Jet grabbed the collar of it and pulled it down.

"Nice hickey" Jet said, staring at the mark Zuko had given him two days earlier. Sokka attempted to shove his hand away, but Jet didn't budge. "What? I'm just playing around!" He said between laughs. His jerk friends joined in, even though it wasn't even funny. No you're not, you are just being an ass. Sokka thought. Then out of no where he shoved Sokka into the lockers.

Zuko couldn't hold back any longer, he was pissed. He walked over to Jet and shoved him off of Sokka. "God, Jet. Can you go for more than 2 minutes without being an asshole?" Zuko said, his voice low and dotted with tones of anger. "Stay the fuck away from Sokka. He didn't do shit to you"

Jet scoffed, unimpressed. "Whatever" Zuko let go of him and then walked away to finish dressing. "Your lucky that scarred freak was here to save you" Jet said, ferociously. "Next time, he won't be" Then he stormed off with his idiot friends.

"Thanks" Sokka muttered.

"Don't worry about it" Zuko said. "I'm sorry about...." He paused not sure what to say. "You know" He gestured to the bruised area of Sokka's neck.

"It's fine, if I hadn't been stupid enough to let us eat those brownies none of this wouldn't have happened" Sokka said as he grabbed his backpack. This was the first time the two boys had spoken a word to each other since Saturday night. It had been extremely awkward between them, especially at lunch and in class when they sat next to each other.

"Not your fault. I shouldn't have taken advantage of you like that" Zuko said, and he knew it was the truth. His voice was thick with sorrow. He was blushing, the conversation was growing more and more uncomfortable by the second.

Sokka looked up at Zuko and saw the sad look in his eyes. They walked through the halls together, heading towards biology. "I never said that I didn't like it" Sokka said quietly. He immediately hoped that Zuko hadn't heard it, but knew that he had. Zuko's eyes widened at the statement.

"Wait re-really?" Zuko stuttered, basically stopping dead in his tracks.

"Well yeah, you're a good kisser" Sokka whispered, hoping no one in the hallway could hear him. "But, we probably shouldn't do it again"

I matter of milliseconds, Zuko went from being extremely happy to being crushed. "Of course. We were stoned, it doesn't mean anything" Zuko said, lying through his teeth once again.

"Exactly" Sokka said, and then he walked to his seat and sat down. Sokka definitely hadn't regretted it. It had been amazing, better than any kiss he had shared with Yue or Suki. However, even though he admired Zuko for his looks, he knew it would be a poor choice to do something
like that again. His sister absolutely hated Zuko and he was pretty sure he wasn't gay. Not that it mattered if he was, he just wasn't.

Zuko sat hunched over his tablet in the tea shop. Today was his day off of work, but he decided to stop by after school and say hello to his Uncle. He had been sitting there for a couple of hours. He had finished his homework already, and was pretending to be doing something on his computer. He didn't want to go home quite yet. The quiet hum of the tea shop keep him from thinking too much about the days events.

"Nephew" Iroh said, as he pushed a cup of tea over to Zuko. He grabbed it reluctantly and sighed. Iroh took a seat across from the sullen teenager. "What is bothering you?"

"I am just a little stressed about school" Zuko half lied, he was getting pretty good at it. "It's nothing to be concerned about Uncle" He said.

"I can tell it is something more, Zuko. You are too smart to stress of over school like this" Iroh replied, Zuko groaned. His Uncle was always able to see right through him. However, he appreciated his Uncle's genuine concern for him.

"It was just a long day" Zuko said, trying to brush off his uncle. Iroh eyed him suspiciously from across the table.

"In that case, go home and sleep" Iroh said, deciding not to press for any more information than Zuko was willing to give him. He also skipped out on the long wisdom filled speech he would normally give Zuko in this situation. Zuko opened his mouth to argue but Iroh simply got up and walked over to the counter. Zuko sighed and got up to leave.

Sokka rolled over and shoved his face into his pillow. "Ughh" He groaned in frustration. He couldn't get Zuko off his mind. It was 12:30 and his mind was racing with thoughts. Did Zuko like him? Did he want to do it again? Did I want to do it again? Sokka knew he had said that they shouldn't do it again, but maybe he had spoken too soon.

These thoughts were especially confusing. He usually had these thoughts about girls not guys. He was attempting to stay mature about the situation but he was thinking like a 12 year-old. He hated the Does he like me? Does he like me not? game that was going through his head. He didn't even know if he actually liked Zuko, but he was still asking himself these dumb questions. The kind of thoughts that made your stomach turn in knots and gave you butterflies.

He sat up and ran his fingers through his long hair. He looked out the window and up at the moon. "What do I do, Yue?" He said quietly. He always turned to Yue when he needed help or confused. The calming presence of the moon reminded him of her. He sighed and laid back on his pillow. He begged for sleep to come and finally it did.
Chapter 7: Answered Questions

"Bye Zuko, Bye Sokka!" Aang shouted from the tea shop door.

"See ya later Sparky, Snoozles" Toph said, waving in their general direction due to her blindness. Their friends exited the cafe, leaving Sokka and Zuko alone at the table. Zuko sighed loudly and looked down at his phone.

"Do you want to do something?" Sokka asked. It was a Friday night, a week or two after the locker room incident. Things were back to normal and Sokka and Zuko were the closest they'd been.

Zuko shrugged and locked his phone. He looked up at Sokka and smirked. "I have an idea" He said. Sokka blushed and looked away from Zuko. "Not that kind you dork" Zuko said in between giggles. Sokka laughed and blushed even harder, this time from embarrassment.

Zuko stood up and grabbed his keys. "Let's go" He said. Sokka stood up and followed Zuko out the door. They got in the car and Zuko began driving through the streets of Sozin Hills.

