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**The Way I Am (or The Art of Asami Sato and Opal Beifong)**

by [ziraseal](#)

**Summary**

No one finds their destination without hitting a few dead ends first. This is the story of how Opal Beifong grew up, and how Asami Sato learned to love.
Yakisoba

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes
Korra’s eyes hurt. A lot.

The twenty-two year-old couldn’t remember much of what had happened last night… but from what she could tell, she was currently laying on Opal’s couch. The sun was peeping through the curtains — threatening to give the girl a brightness-induced headache. There was a pleasant aroma drifting in from the kitchen— biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs, and pancakes.

The Avatar sat up and let out a groan. A sharp pain shot through her forehead (like Harry Potter and his scar) and she nearly fell to the floor.

“What happened?”

There was a clatter from the other side of the apartment and Opal’s head energetically poked around the corner of the kitchen. She was wearing an adorable apron with kitten and puppy print. Could this Airbender get anymore sugar, spice, and everything nice?

“Pepper-spray,” she said with a sad smile, “Aunt Lin texted me this morning, says she’s sorry.”

“Tell her I don’t blame her,” Korra said, walking into the kitchen and grabbing a glass of water. “I participated.”

“You know her; she was acting on the City Council's orders. Although… she’s never been one for art.”

“Yeah, that’s more your mom’s thing,” Korra laughed.

She’d forgotten about the riot. To be fair, it started out as a demonstration— a peaceful gathering to protest the shutdown of the Republic City Art Museum. The Waterbender hadn’t expected it to get out of hand— just a few dozen grumpy students holding signs. But someone was high or someone had too much to drink before the protest. Push literally came to shove when people began elbowing themselves into the police line to yell at the Museum Administrators. Korra had been at the front of the crowd, innocently waving a sign and shouting at the grousers who hated art, when they attacked her.

You see, the Republic City Art Museum was an absolute treasure— filled with ancient Fire Nation paintings, Earth Kingdom sculptures, Air Nomad scrolls, and Water Tribe jewelry. There was so much history— so many priceless artifacts! Korra thought that, as the Avatar, it was her duty to make sure that people had access to their heritage. But someone had their hand in the City Council's pocket — and was attempting to shut the Museum down.

She felt a sting of pain shoot through her eyes when she remembered the events of last night.

The police had tried to call everyone with megaphones— shouting at the mob to disperse and go home. But the excitement had been too much, and some lovely chumps decided to hit the cops with their signs. Korra was about to turn around and get out of the way when the spray hit her. And it hit her hard.

Thank Raava she’d gone to the event with Bolin, Mako, and Opal. They managed to grab her before she was tromped on by the impending stampede.

“Breakfast’ll be ready in ten minutes,” the Airbender told her.

Opal continued cooking as the Avatar wobbled over to the bathroom. She was momentarily blinded
when she turned on the light, and when she saw her reflection she let out an involuntary groan.

Her eyes were surrounded by a red stripe from the pepper-spray—she looked like Commander Lexa. Fortunately, the rest of her face was only a light pink. She grabbed the washcloth and ran it under the cold tap, letting out a groan when she pressed it against her face.

“FFFFUUUUUUCCCCKKKKK!!!” Korra screamed into the washcloth.

“Yeah... in hindsight, that protest could have gone better,” Opal called from the kitchen.

It felt as though whatever chemicals, or rather poisons, were in the spray were seeping out into the cloth. She plugged up the sink and let it fill with water. When the basin was full, Korra bent the water up to her face and healed what she could.

“You know how weird that looks? Like, your face is blue right now,” Opal said, pushing open the door and peeking into the bathroom.

“I could be peeing right now,” Korra mumbled, her voice muffled by the healing water.

“I would be worried if you felt comfy enough to not lock the door when doing that.”

“Trust exercise?”

“No one trusts the Avatar,” Opal said, casually reaching over and grabbing the paper-towels from under the sink.

“That’s fair. I wouldn’t trust me,” Korra laughed, dropping the water and flashing her best friend a grin.

Opal rolled her eyes and walked back into the kitchen, the Avatar following behind.

“What time is it, anyways?”

“Nine-thirty-three and forty-five seconds.”

“Thanks, smartass.”

The Workshop was in one hour. Air Nomad History, taught by none-other than Jinora herself. I mean, who else could teach it? Even if she was only eighteen years-old, Jinora was a certified master, tattoos and all. And Tenzin was too busy training the other Airbenders.

One hour. That was enough time.

Korra sat down at the computer and logged in. Opal, knowing what she was about to do, slid Korra’s breakfast over with a pot-lid covering the food.

The girl took one look at the reflection in the computer (hopefully the burn wouldn’t last forever, she didn’t want her friends to start calling her “bandit”) and pressed the play button.

“Hello, Avatar Korra here!” she said with a wave. “Soooo, I am still alive—“

“Surprisingly!” Opal’s voice called from the living room.

“— but last night I got caught in some crossfire, as you can see by my lovely new souvenir!”

She gestured to the burn on her face and leaned in so that the camera could capture the look.
“I haven’t checked the news yet, just woke up, but I’m guessing the protest at Republic City Museum didn’t turn out as ‘peaceful’ as the organizers had intended. If you were in that demo last night, and you pushed the cops around… maybe next time we’ll hand out straight-jackets…”

“So, anyways, I wanted to vlog today to let you know that I’m okay! I’m not giving up on making sure we keep out Art in our City, though!”

Korra talked about the importance of keeping culture in the metropolis for another ten minutes. It was one of her biggest passions— right behind probending and ignoring Tenzin’s meditation lessons. One of her predecessors, Kyoshi, had made a fucking elite Earthbending group just to protect culture! Okay, so maybe the Dai Li weren’t the best example, but that wasn’t the point! Korra had to maintain balance, and protecting the city’s art and heritage was a part of that!

“Alright, I have to go to class and these pancakes smell really fucking amazing, so I’m going to go. Catch you next time!”

Korra clicked the stop-recording button and leaned back in her chair, letting out a puff of fire in annoyance.

“You’ll never get that petition signed,” Opal said, in-between forkfuls of eggs.

“You’ll never get a girlfriend with that attitude,” Korra said with a laugh.

“Shush, you!”

Korra giggled and jumped onto the couch, spilling a bit of biscuit onto Opal’s pajamas. With a grimace, the twenty year-old airbent the crumbs into the living-room trash can. She flicked Korra on the forehead.

“I hate you.”

“Which is why you agreed to be my roommate,” the Avatar said smugly.

“Breathe and focus. Clear your mind. We’re going to do this stretch now. Careful, Jun, you’re going to hurt a tendon doing that,” Jinora said, in her usual cheery demeanor.

Today they were doing Airbender moves— just simple stretches and balancing poses. Seeing as there were only a handful of members of the Air Nation on the planet; most of the pupils were from other Nations. Korra… you know, the Avatar, was the exception. Nevertheless, she was participating in the workshop— mostly just to cheer Jinora on.

The rest of the class focused on poses that Korra had spent the past couple years mastering, so she walked over to the water fountain and washed her pepper-ridden face for the umpteenth time that morning.

“You know, you don’t have to come to these,” Jinora said shyly, walking over to whisper to her.

“Aw, you know I want to be here! Besides— you’re loads better at this than your dad.”

“I couldn’t help but notice that lovely new contour that your sporting. Is that a new fashion
“statement?” the young Airbender teased.

“Oh shush,” Korra said with a roll of her eyes. She waterbent a stream from the fountain and splashed Jinora in the face.

“Hey!”

“You deserve it.”

The nineteen year-old airbent herself dry and went back to teaching the class.

“Hey Bandit—“

Oh Spirits, NO!!

“— can you come show Tomoko how to hold her elbows steady?”

Korra stifled a groan and walked over to help a freshman procure the correct balance. It was going to be a long day.

Asami’s eyes and face burned like hell. She couldn’t figure out why— but she took some pain relievers and walked down to the workshop to finish up her father’s latest prototype. This was going to level the playing field a shit ton. If only she had a better fuel to power it with. That’s what they needed the Museum for— though her father was pushing the City Council as best he could. Soon they would have what they needed.