"Where are we going Zuko?" Sokka asked as he looked out the windows as they entered the upper side of Sozin. He rarely came over to this side of town, there were a lot of upscale apartments and even a few mansions. Sokka wondered if this was where Zuko grew up.

"A place I used to go as a kid to clear my mind" He replied as he pulled over on the side of the road. Zuko got out of the car and started walking up one of the many hills in Sozin. The hill was large and covered with a plush blanket of green grass. Sokka groaned as he followed Zuko. The hill was huge and Sokka could feel his calves beginning to burn.

Finally the hill plateaued a bit and a huge tree came into view. Zuko walked over and sat under it, resting his back against it. He patted the grass next to him, motioning for Sokka to follow suit. Sokka sat down and took in his surroundings. He gasped quietly in amazement.

From the hill top you could see all of Sozin Hills. Every hill, apartment, and townhouse was in view. To add to the beauty of it, the sun was setting behind the rolling hills. The sky was a purplish orange. Sokka immediately understood why Zuko came here to clear his mind, the sight was extremely calming. Sokka looked over at the teenager, he was smiling faintly with his eyes closed. The soft breeze blew his mop of hair around his head. Sokka wasn't sure which sight was more beautiful, Zuko or the Sunset.

Zuko sighed happily and Sokka pulled his gaze off of him. "Right after my Dad kicked me out, I came here" He said, looking down at the scene below him. "In fact, I fell asleep here and spent the night. I didn't have anywhere to go, I was lost. I had finally gotten something that had been weighing me down for years off my chest" He paused, and took a deep breath. "Something that I spent a lot of time figuring out and he just threw me out" Zuko said, his voice was scratchy, he sounded as if he was going to cry. Clearly the wounds his father had given him hadn't fully healed yet.

"But the first time I came here was with my Mom" He said, pulling in a deep breath. "Ever since then it's just been a good place where I could clear my mind" He paused again, an uncomfortable silence settling between them again. "Ya, know?" Zuko finally finished and looked over at Sokka.

"What happened to your Mom?" Sokka asked, Zuko had never talked about her before.

"She got really sick and died" Zuko whispered.
"My Mom died too" Sokka said. "In a car crash though" He added awkwardly. Zuko looked over at Sokka. He had never talked about his family much. Zuko assumed everything was normal in his life, apparently not.

"What about your Dad? Zuko asked curiously.

"He's stationed in the Middle East" Sokka said sadly. "He has been since I was really little. I haven't seen him in a long time"

Zuko nodded in understanding. "So is it just you and Katara?"

"We've lived with my Grandmother since we were young. She's amazing" Sokka answered. "Do you like staying with your Uncle?" He asked.

“I’m lucky my Uncle took me in, he was the best thing to ever happen to me” Zuko said, emptying out the thoughts in his head. “I remember when I first moved in, all I wanted to do was go back with my Dad” His gaze drifted off Sokka’s eyes and fixated on the grass in front of him. “Over the entire summer the only thing I would think or talk about was proving I had honor to my Ozai. I even considered going back to pretending to be straight” He paused and took a deep breath. The thought of those times a few months ago were painful. “One day Uncle must’ve had enough. I still remember what he said, ‘I’m begging you Zuko! It’s time for you to look inward and start asking yourself the big question: who are you and what do you want?’ That question, I had never truly thought about it. I had always thought about what my Dad wanted”

“Did you figure it out?” Sokka asked, the question had slipped out of his mouth. Despite how sad Zuko’s past sounded, he enjoyed learning about it.

“What?” Zuko asked, looking over at Sokka.

“Like what do you want? Are you happy?”

“Oh” Zuko said. “Yeah, I thought I was going to hate Sozin High, and admittedly it sucked the first couple of weeks” He paused, wondering if what he was about to say was weird. “Then I met you, and the rest of your friends. It made the transition a lot” He stopped, looking for the right words. “Easier” Zuko concluded awkwardly. “I am somewhat at peace with myself, sometimes it’s still hard though.”

Sokka gazed out over the city, the sun had completely set by now. Zuko looked down at Sokka, the light from the city below enhanced his features. He looked incredibly attractive. His hair, which was down for once, hung loosely around his face. The faint glow highlighted his cheekbones and jawline.

It was slightly frustrating to have to keep this friendly relationship with the other boy. Zuko liked him so much, hell he was in love with him. The way Sokka cared for him and cared about his life and past meant so much to Zuko. Sokka was sort of like a wallflower in that sense. Zuko could tell him anything and he would understand, there were rarely any questions asked. When there were questions, Sokka asked so gently. Zuko also liked learning about Sokka's life. He could now see, that despite how simple Sokka seemed, he was very complex underneath. With his friends he was sarcastic and funny. In class he was smart, he was even in all the honors classes Sozin offered. With Zuko he was quiet and gentle. Sokka truly fascinated Zuko.

For a while they just sat there, Sokka admiring the city and Zuko admiring Sokka. Suddenly Sokka let out an adorable yawn and rested his head on Zuko's shoulder. He quickly fell asleep and Zuko put his arm around the other and pulled him closer. It was a melancholy feeling, having Sokka so
close, but knowing he wasn’t his.
Chapter 8: Is this okay?

Chapter Notes

A far-fetched chapter that makes me happy. I am sorry this took me a lot longer than expected to update.

Aang sat in Sokka's car and waited patiently for the older boy to get in. "Ready to go Aang?" Sokka asked as he put his keys into the ignition. The car roared to life and Aang pulled on his seat belt.

"Yeah! Let's go!" Aang exclaimed loudly and looked out the window as they pulled away from his apartment. Sokka turned left onto Bender Drive as he made his way towards the laser tag place.

"How come you didn't invite Zuko to go with us?" Aang asked as he pulled his eyes off and looked at Sokka.

"Whaddya' mean Aang? This is our hang out time! When we can get away from the girls" Sokka replied. It was indeed true that the boys rarely got quality guy time because they were always with Toph and Katara. So every other week or so they set aside some time to hang out and do something. This week they were going to play laser tag in downtown Sozin.