The elevator doors opened and she stepped through. Men and women were down here— brashly waving power tools as though they were ogres waving clubs. Pathetic. She winced as some new recruit (hardly a day over eighteen) began to drill a piece of metal with a large drill bit, when proper technique decreed that you punch a hole and use a smaller drill bit to get a more proper alignment— oh, whatever. People have to start somewhere, as cringeworthy as it might have looked.

She weaved her way around people soldering and welding— to the back of the workshop. Her father was looking over some blueprints with an associate of his. Asami gave her father a kiss on the cheek and read the plans over his shoulder.

“Damn that protest— the last thing we need is publicity,” the Lieutenant said, barging through a door on the right; assistant in tow.

“There were nonbenders in that demonstration,” Hiroshi said, without looking up. “The last thing we want to do is bring innocents into this. We’re targeting Triads right now. I can secure the Museum without nonbender bloodshed.”

The Lieutenant let out a huff and walked away to inspect the workers. Asami smirked— she hated that guy. A pain shot through her forehead.

“Argh!”

“Are you alright, dear?” her father asked, turning away from his work and putting a hand on her shoulder.
“Yeah, I’m fine. But I have a funny feeling my Soulmate got pepper-sprayed last night.”

Hiroshi let out a chuckle. “Well, just be glad he lives on this side of the planet. Why— I had to go all the way to Ba Sing Sei to find your mother!”

“I think I’m going to go take a walk— stretch my legs. Maybe I’ll pick up some lunch?”

“There’s a new Yakisoba stand on Main Street; be a dear and bring me a plate?”

“Sure thing, Dad.”

With that, she kissed her father’s cheek again and walked back through the room. She had half a mind to tell the eighteen-year-old recruit that he was holding the drill wrong— but she was in too good of a mood.

Asami rode up the elevator. And then walked down the hallway— past the guarded double doors. And then up the real elevator. She gave a nod to the security guard (whom she had known since she was no taller than the guard’s desk), and stepped out of the building. While the work that the Equalists did was all well and important (and called for absolute secrecy), fresh air was so relieving. She smelled the fresh landscaping in front of Future Industries tower and walked out onto the sidewalk.

She’d almost made it to the Yakisoba stand when she collided with something blue.

Korra was taking Naga for a walk when she saw her. Or rather… she didn’t see her. She blundered right into her.

They would’ve both ended up on the crosswalk— if not for impeccable timing. For at that moment, Korra managed to cushion their fall with a bit of airbending.

“Oh my goodness!” she said, “I’m so sorry!”

“Don’t be,” the woman chuckled. “Those were some… swish moves you pulled there.”

“Oh… well… you know…” Korra said, scratching her head and trying to ignore the heat rising to her cheeks. This woman was insanely pretty.

No… no wait. Opal’s pretty. Jinora’s pretty. Pretty is when a girl looks really cute and you think she’s adorable. This woman was beautiful, stunning, gorgeous— there weren’t enough words. Spirits, she looked like the human personification of the word perfection.

She became aware that the woman was talking to her.

“Sorry, I didn’t hear what you catch. I mean I didn’t… you were saying?”

Korra can words. Yes… Korra can definitely words.

“I was wondering if you would like me to make it up for you? I was going to pick up some lunch for
“Does yakisoba sound good?”

“Yeah! Yeah, that sounds great!”

“My name’s Asami. Asami Sato.”

“Woooooooottttaaaahh! Shut up! The Asami Sato! Holy crap, I just blundered into a CEO! Shit! I’m swearing in front of a CEO! I am so sorry!”

The woman, Asami, let out a laugh, “Don’t worry, I’m next in line. Now— if you’d run into my father…”

Korra chuckled, “I don’t think I’d still be breathing. My name’s Korra.”

“Hey… you look familiar… Oh wait! You’re the Avatar! You run that really funny vlog!”

For the second time in three minutes, Korra felt herself blushing.

“Oh… that’s nothing…”

“It’s not nothing! I think you’re really brave for… you know… speaking your mind,” Asami said, patting her shoulder.

She’s so gorgeous… oh shit! I have a fucking burn on my face! I must look like a total dork! Korra thought.

“Can— can I still take you up on that lunch offer?” she asked.


“I hope you like noodles,” Asami said, turning and beckoning for Korra to follow.

The Water Tribe girl’s face lit up like the Southern Pole’s night sky.

“Sounds perfect.”

This was too good to be true.

Spirits, if she could pull this off— and get into the Avatar’s inner circle… they would stand more than just a chance.

*I have to tell Dad. As soon as I finish up here,* Asami thought.

The girl, Korra, was currently staring at the menu, while her dog kept nudging Asami in the side. Besides the fact that Naga was bigger than a Satomobile, it was kind of cute.

*Don’t personify benders.*

The words, her fathers, rang through her head. Asami took a second to collect her thoughts, inhaling
and exhaling slowly. She decided to get some conversation going— you know, espionage. See what
she could learn.

“So, that’s a nice… uh… look? What happened?”

Korra let out a groan and gingerly touched her hand to the burnt skin around her eyes. Asami
ignored the way her face twitched a little in pain.

“I was at the protest last night— and I was present when some genius decided to turn it into a riot.”

*So the Avatar’s involved in the demonstrations? Good to know.*

“What did you use to treat it?” Asami said, stepping up to the counter. “It looks horrible!”

While she quickly placed her order, Korra let out a small sigh. “I tried to heal it with waterbending,
but I guess it’s too much of a chemical burn to actually naturally heal it.”

_There’s nothing natural about bending. I suppose if I want to make friends with her, I ought to help._

Asami set her purse on the bench while Korra ordered her noodles. Ah hah! She found the tube of
burn paste (reserved for when someone accidentally hit her with a shock glove during training) and
tossed it to Korra.

“Try that. If it works, you can keep it. I can always get more.”

The Avatar curiously peered at it, unscrewed it with a shrug, and applied the paste. She let out a load
groan as the medicine worked its wonders.

“Oh, OH! Spirits, this is amazing! Thank you so much!”

“No problem,” the heiress said with a smirk.

Making alliances. Sneaking around. All in a day’s work.

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**Chapter End Notes**

I have updated this chapter with the official art, but the wonderful bevisi-- who can be
found at
http://bevsi.tumblr.com/

Thank you to silenceabounds for paying for it!! It’s a wonderful piece of art!!
“Hey there, stranger!” a voice called.

Asami had been sitting in the Future Industries booth when a group of people walked in; Mako, Bolin, Opal, Jinora, and Korra barged in and sat down in the seats next to her. The heiress stifled a groan and made room for them to watch the match. It was just supposed to be her and Korra watching the White Falls Wolfbats vs. the Ba Sing Sei Badgermoles.

Just... just an hour of so with some bender chumps— you can do that, Sato.

The bell rang and the kids next to Asami leaned forwards in their seats in excitement— she knew that they hated the Wolfbats. Water collided with earth and fire, and fists and feet flew out in attempts to strike at each other. The captain, Tahno, was being his dirty, usual self; flinging pieces of rock concealed in water at his opponents and targeting one bender with three elements at once.

Filthy scum— cheating their way through life like rats. I wish Amon was still here to take away their bending.

She looked over at Korra— who had succeeded in eliminating the former leader of the Equalists a few years prior. It had been all over the news that she’d simultaneously discovered her airbending skills during the fight. The girl was cheering on the Badgermoles and sharing a bag of popcorn with Bolin.

A shame.

Asami turned her attention to the match— studying weaknesses in their positions. In one minute alone, she counted twenty different times that Ming and Shaozu had left their defenses open to Chi-Blocking. She smirked. Benders were so oblivious to their own demises.

One of the Badgermoles, a firebender girl named Hikaru, did some sort of spin with her flames and managed to shoot Tahno back a zone.

“Woo! Yes!” Opal cheered.

“I thought Airbenders didn’t condone violence,” Asami commented casually.

Opal shrugged, “I know. It’s in my nature— Earth Kingdom blood, and all. Besides, it’s just a friendly sport. They know that it’s just a game. Plus, Hikaru’s a friend.”

Really? Just a game? Then why bother playing dirty?! If the Wolfbats knew how unfair their privilege was, maybe they would actually try and earn it!

Asami stood up suddenly. She needed to leave— all this bending was just too sickening to watch.

“Hey, are you okay?” Korra asked softly.

“Yeah, yeah. I’m fine— I’m actually feeling a little ill. I think I’ll take a cab home.”