"I know but... Zuko is our friend too and we should include him!" Aang said. He watched as Sokka tensed up slightly. He was gripping the steering wheel tightly and hunched over it awkwardly.

"I don't think Zuko would be into this type of thing though..." Sokka said, remembering Zuko's relaxed and shy attitude. He couldn't picture Zuko playing laser tag. Not only that, Zuko had been acting somewhat awkwardly around him lately and Sokka wasn't sure what to think.

Aang pulled up his phone as Sokka pulled up to a red light. "No!" Sokka screamed as he leaned over the center console and reached for Aang's phone. "Don't call him!" Aang stretched his arm all the way out until the phone was clearly out of Sokka's reach. He also had a hand pressed firmly onto Sokka's cheek and was attempting to shove him away.

"Sokka we have too!" Aang pleaded as he dialed with one hand and continued to push Sokka away with the other.

"Hello?" Zuko said, his voice went up a little at the end. He was a little surprised that Aang was calling him.

"Sokka the light is green" Aang said between giggles, knowing he had won. Sokka reluctantly pulled himself off of Aang and put the car in drive. "Hey Zuko! Sokka and I are on their way to play laser tag do you wanna come?" Aang looked expectantly into the phone and awaited Zuko's response.

"Uhh" Zuko groaned, clearly shocked by Aang's question. "Yeah I..I guess" He said. Zuko had nothing to do on Saturday nights, and Iroh was always at the shop anyway, so it wasn't like he would care if he went out. "Do you want me to meet you there?" Zuko asked as he changed into his favorite red sweatshirt.
"No! We'll come get you!" With that, Aang snapped his phone shut and smiled widely.

"Aang!" Sokka yelled, his voice cracked at the end. He groaned and then laid his head on the top of the steering wheel in defeat. Aang just laughed and pulled his beanie back into place.

"So this is Zuko's house?" Aang asked as they pulled up to the modest town home. Sokka unbuckled his seat belt and put his head back on the head rest.

"Well it's his Uncle's but-" Sokka said and then he noticed Aang undoing his seat belt too. "No! Aang stay here"

"Why-"

"Because... because you've already messed this up enough and god knows what you'll do" Sokka was making up such a bullshit excuse. There was no real reason he didn't want Aang to get Zuko... he just didn't. Sokka got out of the car and walked up to the house and tried to put on a calm exterior. Sokka rang the doorbell and waited patiently.

Zuko heard the doorbell ring faintly and closed his laptop. He opened the door to Sokka, and damn did he look hot. Zuko wasn't even going to lie to himself about it, he looked really attractive. He was wearing a 3/4 sleeved baseball shirt that was white with blue sleeves. It hung nicely on Sokka's frame and brought out every attractive part of him. His broad shoulders, his collar bones, his lean muscles.......

"Zuko... Zuko are you ready to go?" Sokka asked, slightly weird-ed out by how long Zuko's stare had lingered on him. There he went again, acting all weird like Sokka had noticed he had been for the past few weeks. Zuko blushed and began to lock the door to the house. He followed Sokka into the car and got in the back seat.

"Hey Sifu Hotman!" Aang shouted from the front, he turned awkwardly in his seat to look at the elder boy.

"Aang, how many times do I have to tell you not to call me that?" Zuko said somewhat sternly but he cracked a small smile towards Aang anyways.

"Nice game you guys" Zuko said as they exited the arena. He wiped his brow of sweat and sat down at a table in the waiting area.

"How did you even do that!" Sokka said, his voice cracking yet again. Zuko won all three games of laser tag with out getting hit a single time.

"Yeah Zuko! That was insane!" Aang shouted, waving his hands in the air dramatically. Zuko laughed quietly and shook his head. Even he was slightly surprised he didn't get hit once but he definitely wasn't shocked.

"Well I am a master swordsman" Zuko said incredibly nonchalantly. He vaguely remembered the years of training swordsmanship with his master. Sure laser tag was absolutely nothing like sword fighting but he was able to transfer some defense techniques over so he could avoid being shot.

"That's amazing" Aang said with a voice full of awe. "Can you teach me sometime?" Even Sokka was impressed, he had no idea that Zuko had mastered such a thing or anything for that matter.

"Sure" He said. Zuko looked over at Sokka who was smirking faintly. Zuko's thoughts trailed off to Sokka running around trying to shoot Zuko just minutes ago. His determination and perseverance was charming. It made Zuko fall for him a little harder.
"We should get going, it's almost 10:30" Sokka said, once again he was the voice of reason. With that they all stood up and made their way to Sokka's car.

"See ya later Aang" Sokka said out of the window as Aang made his way towards his apartment. Then he quickly shut the window to keep out the rain. It was pouring by now and now it was getting really late. Truthfully Sokka didn't feel like driving a half an hour into the upper side to drop off Zuko. He tossed an idea around his mind for a few minutes or so before voicing it.

"Do you just want to spend the night at my house? I'm really tired" Zuko was caught off guard by the question. A confused look covered his face for a moment but he forced himself to relax it.

"Uh sure" Zuko said quietly, his voiced just above a whisper. Sokka nodded and began driving home.

They walked into Sokka's room and Sokka flopped on the bed and let out an broken-down sigh.

"Do you need clothes?" He asked Zuko, who was leaning awkwardly against the door frame. "I have some extra soccer shorts, but I don't have any clean shirts. So..." Sokka paused this was gonna come out weird, "Can you just sleep shirtless or something? Sleeping in sweatshirts is uncomfortable" He akwardly finished the statement as he gestured to Zuko's hoodie. The pale teenager's eyes grew wide for a split second. It wasn't that it mattered normally. He always slept shirtless, but he was gay and about to sleep in the same bed as the guy he was in love with. He was nervous and internally freaking out.