“Oh— Naga and I could give you a ride home!”
Asami gulped; she didn’t want to spend more time with benders, but she also needed to keep up friendly appearances. She smiled at the Avatar.

“Yeah, sure.”

“Don’t worry— we’ll take it nice and slow,” Korra chuckled, grabbing her backpack.

“See you later,” Jinora said, giving Asami a long stare with her silver eyes.

Woah there, kid. What’s your deal?

Asami and Korra pushed their way through the doors and walked through the hallways silently. What do you say to someone that you consider an enemy? The engineer pretended to be looking through the tall glass windows as they strolled through the arena. The Republic City skyline was… peaceful. Airships darted back and forth— carrying cargo and passengers to and from the great cities of the world. Ships sailed through the harbor and fueled up at the colossal piers— docks that stretched for miles and miles on the waterfront. The infrastructure was rather… beautiful.

“Here we are, then,” Korra said cheerfully. She put a hand on Asami’s elbow, and the heiress had to do everything in her power not to tense up at the touch.

She hopped onto Naga’s back and, unsure of what to do with her arms, placed her hands on Korra’s shoulders. Much more appropriate than, say, her waist.

The dog lurched forwards— eager to bound through the busy streets. Despite the Avatar’s promise that it would be a peaceful excursion, the trio raced past Satomobiles and pedestrians— tearing through parks and leaping over market stands.

Though I wasn’t really sick before; I sure as hell am going to be now.

They arrived at the Sato Estate with fifteen minutes or so, and Asami and Korra slid off Naga’s back. The Polar-Bear-Dog gave the engineer a lick with her hand (which she had to resist the urge to wipe her hand on her pants). Korra led her to the front door— acting all chivalrous and gentlemanlike. She gave a low, swooping bow and Asami forced a giggle.

The heiress watched as Korra stumbled along giddily with her hands in her pockets, turning and giving Asami a wave when she climbed back onto Naga.

Perhaps… did she have a crush on Asami? That… that would work out to the Equalist’s advantage.

Korra was slumped over her desk in Calculus; listening to her professor drone on and on about math. Ugh. She glanced at the analog clock hanging over the doorway. It was three-thirty— which meant she had a whole hour before class let out. Perhaps she could sneak out at break? Hmm…

Opal chucked a piece of scrap paper at her head, and Korra stifled a groan. The Airbender never let her skip class.

“We have a test Tuesday,” she hissed.

“UGGGGHHH,” the Avatar moaned into her hoodie— which was bunched up into a pillow on the
“Hey,” a student leaned over to Korra’s desk. It was the _Ba Sing Sei Badgermole_’s Firebender, Hikaru— who also took classes at RCU, “Are we going to organize another protest at the museum?”

The memory of the demonstration sent a small shot of pain to the still-recent burn on Korra’s face. The medicine Asami had given her had helped immensely, but damaged tissue is still damaged tissue, after all. At least the paste made it so that there wouldn’t be much scarring.

“I think we ought to try again,” Opal whispered to Hikaru. “This time, we make sure that the crowd stays behind the metal fencing.”

Korra lifted her head up from her hoodie. The clock read three-thirty-two. God dammit. She checked her phone for any new messages— but the screen was blank. She was hopelessly and utterly bored. She ducked her head back into her hoodie.

“I’ll put something up on the vlog. Let me know what date you want to do it,” she said, her voice muffled by the sweater.

“Great!” Hikaru said. Though Korra wasn’t looking, the Avatar knew the other girl’s friendly face was positively beaming.

Three failed attempts at napping later— Korra and Opal were walking back through the campus; weaving their ways around students and trying not to get hit by rouge skateboarders. The air was cold, and the dark clouds above made Korra wonder if it was going to snow that night.

“Excuse me, do you have a moment to talk about the New Anti-Bending Revolution?” a woman asked. She was holding a stack of flyers in one hand, and an umbrella in the other.

“Umm… I guess,” Opal said uncertainly.

“Wonderful! As you may have heard— this city is ridden with ‘Bending Tyranny!’ Triads are running in the streets, terrorizing and extorting innocent Nonbending civilians— who can’t hope to defend themselves! Not to mention; the repulsive sport of Probending syphons all of Republic City’s spare change just so that people can pay to watch Benders beat each other up! For fun! It’s absolutely barbaric!”

Korra was glad her hood was up— she didn’t want to know what berating slurs the woman would spit at her, if she knew that Korra had been the one to stop Amon.

“But the police are doing all they can to stop the Triads!” Opal countered.

“You mean the ‘Metalbending’ Police Force?”

“Well yes, but—“

“And who controls the Police Force? A whole council of Benders, that’s who!”

“But—“

The woman silenced the two girls by slapping flyers into their hands, “If you wish to be re-educated on the injustices that Nonbenders still face— please come to our rally. Next week, at 10:00pm.”

Perhaps they would’ve had to face more of that “anti-Bending” garbage, but at that moment Hikaru caught up with them and feigned an excuse to drag them away.
“Thanks!” Korra said, giving her a high five.

“No problem,” the Firebender laughed. “She looked like she was chewing your ear off!”

They walked back to Korra and Opal’s apartment (which was really Opal’s, since Korra “technically” lived on Air Temple Island—but Korra helped keep up the rent with her White Lotus allowance). Opal unlocked the door and the three girls stumbled in with a laugh—falling onto the couch and turning on the TV.

At some point—Opal opened the fridge and tossed them a couple of beers. They watched Nuktuk Movers (which Hikaru liked an awful lot for someone who was just “friends” with Bolin) and munched on a bag of popcorn.

“Hey look!” Opal pointed out.

The outside window was frosted over—but when they cracked it open, they realized it was snowing out.

“I hope Calculus gets cancelled tomorrow,” Korra muttered under her breath.

Asami was reading a book about the Kysoshi Warriors when she felt an intense pang shoot through her thigh.

“Agghhhh!” she cried, clutching her leg and stumbling to the master bathroom. She wrenched open the cabinet and grabbed some Ibuprofen.

Fifteen minutes—she felt a little bit better, though her leg was still sore for some reason. Must’ve been her soulmate. Or perhaps it was a cramp. Yes, that was it.

Asami closed her book and hopped off her bed. She walked down the stairs—waving away her servant’s concerns and striding through the back door. The air was cold, and when she looked up she saw snowflakes falling down…white dots peppering her raven hair.

She pushed open the door to the workshop and pressed the hidden button under the metal table. The floor creaked and groaned as the metal panel slid to the side and revealed a staircase. She took the cart to the hidden bunker—where she knew her father would be working on the new and improved Mechasuits.

“AHH!” Korra yelped, as Hikaru tried to drunkenly remove the pair of scissors from her thigh.

“We should…we should…probably take her to the hospital,” Opal hiccuped.

They’d had one too many beers and were shitfaced, sitting on the floor of Opal’s apartment. At some point that evening—Korra had accidentally tried to open a bag of chicken for cooking, and had drunkenly stabbed herself in the thigh with scissors.
“You should c-call someone on my cellphone— like A-Asami! She can give us a ride t-to the h-hospital” Korra slurred.

Opal stood and wobbled over to the counter— snatching Korra’s smartphone and fumbling with it until she could press a random number.

“H-hello?” a girl’s voice answered. It was obvious that the person on the other end of the line had been sleeping (it was rather late, after all).

“Hheeeey! We need someone to *hic* take Korra to the *hic* hospital!” Opal said.

“Oh my goodness! Is everything alright— who is this? Is this Opal?”

“Yassssssss!”

Opal heard a sigh on the other end of the line and then the jingle of car keys.

“I’ll be there in ten minutes. Don’t do anything stupid! Just… just stay there! You crazy band of buffoons!” the girl said. And then she hung up.

“BBBBYYYYYYYYEEEEE!!” Opal shouted into the receiver.

“Are we ex-expecting company?!” Korra drunkenly asked.

“I hope not!” Hikaru laughed, “I forgot my dreeeeessssss clothes!”

“Is she going to be alright?” Jinora asked worriedly.

Her Aunt Kya waved her off. They were at Air Temple Island (goodness knows Korra didn’t need to pay an unnecessary hospital bill), and Kya was currently healing a snoring Korra’s leg. A pair of scissors lay on top of the dresser.

Opal and Hikaru were asleep in the guest rooms— thank goodness classes would likely be cancelled tomorrow (thanks to all the snow). They were going to be very, very hungover in the morning.

“You damn college kids,” her Aunt chuckled. “Always getting into one shenanigan or another.”

“Hey! I found them like this!”

“I know— and between you and me, I wouldn’t tell your father either way. Hell… if you smoked half the lillyweed that I did in college—”

“Aunt Kya!”

That earned her a chuckle from the Waterbender.

Jinora stood and went to go check on the others— hopefully they hadn’t thrown up or wrecked their rooms. Hikaru was snoring peacefully in her guest room, and Jinora quietly shut the door.

“Heeeeey!” a voice said behind her.

Jinora turned and put a finger to her lips. “Sssshhhhh!”

“Oh… Heeeeyyyyy” Opal whispered.
“Why aren’t you in bed?”

“I don’t wanna!”

“Come on,” Jinora said, with a playful roll of her eyes. She grabbed Opal’s left arm and put it over her shoulder— leading the stumbling girl back to her guest room.

One Airbender tucked another into bed, and just as Jinora was about to leave— she felt a hand on her wrist. She was tugged forwards and felt her lips get crushed into a bruising, sloppy kiss. She blinked in the darkness— and then closed her eyes.

*This is nice. Yeah. This is really— wait… no… she’s drunk. I shouldn’t.*

Jinora broke the kiss off with a sad smile. She was about to open her mouth to say something— but then she realized that Opal had already fallen back against her pillow and fallen asleep. The nineteen year-old stood and walked out of the guest room… unsure of where to go and what to do. She settled with taking a walk on the snowy, but slightly moonlit beach surrounding Air Temple Island.

Part of her hoped that Opal wouldn’t remember the kiss— so that it wouldn’t complicate their friendship.

And another part of her… her heart… felt a surge of hope.

Chapter End Notes

It feels good to be back in the writing scene. Hopefully I can update once a day :)
What do bottles of Advil and PB&J have in common?

“Ah-ha!” Mako said, jumping up from his seat on Opal’s couch.

It was Saturday, and they were snowed-in (two whole feet!)— studying the City Council Codexes. Surely, somehow, there was a loophole so that they could keep the Art Museum up and running. Or, in Asami’s case, make damn sure that it got shut down.

“It says here that ‘No public building of the City may be torn down without a 66% approval rating from the citizens via vote!’ We could petition for them to hold a poll, and they wouldn’t be able to override it!” Mako recited, leaping and bounding around the room.

Korra rushed up and engulfed him in a hug, “That’s perfect!”

“We still have to get public opinion on our side,” Hikaru noted.

“Oh shush— one step at a time!” Korra waved her off, “I can notify the blog— and we can get a group going! Plus, we’re holding another demo tomorrow!”

“So long as nobody gets hurt again,” Asami muttered.

She would need to tell her father about this loophole— it was going to put a fucking wrench in their plans. Now that they couldn’t do a deal under the table for the Museum… she was going to have to get the public to hate art. Fuck. She… she needed a distraction— lest she lose her cool (and therefore her guise).

“Hey, Bandit,” she said with a saccharine sweetness, “Wanna go get some coffee?”

“Oh, Spirits!” Korra laughed. “Not you too!”

“I can’t help it— your burn makes you look like Zorro!” the engineer said, faking a laugh.

“UUUGGGHHH! Alright, come on— Widget!”

Huh. She’d never had a nickname before. Well… not since Mom.

They walked out into the snow, and Asami had to stuff her hands in her pockets— it was so cold. You know, Fire Nation blood. Korra sensed this and linked an arm through hers. The air surrounding them began to warm up.

“Perks of being a Firebender,” the Avatar said cheerfully.

*You wouldn’t have said that if you knew what— who had killed my mother.*

As disgusted by bending as she was, the engineer did slightly appreciate the gesture (though she wouldn’t admit it).

The streets were blocked up by cars, their owners desperately trying to shovel their ways through the snow to get to work. Though, the blanket of powder covering the city made everything look rather… picturesque. Kids were running around— building snowmen and having snowball fights with each other. There was a sense of… peace… in the air.

Asami and Korra turned a corner and let out a gasp.
There was an ambulance— medics carrying wounded on stretchers out of a building. Korra let go of Asami and jogged up to a policeman (who the engineer recognized as Officer Saikhan).

“What happened here?”

The officer, acknowledging the girl’s status as Avatar, turned to her and gave her the briefest of nods, “Red Monsoons tried to extort the tenants— used the freshly fallen snow as an advantage.”

Asami looked down at her feet. All of a sudden the snow didn’t feel so picturesque.

“We’re facing multiple cases of potential frostbite— so we need to get these victims out of here. Do you know Healing techniques?”

Korra scoffed, “Is Toph Beifong a Metalbender?”

The corners of Saikhan’s mouth turned upwards into a small, sad smile; he opened the back doors of the ambulance. Korra hopped in and took a look at the civilian victims— and then back at Asami.

“I’m going to have to rain-check on the coffee— I’m sorry.”

Asami waved her off, “Don’t be… those people need your help. I’ll text you.”

The officer closed the ambulance doors after they’d finished loading it up with victims. Nine out of the ten of them were Nonbenders. Asami felt like throwing up. The last thing she saw before the doors shut was Korra kneeling down and talking to a little girl as she began to heal her arm. Asami turned away and headed the direction of one of the Red Monsoon’s little “hideouts”— reaching into her purse for her electric glove.

*I’m going to go fucking do something about this.*

“Hello?” Opal asked as she answered her phone.

“Hey, sis!”

“Kuvira! How’s it going?!”

“Great! Things are sunny and… uh… metal-ly in Zaofu,” the Captain answered.

Opal laughed. Her sister was never great with words. She closed her book and stood up from the couch with a stretch— leaving the others to go through the Codexes (though Hikaru seemed pretty happy to sit and read next to Bolin).

“How’s the girlfriend sitch?” Kuvira asked.

“Oh… well… I’m in-between ladies, I guess… you know… at the moment,” Opal blushed. “Uh… what about you and Bataar Jr.?”

She didn’t want to admit it out loud in a room full of people (even though she was sitting on the kitchen counter, and they were in the living room), but she had a massive crush on Jinora. Jinora! Of all people! God, she was so fucking pretty! And kind! And smart! But… something must’ve
happened when she was smashed the other day, for the other Airbender had been acting… strange around her. Ignoring her, or hiding whenever Opal walked near the gazebo. It panged the Beifong’s heart.

She tried to tune back into Kuvira talking about her recent date with Bataar Jr.

“— and then he tried to give me a bouquet of flowers! Like, wtf? Flowers!? I’m a Metalbending warrior badass!”

“You liked them, didn’t you?” Opal asked with a smirk.

“… shut up.”

“I’m only teasing you— but I know how much of a softie you really are,” the Airbender razzed.

“Hey, you keep this up and I won’t come to visit you!”

“What?! Oh my god, are you serious?! When?!” Opal shouted into the receiver, so loudly that the kids in the other room jumped in shock.

Opal could hear giggling— her mother and brothers— in the background, and Kuvira had to hold the phone away from laughing so hard.

“Next week? I already have the train tickets, so I hope you don’t have plans?”

Shit! The protest! Then again… it might be a good idea for Kuvira to come along— make sure Korra doesn’t get into any more trouble… hmm…

“Sounds great! I miss you! Tell Wing and Wei and Huan and Bataar and Mom and Dad that I love them! And I love you, too!”

Kuvira chuckled and relayed the message. She heard shouts of “we love you, too!” from the twins and her mother half crying/half laughing in the background.

Perhaps she ought to visit Zaofu soon.

“Ai! Jiang! I need both of you to send me a team of Chi Blockers to Kang Avenue!” the engineer whispered harshly.

“What on Earth for?” one of the voices on the other end of the line asked.

“There was a Red Monsoon attack today— I want to show them the meaning of fear.”

“Was this attack authorized by the Lieutenant?”

“I’ll take care of the repercussions and take responsibility, just get me a squad within the next half hour!” Asami hissed.