"Yeah" Zuko replied, his voice coming out shockingly calm despite how he was feeling on the inside. Sokka threw him a pair of shorts and he pulled off his sweatshirt, which he wasn't wearing anything underneath. This time it was Sokka who couldn't avert his eyes from Zuko. He had never picked up on how muscular he was. Sokka watched as Zuko's arms tensed and relaxed as he pulled on the soccer shorts Sokka gave him. Then he let his eyes travel down to his chiseled abs. Sokka didn't think he was gay however, in the case that he was, this was definitely the type of guy he'd be interested in.

Sokka snapped out of his daze when Zuko walked over and sat on his bed. Sokka's face became flush and he urged himself to change faster.

"So like.... do you want me to sleep in here with.... you?" Zuko asked as he looked over the rather small bed he was sitting on.

"Yeah, sorry it's so tight but we don't have a guest room. Also the couch is uncomfortable" Sokka said as he turned off the lights and then laid down on the small twin bed.

"It's fine" Zuko assured him as he proceeded to lay down next to Sokka. It was incredibly uncomfortable and Zuko had his body stretched into an awkward position so that he wouldn't be touching Sokka. And Sokka was in a weird ball position with his back against the wall. "Sokka...." Zuko whispered, breaking the uncomfortable silence. "I don't mean to be an asshole but-"

"Yeah this is really uncomfortable" Sokka said, cutting him off. "What if..." Sokka then moved his body so his back was pressed against Zuko's chest. Instinctively, Zuko put his arm around him and Sokka settled his head into the other's shoulder. The position, which would normally made him uncomfortable and awkward had he not been so exhausted, was oddly relaxing. It had been a while since he cuddled (not that Sokka would ever admit that it was cuddling, it was strictly making do with what they had) with anyone.

"Is this okay?" Zuko asked, his hot breath tickling the back of Sokka's neck. Sokka hummed a happy response and closed his eyes. He focused on the warmth of Zuko's chest as it radiated onto
him.

Zuko commanded for is body to relax and finally it did. The two teenagers melted together perfectly, like pieces of a puzzle coming together.
Chapter 9: A Mix Up

Zuko opened his eyes and winced as the sun pouring through Sokka's window momentarily blinded him. He groaned quietly and looked down at Sokka, who was sleeping. He looked angelic, he was curled up into Zuko's chest with one arm hugging the one Zuko had around him. The ends of his lips curled slightly as if he was having a dream. He looked so cute, so cute that it made Zuko's chest hurt a little. Zuko sighed reluctantly and began to pull away from Sokka. He tried his hardest not to wake the other up as he slipped his arm out from under Sokka and sat up on the bed.

Zuko checked his phone and it was only 7 but he knew that he would not be able to fall back asleep. There was little point in waiting around until Sokka woke up. It would probably make for an awkward and embarrassing confrontation that Zuko would rather avoid. He stood up in the relatively dark room, he couldn't see much because the only source of light was coming from the window.

Zuko sighed as he pulled off the soccer shorts Sokka had given him and attempted to pull on his black skinny jeans. He stumbled clumsily a few times before finally being able to get them all the way to his waist. He leaned down and grabbed what he thought was his sweatshirt and pulled it over his head. Then, he slipped very quietly out of Sokka's room and prayed no one else was up in the house. He tiptoed through the hallway and down the stairs into the living area.

He laced up his shoes and reached for the door, ready to celebrate making it out of the house with out getting caught when - "What are you doing?" A female voice asked him in a rather unfriendly tone.

Zuko sighed in defeat and leaned against the cold front door. "Dammit" He said under his breath. He turned around to a pissed off Katara who had a robe wrapped around her body. "I-" He choked out wondering how he could describe the current situation. "I was just leaving"

"Why are you even here?" She asked, the words were laced with poison. Her true hatred for him was showing.

"I hung out with Sokka last night and we lost track of time. So I spent the night and now I'm leaving" He answered trying to keep his tone steady and calm. He truly didn't know why she hated him. Ever since the day they had first met, Katara was nothing but a bitch to him. Zuko was always nice to her despite the fact that he wanted to call her out on just about everything she did. She acted sweet and innocent when truthfully she was pretty stuck up, well at least in Zuko's opinion she was.

"Oh really? all you did was 'hang out'?" She said mocking him. "Because I went in there early this morning to get something out of his room and it looked like you guys do more than 'hang out'"

Zuko blushed and glued his eyes to the floor.

"It isn't like that-" Zuko said before getting cut off. He was getting angry now. She barely knew anything about Sokka and his relationship. Sure, he understood where she was coming from, but even if Sokka and Zuko were a couple she really didn't deserve to have a say on it. And she definitely didn't deserve to call him out on it like this.

"You don't have to lie to me Zuko. I know you like him" She spat, cutting him off. "Stay away from my brother" With that she gave him one last death stare before turning and walking back up the stairs. A fire was lit inside Zuko. He was so pissed and the anger he spent years controlling was threatening his calm composure. He forced himself to pull the front door open and stepped out into the cool morning air. He pulled up his hood and took a deep breath of the humid air in an attempt
to calm himself down. He began the 45 minute walk home. A long walk indeed, but he didn't want to burden Sokka any further and after that whole thing with Katara he needed some alone time.

When Zuko arrived back at his own house, he let out a sigh of relief. Al he wanted as to collapse on his bed and shut out the world. But, as he was walking toward his room, he heard his Uncle call his name. "Zuko"

He turned on his heel and walked into the kitchen where his Uncle was sitting drinking his tea. "How was your night?" He asked.

"It was..." Zuko paused, attempting to find the word to describe it. "Nice" The night really had been fun and he enjoyed getting to spend some time with Sokka. He also really enjoyed getting to spend the night with him even though it was resulting in this mess of a morning. And when they returned to school the next day, Zuko knew he was going to have a hard time keeping his shit together around Sokka.