“Uh… you got it, Boss!”
Asami clicked the “End Call” button and peered out of the dark alley she was currently hiding in. The engineer was clad in an Equalist outfit— the organization had placed caches (in the form of safehouses) all over the city in case a group needed to stock up, and she’d taken the opportunity to stop at one and change.

The thug/bouncers were idly standing in front of the money-laundering bar that the Red Monsoons ran on Kang Street. Just thirty more minutes, and they wouldn’t know what hit them…

“You know, I kinda like the name Widget,” a voice in the back of her head said. “I’ll have to call her that more often.”

“No,” she muttered. “I’ve got to stay focused.”

Okay, I’m going to start healing this,” Korra warned the little girl. Her name was Gyeong, and she looked really scared to be in the emergency room— though not nearly as scared as her father.

“Okay,” Gyeong whispered.

Korra took a deep breath and focused her energy towards the mark spanning from the girl’s shoulder up her neck to her cheek. Poor thing had been caught in the crossfire of a water-whip from some Triad thug.

*Those assholes are heading for some serious karma, Korra thought. What kind of heartless monster hurts a little girl?*

Gyeong let out a little whimper at the cooling sensation of Healing, and Korra gave her a smile.

“You’re really brave, I admire you a lot!” she said, trying to cheer the girl up.

Her father gave a small chuckle, “She thinks highly of you— it’s like every day I come home from work and she’s playing Avatar with her friends.”

Korra put a hand over Gyeong’s, “Well maybe when you grow up, you can join Team Avatar— how does that sound?”

The little girl’s eyes brightened for a moment, and then she shyly looked away with her cheeks tingling pink.

“Of course, when I’m out saving the rest of the world— I’m going to need someone to protect Republic City… do you think you could do that for me?” Korra asked, squeezing the little girl’s hand as she continued healing.

Gyeong didn’t return the gesture, but Korra could have sworn she heard her say, “Okay.”
It was Asami’s job to defend Republic City. Not the council— not the pathetic excuse for a police force. Not the Avatar’s job. The fate of thousands of Nonbenders rested on her shoulders.

She readied the glove on her hand and signaled for the Equalist group to follow her. The bouncers—recognizing the trademark masks—dropped into Waterbending stances and, drawing the water from the snow, shot icicles at the group. Several brave vigilantes fell to the ground, but Asami surged forwards… the guards were down within seconds.

The heiress rounded up her group and they kicked the doors down.

There wasn’t any water in the room. Asami smirked under the mask. They moved swiftly, Chi Blocking thug after thug—though at one point the heiress got tired of being merciful and began shocking them with her glove.

To watch them fall—to see the power extinguish from their eyes…it was…beautiful. Asami could watch this for hours. Most mesmerizing.

Though, she would need to put some ice on some of these bruises that they were giving her.


Korra slumped her way through Opal’s living room and let out a groan when she landed on her bed. Even though all she’d been doing was healing—it felt as though she’d been sparring all day. She took off her Water Tribe jacket and looked at her arms…littered with blemishes and welts. Must’ve been her soulmate.

**Hey there**, she thought sadly. **Wherever you are… I hope you’re doing okay. I mean, obviously not and all… but… hang in there… I haven’t met you yet, or anything… but if we’re going to be doing this for the rest of our lives we ought to invest in a large bottle of Advil.**

She chuckled at this—no doubt it was hard to be the Avatar’s soulmate, of all people. Training, warlords, bandits, anti-bending fanatics…you name it! She went up against a lot of psychos, and she wouldn’t blame her soulmate if the chick/dude/whatever-they-identified-as wanted to kill her.


**“Hang in there…”**

Asami thought she heard somebody say that as she stumbled through the Sato Estate and staggered into the bathroom—but ignored it. Locking the door, she stripped her Equalist gear off and turned the faucet of the bathtub on. Steam filled the room and she took a moment to check her body in the mirror.

Ouch.

One whole side of her, spanning from her hip to the top of her ribcage, was black and blue from a chunk of ice—the size of a bowling ball—that had slammed into her during the raid.
But it had been so fucking worth it.

She let out a loud groan as she slipped into the scalding tub and leaned back. Oh! Oh, Spirits! She could almost fall asleep in here. She poured a bit of peppermint oil into the tub and inhaled the sweet scent— reveling in the feeling of cleanliness. She always hated the grime that followed of a fight… it reminded her of filthy fucking benders.

Now, now— Asami, this is your time to relax. You earned this. And hey! Nobody died or got captured during the raid! Treat yourself! she thought.

She sank a little further into the tub, allowing the water to touch her chin.

“I haven’t met you yet, or anything… but if we’re going to be doing this for the rest of our lives we ought to invest in a large bottle of Advil.”

A little bit of water splashed and spilled out of the tub as she sat up rather suddenly. Surely… surely she wasn’t hearing things? No… no… it must’ve been her soulmate. There were studies that showed that, occasionally, one could communicate with their soulmate telepathically. She gave a soft smile.

“I’ll buy the Advil if you keep mum about the bruises. And… uh… sorry,” she thought.

Asami then shook her head. It was silly to try and communicate with her “soulmate”. The studies were… what… one in twenty? No—it was probably trivial superstition… no need to bring her soulmate into her life… not just yet. Perhaps— when the New Anti-Bending Revolution was properly underway, or even finished— she would seek out her Destined One.

Korra was about to go to sleep when she heard the voice again— indistinguishable in gender or age or accent, but loud and clear.

“I’ll buy the Advil if you keep mum about the bruises. And… uh… sorry.”

She bolted upright in her bed and let out a laugh.

“It’s okay. I’m used to it. I… uh… I don’t think I’m in a good place to meet you yet… I’ve got a lot on my plate… but… how about Kwongs… in one year?”

She sat there, waiting for an answer. Fifteen minutes passed, and she contemplated going back to sleep— instead Korra walked back into the kitchen and opened the fridge. She was in the middle of making a peanut butter & jelly when she received her response.

“Okay… but… top or bottom?”

Korra dropped the butter knife and began laughing in the middle of the kitchen— so loudly that she woke up Opal (who proceeded to shoot her with gusts of air until she finally shut herself in her bedroom). Sitting at her computer and munching on her sandwich— Korra made a reminder at her desk to have a dinner date at Kwongs in one year. She then leaned back and closed her eyes with a smile.

“Bottom.”
"There are dreamers and there are realists in this world. You'd think the dreamers would find the dreamers and the realists would find the realists, but more often than not the opposite is true. You see, the dreamers need the realists to keep them from soaring too close to the sun. And the realists, well without the dreamers, they might not ever get off the ground."

-Cameron Tucker (Modern Family)

Opal’s hiking boots crushed through the snow on her way to class with Korra. The *crunching* that her feet made as she walked through Aang Square at RCU was always her favorite part of winter. She pulled her scarf up a little so that it would cover her nose (which was bright red from the cold) and pushed her way past a crowd.

Wait… why was there a crowd? Rush hour between classes wouldn’t start for another twenty minutes…

There was some sort of… stage? Yeah, a stage— in the middle of Aang Square. And on top of it, some guy was wildly speaking with a megaphone.

“I don’t like the look of this,” Korra grumbled.

They walked closer.

“… which is why, good citizens of Republic City, we need to tear down that Art Museum! It’s structurally unsound— risking all of our precious artifacts and heirlooms! Future Industries has offered to donate new land to build a modernized building! All we need are your signatures!”

*NO!*

Korra and Opal surged forwards, pushing past startled freshman and sleepy juniors.

“Hey! Where’s your proof that it’s structurally unsound?” the Avatar interjected.

“What do you mean?” the announcer asked with an innocent tone.

“I’m saying we want proof! You’re making a false claim and I want you to fucking back it up with facts!”

The announcer hesitated. Korra wondered on whose behalf he was speaking… possibly Future Industries… but that didn’t make any sense… Asami had been willing to help them look through the Council Codexes…

“Look here, pal, what’s important is that we think that the Art Museum is out-of-date and needs to be relocated— the old building needs to be torn down!”
There were murmurs in the audience; people weren’t sure who to believe. On one hand, the current Museum building was old and musty and smelled a lot like old people— and sure, it’s not like kids had that much interest in art. No, they were too busy on social media and doing homework to go downtown and visit a building filled with dusty old vases.

But the place was actually kind of cool, if you took the time to visit on a rainy Saturday afternoon. Strolling through the silent halls— where the only thing to be heard were your footsteps as you moved from one painting to another. Or walking down the Statue Hall— where they designed the windows so the sunlight hit the sculptures just right. And then there was the architecture itself! Designed by Toph Beifong herself (who wasn’t much of an art enthusiast… cause… you know… but did it as a favor for Avatar Aang), the columns and archways and ceilings had beautiful decorations and frescos— some of which were imitations of the actual murals in the Air Temples!

Korra had a lot of work if she was going to persuade the world that they needed to keep the Art Museum.

________________________________________

Asami’s cell vibrated against her leg. She shifted her position in the chair and glanced at her phone. She had a text message:

Avatar Korra: What are you doing this afternoon?

The engineer rolled her eyes— she supposed she needed to hang out with the benders (keep up appearances). She checked her planner and noticed that it was, surprisingly, cleared.

Asami Sato: I’m free— what did you have in mind?

She tried to lean forwards and pay attention to the Board Meeting, where some young, clean-shaven exec was announcing a plan to build a few new warehouses. Boring. If it weren’t for her father— Asami would have skipped out. It’s not like this meeting had pivotal information for the company… they could make do without her…

Avatar Korra: Well… we were wondering if you wanted to come over and play?

Asami Sato: What do you mean “play”?

Avatar Korra: Building snowmen and sledding?

The heiress leaned back in her chair and pondered this for a moment. She’d never played in the snow — with other people, that is. Even if they were Benders… maybe it would be… fun. Her right knee was bouncing up and down (you know, when you’re super bored and your leg does the thing), and she was absentmindedly doodling on a scrap of paper. Warehouse Exec was droning on and on.

Yeah, she could use a break from adult-land.

Asami Sato: Sure thing, what time?

Avatar Korra: Uh… I didn’t plan this far ahead… 4:00?

Asami Sato: Alright, I’ll see you at your dorm.
Someone knocked on her door while she was meditating. The Airbending Master opened an eye and sighed in relief that it wasn’t her brother or sister— she didn’t have the energy. Jinora’s gray eyes looked up into the bright green ones belonging to one Opal Beifong. Her heart began warming up for a dash.

“I was wondering if…”

“Yes?” Jinora said, standing up from her Lotus Position and brushing her yellow robes off.

“Korra invited some of her friends over to the dorm to play in the snow— do you want to come with me? You can spend the night if you want!”

Jinora’s face lit up, “Yeah, sure!”

Her heart was at the starting line, and when Opal’s face broke into a smile— the gun went off and her heart began sprinting.

And then it sped up to an Olympic-level gallop when the older Airbender took her hand and led her through Air Temple Island, to their gliders. Opal’s stave was a long, cedar glider that she had carved herself (as was tradition), whereas Jinora had a stave made from imported Madrona wood— a gift from her grandmother. They retrieved them and raced through the courtyarded.

Should I tell her about the kiss? No… I don’t think she remembers…

They ran off the dock and for a moment it felt like Jinora was diving headfirst into Yue Bay, and then her glider sprang open and the wind picked her up. Climbing higher and higher until the Acolytes on the Island were little dots— she twirled around in a barrel role and let out a laugh. Though the air was cold, being an Airbender had its sincere advantages; for she could regulate her breath and— by extension— her body temperature (just as her grandfather Aang had when he visited the North and South poles).

“Show off!” a voice below called out.

I can’t help it, Jinora thought, being around you makes me want to fly to the stars.

They coasted over the busy streets, having been cleared of all the snow, and darted in-between buildings. Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it’s just a pair of giddy Airbenders.

Riding a warm thermal over a skyscraper, Opal and Jinora dived down to the RCU campus— skidding to a halt in front of the apartment complex, where patches of students were merrily building snow forts and having all out snowball wars (Water Tribe kids were having the last laugh, of course).

The girls located Korra, Asami, Mako, Hikaru and Bolin over by the trees— where the rascals were making snow angels.

“Heeeeeeeyyy,” Bolin called, from under a pile of snow that his brother had just dumped on him.

“Hello!” Opal waved cheerfully.

Jinora couldn’t help but sense the auras of everyone around her (being a Spiritual leader, and all); and for some reason— though she was laughing and smiling and sticking her tongue out at Korra—
the Sato girl’s aura was a little dim. Hmm. It had been that way last Saturday, too… when they’d been searching through the Council Codexes. Most curious.

She was distracted, however, when Opal and Hikaru began flinging snowballs at everyone. A puff of cold white powder hit her square in the nose.

Oh, it’s on!

Yes, Airbenders believe in non-violence… but this was harmless fun. Jinora quickly aimed a blast of air down at Hikaru’s feet, and the Firebender was hit with a puff of snow. Quickly, everyone began taking side.

Jinora sided with Mako and Bolin— so that it might be fair (seeing as Asami had paired with Korra… who had instantly created an icy fort for herself). Indeed, Bolin playfully stomped on the ground and a three foot wall of Earth rose up.

“No fair!” Opal shouted.

“Come on!” Hikaru shouted.

With a puff of air and a set of thrusters made of fire— the pair of girls settled in the trees above (Opal would occasionally send air down to scoop up some snow for them, using her coat as a pouch to hold the ammo).

Despite the disadvantage among benders, though, the winner was clearly Asami Sato— who sent snowball after snowball flying with a laugh. She had perfect aim, hitting everyone square in the face again and again.

“How are you doing that?” Bolin shouted, from behind the Earth wall.

“Trajectory— take a physics class!” the engineer snickered.

Eventually, Opal dropped down, scooped up a pile of snow in her arms, and dropped it on Asami’s head.

“Truce!” Korra shouted with a chuckle, “Truce!”

Bolin tapped his foot again, and the Earth wall dropped back down. Korra’s ice fortress melted back (and then froze) back into snow, and Hikaru dropped out of the tree.

The seven friends began to build snowmen instead— out of breath but in the highest of spirits.

Jinora couldn’t help but notice how much brighter Asami’s aura was.

Korra pushed the apartment door (not realizing that it was strangely unlocked) and dragged in the group of friends with a laugh. They stumbled around in the kitchen, eager to warm up with some hot chocolate, but Korra headed for the sofa to lay down.

She jumped up with a puff of air and landed on something squishy. Wait… the couch wasn’t squishy.
“OOF!”

It took the Avatar a moment to realize there was currently someone under her. She rolled off and scrambled away— readying a bit of fire in her hand in case it was an intruder. A woman was writhing in pain from the accidental assault.

“Wow, okay… that surprise didn’t work out as well as I had hoped,” the squishy person moaned as she sat up.

“What a minute! I know that fucking voice!” Opal squealed.

The Airbender ran into the living room and threw her arms around the squishy couch-dweller, half-crying and half-screaming in joy.

“I CAN’T BELIEVE YOU’RE ALREADY HERE!”

Korra extinguished the small flame in her hand and looked at the person hugging Opal. The woman had a green hoodie and light blue skinny jeans on— and a long black braid. She also had green Earth Kingdom eyes and a mole on her right cheek.

“Guysguysguys!” Opal called excitedly, “Come and meet my sister, Kuvira!”

The others walked out of the kitchen with warm mugs of cocoa and waved the woman “Hello”. The woman turned to the Water Tribe lass.

“You must be Avatar Korra,” Kuvira grunted (Opal was still happily clinging onto her shoulders). “It’s an honor to meet you.”

“No! I mean, the honor is mine! I’ve heard a lot about you from your sister,” Korra mused.

“Uh… good things?”

“Más o menos.”

Kuvira laughed and then leaned back down on the couch, pulling Opal down with her— tickling the Airbender with a vice grip.

“No! Not the neck, not the neck!!” the Airbender screamed, squirming around and trying to slap her sister’s hands away.

Hikaru and Mako and Bolin proceeded to sit down on top of them— making a large dog pile on the couch while Jinora and Asami decided on movers to watch. Korra chuckled at the scene and opened the fridge for a couple of beers. It had been a good day.

“I hope you’re having a good day, and enjoying the snow,” she thought to her soulmate.

Her back was turned, reading the newspaper on the counter, but had she been facing the other way… she would’ve noticed Asami Sato tense up for a moment in surprise, and then relax with a smile.

“Actually, yeah. I had a really good time with some friends in the snow. I haven’t done that in a while.”