Iroh smiled and nodded, Zuko turned to leave the room but once again Iroh spoke up. "I didn't know you liked blue" He stated, his eyes closed as he took a long sip of tea. Zuko looked down at the sweatshirt he was wearing, which was in fact a deep shade of blue. "Or that you were into soccer" The old man finished. The hoodie said 'Sozin High Soccer 2015' on the front. Zuko palmed his forehead, he put on the wrong shirt. Zuko was surprised that 1) He didn't notice that it fit him a little snug, 2) He hadn't even noticed it wasn't during the 45 minute walk home and 3) that Katara hadn't said anything about it.

"Yeah well- ya know.... I love school spirit" Zuko said coolly, attempting to pull it off like it was actually his sweatshirt despite the fact that he hated the color blue and team sports. At this point Zuko's face was deep crimson and the temperature of the sun.

Iroh nodded and said, "I see" He knew it was Sokka's, he had worn it a thousand times to the tea shop and it clearly had his last name, Ammagaruñnik (Am-ma-gar-you-nick), printed in bold black letters across the back of it. Iroh wasn't shocked that he was wearing it because he had easily picked up on Zuko's feelings towards the other boy. It was obvious really, he talked about Sokka occasionally (Zuko never talked about his friends), he always looked at him longingly when Sokka came to the shop after soccer, and he was very defensive when ever Iroh said anything about the two of them hanging out. Honestly, Iroh was surprised that Sokka hadn't piked up on it either. That boy was truly oblivious to somethings.

Zuko groaned loudly and went into his room. He looked at the sweatshirt and mentally scolded himself for not grabbing his own. However, he liked the thought of wearing the other's clothes. The material smelled vaguely of Sokka, Zuko liked it.

Zuko flopped down on his bed and willed himself to fall asleep. It had truly been a morning from hell and he was more than ready to forget about it all.

Sokka turned over in his bed to find the other half empty. He sat up and looked around, every sign of Zuko was gone, excluding his red sweatshirt that was still sitting on the floor.

Out of no where Katara burst into his room. "Why was Zuko here?" Sokka laid back down in his bed and attempted to ignore her. In his opinion, it was too early to deal with pissy sisters. "Sokka!" She said as she slapped Sokka's shoulder.

"Oh my god Katara" Sokka said as he sat up and turned his body toward her. "Am I not allowed to have friends over?" He added sarcastically.
"Well yeah but" Katara said finally beginning to soften up. "I think he's a bad influence on you and not only that, I think he likes you" This, this caught Sokka's attention. He raised an eyebrow and looked at her, clearly confused.

"What? No he doesn't. I mean there was that one time but..." Sokka said beginning to trail off as he remembered the time they had gotten high together. "Anyway, no Zuko definitely doesn't like me. We are just friends, Katara"

"First of all, I walk in here and the two off you are wrapped around one another like a couple and then he leaves the house wearing your sweatshirt? I mean don't blame me for thinking you guys could be a thing" Katara whispered, looking at Sokka's bed.

"My sweatshirt?" Sokka asked, looking at Zuko's abandoned hoodie on the floor. "And we were not 'wrapped around one another'!" He shouted, his voice cracked an embarrassing amount of times for a 17 year old. "It is a small bed! We couldn't fit if we slept normally" He said trying to defend himself. He was blushing like crazy and doing everything he could to avoid eye contact with his sister.

"Whatever Sokka" Katara said and she left his room. Sokka was still utterly confused and embarrassed on about 20 levels. Likes me? Sokka thought to himself. Zuko didn't like Sokka. There was just no way he could, sure they were very close friends and Zuko was gay but.... he definitely didn't like Sokka. Right? Sokka reasoned with himself. He grabbed his phone off the bed side table and decided to shoot the other teenager a text.

Sokka: Okay first of all where did you go? and secondly why my sweatshirt? He typed, deciding to leave out the whole crush thing. He did not want to talk about it now. Sokka knew that they were going to have to cross that bridge at some point, but he definitely was not ready to cross it now.

Zuko: I had to leave, my uncle needed me. (thanks for letting me spend the night) and I accidentally grabbed the wrong one. I'll give it back tomorrow at school.

Zuko sighed and locked his phone. So much for avoiding any awkward and embarrassing confrontations this morning.
Chapter 10: Anger Bubbles Beneath Skin Like Hot Water

Chapter Summary

FUCK

Chapter Notes

DID SOMEONE SAY THREE FUCKING MONTH LONG HIATUS. I honestly have no fucking reason for not posting except for the fact that I'm lazy as fuck with writers block. I left you guys with this happy fucking story. And came back emo band trash. I've read so much triggering TOP and FOB shit in the past 2 days and I am in fact triggered as fuck. If you can't tell I'm pissed off right now and listening to some angry/sad music so the cussing is off the hook. And I wrote the last 3 paragraphs today and honestly that's why all the sudden Zuko is pissed off but fuck I would be too. God this story is so shitty. So anyway I've got some new Zukka AUs in store that I am working on with some tumblr friends of mine and some emo and depressing as hell Twenty One Pilots fanfiction coming out soon.

Zuko pulled off his shirt and sighed. It had been a long day at school and he just wanted to go home. However, he still had to go to work.

He was alone and for once the locker room was quiet. Everyone else had already left school or had gone to their practices. But all of the sudden the quiet was disrupted with the door opening rather abruptly.

"Lookin' good Zuko" Jet said, his voice low and mischievous. Zuko groaned and closed his eyes. He really did not want to deal with Jet right now.

"I thought I was a scarred freak Jet" Zuko remarked, recalling the comment Jet made a few weeks ago. He turned his body towards the other teenager.

Jet laughed and began to walk towards Zuko. He tensed for a moment, his muscles stiffening, but he forced himself to relax. "What do you want Jet?"

Jet didn't answer him, he just stepped over the bench separating them and pushed Zuko's back against the cold lockers. "Jet stop" Zuko whispered, his voice laced with anger.

"Aw why?" Jet whimpered sarcastically. He put his arms on either side of Zuko's head and dipped his own head down to Zuko's neck. Jet's warm breath against his neck sent shivers up his spine. Jet pressed his lips to Zuko's neck and bit down hard. He licked all the way up Zuko's jawline and Zuko put his head back in an attempt to move away from the guy but there was no where to go.

Zuko didn't want to do this but he wasn't about to let Jet walk all over him. He shoved Jet off of him and pulled his fist back. He let connect with Jet's jaw in an attempt to move away from the guy but there was no where to go.
the fuck was that?" Zuko roared.

Jet opened his mouth to make a remark but was cut off by Principle Zhao barging into the locker room. "ZUKO!" He shouted, Zuko jumped a little. "What are you doing young man?" Zuko thought telling the truth, but from the way it looked, Zuko was beating Jet up for no reason.

"I-"

"In my office NOW!" Zhao practically screamed. Zuko pulled on his polo and looked back at Jet who was smirking. He had his hand up to his chin, blood seeping out between his fingers. Zuko scoffed, but still reluctantly followed the principle.

"You're late" Iroh said as Zuko walked around the counter and tied on his apron. "and I received a call from your principle"

"I'm sorry Uncle" Zuko whispered. He really was, not that any of it had truly been his fault, but he still felt bad that he was causing his uncle trouble.

"Why would punch a fellow classmate in the locker room?" Iroh asked.

"Uncle, it's not the way it seems, he started it"

"That's not what your principle said" Iroh commented as he set down the mug he was drying.

"Uncle he came onto me!" Zuko shouted, much louder than intended. He blushed as a few customers looked over. "I was protecting myself"

"If that is the truth, then why did principle Zhao tell me otherwise?" Iroh asked as he looked at the blushing teenager.

Zuko pondered for a moment, wondering how to phrase what exactly went down. "I was in the locker room an-" but he was cut short but Sokka walking up to the counter.

"We need to talk" Sokka said in a serious tone. Zuko raised a brow, not used to Sokka using this tone of voice. Sokka grabbed his wrist and dragged him towards one of the tables in the shop. Iroh rolled his eyes but didn't say anything.

"I talked to Katara and" Zuko knew exactly where this conversation was going and he was not ready for it. He stood up the table but Sokka quickly grabbed his wrist and pulled him back down.

"We have to talk about it Zuko"

"I know, but I really don't want to" He whispered, his voice shaky. He knew that he was going to have to face the feelings he had for Sokka at some point but he hadn't expected it to be this way. He also knew they were going to have to actually face the make out session they had when they were high and the whole sleep over ordeal.

"Katara says that you like me. I don't know if it's true though, because she hates you and she might be just trying to push us apart but I don't-"

"I do" Zuko cut off Sokka's nervous rambling, he clearly didn't know how to go about the subject. Zuko was nervous too but at this point he didn't want to have to hide it anymore and he didn't want to lie to Sokka.

Sokka's eyes grew wide and he shook his head quietly "O-okay" He didn't know how to respond.
He wasn't exactly surprised but this doesn't usually happen. He is not used to having his best friend taking romantic interest in him. He wasn't exactly sure what to say. He looked at Zuko, who was sitting with his legs crossed as he looked awkwardly to the side. Zuko looked down at him, he opened his mouth to say something but then immediately shut it again.

After sitting in silence for a few more minutes, Zuko spoke up, "Okay... well, can I go work now? My Uncle is already mad that I'm late" His cheeks were red hot and he was feeling slightly crushed. He really had not wanted this to take the path it had.

Sokka jumped at the change of subject, "Why were you late?" Sokka asked, his voice just above a shaky whisper.

Zuko groaned and palmed his forehead. He really didn't feel like telling the story for the third time today. "I got in a fight with Jet" His voice was calm, at this point he was numb to the situation. He looked down at his knuckles, which were bruised and a little bloody from where they connected with Jet's sharp jawline.

Sokka gasped when he caught a glance at the other's hand. "Really!? How?!" He said, his voice full of excitement. Zuko smirked and shook his head, Sokka was too cute for him to handle.

"I was in the locker room after school and he came in," Zuko paused and took a breath before continuing. When he did, he used a much more serious demeanor. "He like came onto me. He started like... like... making out with me... It was the weirdest fucking thing" By the time he finished speaking his voice was shaky and his breath slightly uneven. However, he didn't really mind sharing what had actually happened because they were so close.

"Dude! No way!" Sokka exclaimed, earning him the attention of a few people in the shop. He noticed them and immediately began blushing. "So you punched him?"

"Yeah and Mr. Zhao came in and started yelling at me and I told him that I started it. Well I guess I did... but anyway, I didn't tell him about Jet and he suspended me. Long story short, Uncle is pissed and Zhao thinks I beat up people for no reason"

"Why wouldn't you tell Zhao that he freaking sexually assaulted you?" Sokka said, clearly dumbfounded by the fact that he would let himself get in trouble.

"I didn't want to out him like that. That's like, the cruelest thing you could do to someone" Zuko whispered thoughtfully. Sokka's face softened for a moment and he tried to put himself in the place of someone who had to come out. After a few moments of thought he decided it would be difficult and even worse if someone forced you to do it.

"Zuko, can you help me with serving?" Iroh asked and Zuko immediately stood up, ending the conversation abruptly.

"See you late Sokka" Zuko said somewhat bitterly. He didn't really have a reason to be upset with Sokka but he was just angry in general now. He felt misunderstood and frustrated with the days events.

The minute his shift ended and the shop closed, Zuko stormed out. He opted for an angry walk home in the rain rather than driving back with his Uncle (surely Uncle Iroh would understand). It wasn't raining too hard and the apartment wasn't far so he just ran out the minute he took off his apron.