Korra turned a page, pretending to read the classifieds as she sent another message.
“Good to hear, it sounds like you needed a day off,” she thought.

For a moment, it was just radio silence inside Korra’s head— for the group began settling down on the couch and comfy armchairs as they found the Star Wars DVD’s. Korra sat down next to Asami (who noticeably scooted away from her a little— perhaps the Water Tribe girl had been reading things wrong), and handed the engineer a beer.

A minute into the movie, she got her response.

“You have no idea.”

Chapter End Notes

Hope you guys are having a great day!
“That’s… weird…” Kuvira trailed off.

They were at the second protest at the Art Museum— Jinora, Bolin, and Mako were waving signs up at the front about how they couldn’t get away with this (without the 66% approval rating). The crowd was more subdued than last time… Korra had posted quite a few videos on “appropriate protest conduct” last week, that had gone pretty viral around the RCU campus.

“What?” Korra asked.

“It’s just… it feels like there’s something… there…”

“You’re not making any sense,” the Avatar commented, raising an eyebrow.

Kuvira turned to her, “Do you know Metalbending?”

“Your Mom taught me.”

“Details, details. Okay, concentrate your focus underneath the building for a moment.”

Korra tapped her foot on the ground— following the seismic sense down to under the foundation of the Art Museum. It was difficult to focus, what with all the protestors chanting “Keep Our Art, Don’t Tear It Apart!”, but sure enough… there was some sort of deposit.

“What do you think it is?” Korra whispered to Kuvira.

“I don’t know. It doesn’t feel like metal or rock— more like an ore of sorts. I’ve bent all kinds of metals, even some ores… but this doesn’t feel like anything familiar. Maybe fuel of some sort?”

“And it’s underneath the Museum.”

“… so whoever’s trying to tear the building down is doing it for whatever’s down in the Earth below,” Kuvira concluded.

Korra looked at the line of policemen guarding the line of protestors. Some of the Museum Curators looked a little pleased to see so many people who wanted to keep the building open— but there were also some Exec-looking men and women standing next to them… who looked determined to stop all the college students.

This changed everything.

“… .

“Well, the demonstration went smoothly,” Saikhan said, leaning back in the office chair.


“What’s the situation on the Monsoon attack?”
“Which part?”

“The ‘Neo-Equalists’ who obliterated a whole damn building of thugs,” Saikhan said, taking a sip of coffee.

Lin looked at her second-in-command and then at the file on her desk. Someone had led a group of Chi Blockers into a money-laundering restaurant and punched the Monsoon’s square in the face. There were twenty-three injuries and two critically wounded— still at the hospital.

“The ‘Neo’ types are out for blood. Whatever’s coming up— I think it’s going to be worse than Amon,” Lin muttered, pinching the bridge of her nose.

“Any orders?”

“I want extra security around the Probending Arena. And see what we can do about reinforcing our armor for Chi Blockers.”

Saikhan instantly stood and saluted, “You got it, Chief.”

Lin looked out of the window of her office, down at the statue of her mother. Despite the real woman being, you know, blind… the stone Toph Beifong was watching over the city— ever vigilant.

_I miss you, Mom,_ she thought. _You’d know what to do._

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The Annoying Airbender: Hey there :) Wanna go get some coffee?

The Nerdy Airbender: Yeah, just finishing a workshop. Where do you want to meet up and when?

The Annoying Airbender: Doesn’t Kai work at a shop near the Waterfront?

Kai was Jinora’s best friend— who they’d met when recruiting Airbenders in the Earth Kingdom. He was cute… but not as cute as Opal. Besides, he was a total jokester; and a good confidant.

The Nerdy Airbender: Yeah, the one with the green neon sign on Hyun Boulevard.

The Annoying Airbender: See you there ;)

What does a winky face mean?! Ugh, she was horrible at flirting. Wait… was it flirting? Oh Gyatso, this was difficult.

She closed her flip phone (overprotective dad), and rolled up her yoga mat as the other students walked out of the exercise room. They’d been going through meditation poses, and Jinora found that a slightly softer surface— but not a bed or a chair— was always easier to concentrate on.

It was a cold, but sunny, day. The sky was crystal clear— and Jinora inhaled a sharp, burning breath of air.
“Okay… you’ve earned your damn— oh, I shouldn’t swear like that— Master Tattoos,” she muttered to herself, “You can do this.”

Her uncle Bumi, who’d been walking past, leaned down and whispered, “Go get the girl, sweetie.”

She gave him a wink and reached for her glider— the wings springing open and unfurling. Taking a run, she leapt off the set of stairs and ignored the small tug of her stomach as she dropped down five feet (her toes scraping the concrete) … and then soared higher and higher into the sky.

If she was being more careful, she would have noticed the red laser dot hovering on the left wing of her glider.

*Whizz!*

A steel bolt ripped through the orange papyrus-like fabric and slightly grazed Jinora’s side.

“Ahh!”

She began falling down, spiraling as her glider slipped out of her hands.

*Shitshitshitshitshitshitshit!*

“Wait here one moment,” the clerk said, standing up from her desk.

Kuvira and Korra were waiting at the Archives at City Hall. Hopefully, since the Museum was a public building, they would find the architectural plans for the foundation of the old building. All they needed was some sort of footnote— anything to tell them what was buried underneath.

“So, how long are you staying?” Korra asked, trying to break the silence.

“Eh, as long as you guys let me. It’s been a while since I last saw my sister,” Kuvira chuckled sadly.

“What do you do in Zaofu? Police?”

“No, I’m Captain of the Guard.”

“Potato/Po-tah-toe.”

The clerk returned with a folder of large blueprints and handed them over— telling the two women that they couldn’t take the folder out of the building or snap any photographs.

Korra and Kuvira retreated to a cluster of chairs and a table to look over the plans.

“Most of this is the second and third stories— like with all the arches and columns,” Kuvira noted.

“Like, mystery aside, this is actually really cool. I love this building to death; and seeing the plans is just…”

“You sound like my fiancé,” Kuvira laughed.

“He likes art?”
“No, that’s my other brother. Bataar Jr. is an architect when he’s not designing robots.”

“Oh, I remember Bataar Jr.… sort of… he kind of skipped dinner a lot when I came to visit Zaofu.”

Kuvira turned a page, “Yeah, he does that. We both stay up late a lot of nights for work, but love is love and it works out in the end.”

“O great wise warrior!”

Kuvira punched Korra in the arm, but she already felt like she was becoming friends with the Avatar. Cool.

“Ah-ha! Check this out!” the Water Tribe girl pointed.

It was the plans for the basement, where the Curators had planned to put the Analysis Lab. A footnote explained that it was going to be the room where they studied art and examined it to make sure it was the real deal— and not some foraged bullshit. Chemical analysis, X-rays— all sorts of cool stuff.

Surrounding the foundation of the basement, there was some sort of deposit in the ground. But there wasn’t any clue as to what the material was… except… a tiny scrawl… in the corner…

“Unobtainium,” Korra observed.

The fuck was Unobtainium? Kuvira hadn’t heard of anything like that before.

“You know what that is?” she asked the Avatar.

“’fraid not.”

Damn…

Kuvira pulled out her cellphone. There was someone who might know what this stuff was. Hopefully he’d tear himself away from work long enough to check his messages.

Ow. Oh, jeez— that was going to leave a mark.

Jinora tried to stand up, but her ribcage burned so much that she slumped against the concrete wall. It was really cold out— the sunny sky had quickly turned to cloudy overcast. She wondered if it was going to snow again.

There was a gash in her abdomen, a puncture wound from the steel bolt— which was still lodged in her side.

Fuck fuck fuck what the fuck who did this why the fuck OW OW OW!!

It had been pure luck and quick thinking, but she’d survived the fall. Despite the injury, she’d managed to aim a blast, propel herself just right, and crash into the roof of the nearest building— a skyscraper that was probably an apartment complex or business center or something.
She let out a groan as the pain flared up again.

And then a thought entered her head.

*I’m going to bleed out if I don’t do something about this.*

So she did the only thing she could think of.

“Help me, please.”

Hopefully, her soulmate lived on this side of the planet.

“WHAT THE FUCK DID YOU JUST DO?” Asami screeched, storming into the Equalist headquarters and pinning the second-in-command against the wall.