He shoved in his earbuds and pressed play on one of his old playlists. Ode to Sleep came on and he
sulked his way down the sidewalk. He immediately skipped on to the next song once the angry first verse faded to the happy chorus. Car Radio came on next and eventually Goner and he let himself slip into the sad lyrics of the songs. The day had been fucked the minute the final bell of school rang. He didn’t want to have to deal with any of the aftermath. With Sokka or his Uncle or fucking Jet. He could feel the frustration and numbness of anger set in that he was oh so familiar with. He hated feeling this way, pissed off to the point of depression. He hated feeling like he did something good but in the end he’s the one getting fucked over. He could have easily told principle Zhao what had actually happened but no he wanted to save Jet's closeted gay ass.

He was mad at his Uncle for not believing him, he was mad at Sokka for blind siding him in the middle of his shift with his sister's concerns, most of all he was mad at himself for screwing himself over with Jet and admitting his feelings for Sokka. Last but surely fucking not least letting himself fill with anger like he was.
The last few days had been utter shit for Zuko. He had gotten a three day suspension, even though he had been defending himself, and he had to spend every day of his suspension working all day at the tea shop. He explained everything to his uncle, who was skeptical albeit understanding, but Iroh was still upset he resorted to violence to stop Jet.

Since he missed three days of school, he had to play catch up for a week or so, which was terrible. He still worked most nights and would have to go home and do homework until the late hours of the night. He came in to school the next day and would be exhausted. He also had been avoiding Sokka and all of his other friends. So he felt lonely but also guilty at the same time for not talking to anyone.

He was walking into the coffee shop when his phone started ringing. "Hello?"

"Zuko" Zuko froze instantly upon hearing his father's rough voice through the speaker.

"F-Father?" He asked, voice cracking at the beginning of the word. He hadn't spoken to his father since he had been kicked out, and now suddenly, months later, he was calling Zuko.

"Zuko, I wanted to know if you'd join me for tea tomorrow afternoon. I have some things I've been wanting to discuss with you" Ozai said, voice strong and relaxed like it was no big deal he was randomly calling Zuko.

Zuko didn't know what to say. He was stood frozen in the back door of the tea-shop, mouth hanging wide open. After a few moments of silence Zuko finally spoke up, "I-I have to work tomorrow."

"I'm sure Iroh wouldn't mind you taking one afternoon off" Ozai cut him off.

"I would have to talk to him, but I suppose I will meet you. What time?"

"I expect you to arrive at the estate promptly at 3:30 after school"

"Okay, see you then, Father" Zuko said awkwardly and then hung up the phone. After thinking for a moment, Zuko continued into the tea shop and quietly put on his apron and walked up to the counter.

Iroh was there checking out a customer when Zuko approached him. "Good afternoon Uncle" Zuko said quietly.

"Hello, Zuko!" Iroh said, turning from his spot at the register to greet his nephew.

"Father called me today" Zuko said, avoiding his Uncle's eyes.
"Oh? And what did Ozai have to say?" Iron said, turning to get started on the customers order. Zuko followed him behind the counter.

"He asked me to come visit tomorrow, he said he has something he wants to discuss with me" He said. He fought the tremor in his voice that might give away that he was nervous about the whole situation.

Iron stillled for a moment. He set the mug of tea down on the counter and turned to face his nephew. "Well then you should go. But listen to me, I know my brother, you know your Father. It is important you know and understand in the end you should choose what truly makes you happy. And that you will always have a place to stay with me and I will love you, no matter what" His Uncle smiled at Zuko and then turned back to the mug and carried it over to the man who had ordered it, taking away any opportunity for Zuko to respond.

"Ugh, why, Uncle" Zuko groaned under his breath. Sure he understood what his Uncle said, it wasn't that cryptic, but how it applied to him seeing Ozai? He was not sure.

The next day at school Zuko continued to expertly avoid Sokka. Even if he didn't have a real reason to be mad at him he still didn't want to talk about his feelings. At lunch he sat on the other side of the court yard out of his usual table's line of sight and read his book, like he would have if he had never started talking to Sokka. He gave Katara his most perfect and icy glare at every chance he got. He dodged Aang's high fives and conversation starters every time he passed him in the hallway.

The only person he couldn't avoid was Toph, because come on, it was Toph. The girl didn't give a fuck about drama and, come on, who could be mad at her. So when she came up to him after school and started talking to him he didn't walk away.

"Sparky! Don't you dare avoid me too!" She yelled as she approached him, he didn't even wonder how he knew he was there, Toph just knew some how.

"Hi Toph" He replied monotonously.

"Will you and Sokka just get together and get it over with?" She said leaning up against the lockers, tapping her white stick aimlessly.

"No, Toph. Sokka does not feel that way about me and I kind of need to just get over it" Zuko said, sighing as he knew that was the only solution to this issue.

"God you guys are so stupid" Toph sighed, shaking her head like she knew more than he did. Which was probably true.

Zuko looked at the clock on the wall and realized the driver his Father sent was probably waiting for him. "I am going to meet with my Father, see you tomorrow Toph" Zuko said, awkwardly reaching his hand out to ruffle her hair.

"You're weird. See you later, Sparky" Toph said, straightening her white stick and disappearing into the crowded hallway.

When Zuko got into the black car outside of school the driver greeted him as if he hadn't been kicked out of the house months prior. Zuko grunted in response, not willing to act as nonchalant as the driver.
The estate wasn't any different from the last time Zuko had been there. The long ornate hallway in the entrance of the house was still adorned with long red drapes, there were end tables stretching the distance to the main reception room that held fine china and glass art Zuko remembered being scared of breaking when he was little.

He took his shoes off at the door and handed his jacket to the helper that let him in. Then he was led down the hallway and through a few others to his Father's office, as if he hadn't lived here for like 15 years before and didn't know where it was. He felt alienated in the home he grew up in, though he couldn't imagine a time where hadn't felt like that. He was pleased to see that Azula luckily wasn't home, and thanked the gods for that small blessing.

When he entered his father's office all confidence he had built up in the car left him, he was little and weak again. He was anxious at the sight of his Father sitting at his huge oak desk, his long hair falling over his shoulders, the same gold hair piece holding a bun up that he always wore. He tried to give what Zuko assumed was his attempt at a smile, but his eyes were still icy and hawk like, so it didn't pass.

"Zuko" Ozai said, nodding to the chair in front of his desk. Zuko sat down slowly, careful to adjust his sweater and tie as he did so, remembering how he used to get yelled at when he was little for letting it crumple when he sat. It was like he was a little boy again and he was under his Father's grip already.

"Father" Zuko said, his voice cracking harshly on the first vowel, Zuko winced.

"It is nice to see you" Zuko scoffed, what a joke.

"Right" He might've been under his Father's spell again but he wasn't weak willed enough to not acknowledge that that was complete bullshit.

"I don't have time to waste, so I'll get right to it" Ozai said, leaning back in the high backed chair he was seated in. "I would assume you've you learned your lesson. If you are over your silly little phase now. I'm sure you've had time to... experiment at that public school you attend now. Or at least that's what I've beard, a boy named..." He looked down at some papers on his desk. Of course he has fucking notes, of course he's assigned someone to watch me. Zuko thought. "Sokka..." Zuko visibly flinched at the mention of Sokka. So Ozai thought he was Zuko's experiment? That was ironic.

"So if you're ready to come back now, back to Sozin Proper, all things could be forgotten" Ozai said, like that wasn't a big deal, like he hadn't injured his son in an argument months ago, scarring him mentally and physically for life.

"Come... back? Like nothing happened?" Zuko was in shock. So that's what this was about.

"Yes. However, there is a condition. I want to arrange a marriage for you. I have already done so for Azula. It seems it will work out wonderfully for both families" Ozai said with a mischievous glint in his eye.

Zuko's mouth dropped opened but he quickly closed it in attempt to hide his reaction from Ozai. An arranged marriage!? To a girl? One he probably wouldn't even get along with. But at the same time he could be back in with the family and he could probably get us inheritance again...

"What does that entail?" Zuko said quietly. He could not believe he was actually thinking about this.
"Well the Zhāng family has a daughter, three years younger. She's smart, carries herself well, and her family is looking to make an alliance" Ozai responded, looking down at another piece of paper on his desk, of course he had a report on her too. "You'll marry her, our families align, creating a powerful connection between us" Ozai paused. "You could bring honor to this family. You could be the head of this family one day, we will never mention this time of... confusion for you" He said confusion like it was sour on his tongue, he sure as hell wasn't just 'confused'.

The Zhāng's huh? He vaguely knew who his Father was talking about. He quickly mulled over the idea of taking over the family business but that also meant marrying that girl, who was probably only 13 now. Maybe he could live with that, maybe. Maybe he could just accept never falling in love with everyone for the rest of his life. Maybe he could accept never talking to his friends again, or never seeing Sokka... again. Well things were going south anyway right? Suddenly a sense of guilt washed over him. Why was he actually considering this?

'You should do what truly makes you happy' Iroh's voice echoed in his head. He looked away from his Father and out into the hallway, he could see the large staircase that lead to his room and the others from there. Memories of pacing back in forth in his room, wondering if his Father really loved him, if he would still love him if he found out he was gay flooded him. Other memories of sitting on the stairs when he was 5 or 6, listening to him and his Mom talk about him, hearing his Father talk about him like he was less than.

But then he remembered time spent at Iroh's. His Uncle loved him, being at his Uncle's felt so much more like home. Working in the tea shop, playing pai sho with him, going to Sozin Public, making friends..., meeting Sokka.

What was he doing. "No" Zuko said aggressively with newfound confidence. "No! You don't even want me here because you missed me or because you feel bad for kicking me out! You just think I'm some, some business deal!"

Ozai looked taken a back for a moment. So Zuko did have some back bone. "Zuko, you know I am fond of you"

"Fond of me?! What kind of Father is just 'fond' of his son? You can't even lie and say you love me? I'm not going to marry some girl just so you can be better off financially!" Zuko was yelling now, his voice cracking on some words. He stood up and walked up to his Father's desk. "Iroh was a better father to me than you ever were. I've been so much happier since I left here. Sorry your precious heir is a faggot but nothing is going to change that!" With that he turned out of the room and slammed the door to the office shut, the sound bounced off the hard wood floors of the whole estate. He could hear Ozai calling after him half heartedly. But Zuko just continued towards the door and jammed his shoes on, ignoring the help at the door who offered to assist him. He turned onto the street and began the long walk back to Lower Sozin.

Of course Ozai didn't want him to use him for something. How could he even begin to think that he'd want him to come back because he actually missed him or felt sorry. And of course he didn't validate Zuko's sexuality, because that'd just be too much to ask, wouldn't it? Confused. Experiment? What was wrong with him? Why did he think he could go back home?

Chapter End Notes

I JUST UPDATED AFTER 2 YEARS IM SORRY THIS ISN'T GREAT BUT
LIKE..... ITS BEEN 2 YEARS? IM SORRY IM OUT OF THE ATLA GROOVE PLS LET ME KNOW IF I MESSED UP THW CANON OF THE STORY I FORGOT EVERY LITTLE DETAIL. THANK YOU FOR READING STILL I HOPE THAT YOU LIKE IT. I PROMISE I WONT DIE FOR ANOTHER 2 YEARS, OKAY? AND FLUFF IS COMING I PROMISE.

Comment and please leave kudos if you like this! It's why keeps me going I promise.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!