Not Jinora, not that sweet little kid. Bending aside—she was only nineteen. And apparently he’d shot her down for fun…

“I sent the Benders a message,” the Lieutenant said with a smirk.

“You fucking killed an Airbender!! Did you want to start an all-out war before we could even get public opinion on our side?!” she shouted at him.

There was a hand on her shoulder. Her father pulled her back and stood—towering over the Lieutenant.

“Why didn’t you talk to us before ordering a strike against a peaceful force?” he inquired calmly.

“Oh, so your princess can send a fucking squad unannounced into a building, but I can’t take down one measly Airbender?” the Equalist sneered.

“We discussed this. Triads only—and until we can deal with them we don’t touch the fucking group that the *United Republic will start a war over!!*” Hiroshi chided.

“They don’t care about them that much!”

“Who do you think founded the goddamn Republic?! Avatar Aang—who was the only Airbender for a century! His son, General-fucking-Bumi, is an Airbender! Of course they’re going to fucking protect them! You have a death wish all because you wanted to hunt some game?!”

The Lieutenant turned away, “She didn’t die—yet.”

Asami’s eyes widened, “How do you know?”

“I saw her ‘fly’ over to a building. She’ll make it…probably.”
Opal had decided to wait on the coffee until her… uh… date? No— it was probably just a “friendly gathering” or something. She fiddled with the napkin dispenser on the table, and slumped her head on her elbow while she waited. There had been a sharp pain in the right half of her stomach, like the time Wing and Wei had accidentally poked her with too sharp of a pencil (they were grounded for a month). Oh, jeez, it hurt.

“Help me, please.”

Woah there, Nellie! Opal sat up in the booth and looked around. The coffee shop had a few couples and some friends playing Scrabble in the corner— but nobody had been talking directly to her. She looked up at Kai, who was currently making an order for a pair of boys (aww, they’re holding hands).

She slid out of the booth and used the restroom. While washing her hands, she looked up in the mirror and lifted her shirt. There weren’t any new cuts or bruises (where would she get them from, anyways? It’s not like Airbenders sparred with each other), and yet the pain was still present in her abdomen.

“Are you t-there? I’m… I’m really hurt, and I need someone to call 911.”

Opal jumped back and hit her shoulder on the paper-towel dispenser in shock. Holy shit— was she… did she have… a soulmate? She decided to talk back.

“Um… where are you?” she thought.

“OW! Sorry, injury… uh… god, I don’t know…”

Opal thought about it. She knew the layout of the city more or less. If her soulmate was downtown— maybe they could identify a building for her, and she could figure out where they were.

“Describe the building across from you?”

“Uh… alright… it looks… this big red tower? And to the right of me is… a hotel, I think… ugh…”

Opal searched through her bag for the city map that she kept with her— advice from her Aunt Lin.

“I think you’re on the Chakrii Apartment Complex. Is it a gray building?”

“Yeah, I think so.”

Opal grabbed her smart phone and dialed 911, describing that her soulmate was in trouble (not an uncommon emergency call, they were prepared for the vagueness of the call). They assured Opal that they would be at the top of the building within minutes, and she let out a breath. She walked out of the girl’s restroom and received an order from Kai. She needed some coffee to sooth her nerves.

The green-eyed Airbender waited all afternoon for Jinora— only to sadly realize that the other girl must’ve forgotten about their date.
Unobtainium-- it's a real fake thing

Oh, and... uh... sorry not sorry
“Atticus said to Jem one day, "I’d rather you shot at tin cans in the backyard, but I know you’ll go after birds. Shoot all the blue jays you want, if you can hit ‘em, but remember it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird."

That was the only time I ever heard Atticus say it was a sin to do something, and I asked Miss Maudie about it.

"Your father’s right," she said. "Mockingbirds don’t do one thing except make music for us to enjoy. They don’t eat up people’s gardens, don’t nest in corn cribs, they don’t do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That’s why it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird."

— Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird

Opal was pacing outside of the hospital, waiting for Tenzin and Pema to arrive. She’d received a text from a nurse using Jinora’s phone (Opal was listed as one of her emergency contacts). Jinora had been attacked by someone and was in critical condition.

Why Jinora? A peaceful Airbending Master?! The last person to attack the Airbenders had been Zaheer— and Korra had defeated him. But that’d been many, many years ago. Who would commit such… such a monstrosity?

Uggh! OW!!

Opal quickly sat at a bench and keeled over, doubling in pain. Her stomach had only gotten worse that afternoon. Her abdomen felt like someone was ripping it open.

“Opal!” a woman cried.

The Airbender looked up to see a blob of green running at her and stumbled trying to walk to the blob— but the pain was so intense… everything became… blurry… dark…

“Where am I? The Spirit World?!"

Kuvira had a funny feeling she knew exactly who Opal’s Soulmate was. They were sitting in the hallway— outside of Jinora’s room. The Metalbender, thinking that Jinora’s surgery had something
to do with her sister passing out in the parking lot, had whispered to a nurse that she might need some painkillers and a cup of water. Opal was out cold, slumped against her sister’s shoulder— occasionally letting out a whimper in her sleep. Kuvira silently sat, stroking Opal’s hair the way her foster mother, Suyin, used to do to her— when perchance a lightning storm would rage outside her window as a young “newly-orphaned” in the Zaofu Palace.

The Captain of the Guard closed her eyes and smiled, for she still remembered when she’d discovered her Soulmate;

*They were playing soccer— a once-in-a-blue-moon occasion where fifteen-year-old Kuvira and her brothers could pull Baatar Jr. away from his precious workshop.*

“Hey, that’s a foul!” Wing shouted at Huan.

“How should I know? I’m a sculptor, not a jock! Besides, you’re on my team!”

“Oh yeah. Nevermind!”

Suyin was watching the match from the gazebo— laughing and holding little ten-year-old Opal in her lap. It was a sunny summer day, and the heat reflecting off the metal made Kuvira a little dizzy.

*She kicked the ball as hard as she could— towards Wei guarding the other goal.*

Unfortunately, Baatar Jr. had been paying attention; sticking his foot out and blocking her perfect shot.

“Hey, no fair!” she yelled.

“Well, it’s not fair that there’s three people on your team and two people on mine!” he called back, looking over his shoulder as he dribbled down the courtyard. He was heading straight for Wing, and was probably going to make the shot.

Kuvira was too wrapped up in the excitement. She ran straight at her adopted brother and her fist “accidentally” collided with his face.

*A sharp pain shot through her nose and she dropped to the ground— next to a writhing Baatar Jr.*

Suyin handed Opal to Baatar Sr. and made a beeline for the field.

“Oh, dear. I always wondered…” she chuckled— pulling both of her kids upright.

“What do you mean, Mom?” Huan asked.

“It looks like you’re soulmates!”

Three years later, they were smitten for each other. Four years later she proposed.

Korra turned on the webcam and faced the screen. She let out a big sigh and pressed the “play” button.

“Hey guys,” she said, in a depressed and deflated tone.
“So… I don’t know if it’s in the news yet… but one of my best friends— no, fuck that, my sister was shot yesterday. We don’t know why yet— we think it may have been a ‘Neo Equalist’ attack.”

She fiddled with the cup filled with pencils on her desk and then looked back at the camera with teary eyes.

“Look… equality is really important— and as the Avatar I promise I will do everything in my power to help Nonbenders and Benders live on this planet peacefully. But… violence… violence against innocent civilians doesn’t make you revolutionary. It doesn’t make you “heroes fighting for the common man”. It makes you a murderer and a terrorist.

“My… my sister is going to be okay, we think. You— you should have seen her mom in the emergency room! You know how Air Nomads have the oath for nonviolence? Hah! She was going to kick the doctor through the wall if he didn’t let her into the room!”

Korra chuckled and wiped a tear away. She leaned back and took a sip of tea.

“I don’t know what’s going to happen next. I have classes and this whole Art Museum sh*tick and there’s—this—really—cute—girl—that—I-like—who—I-want—to-ask-out and also my sister’s in the hospital and fucking Neo Equalists are cropping up in the city. I don’t know when the next video is, but I promise that I’ll update within the next week.”

Korra talked for a little longer and then signed off and closed her laptop. It was a short video—shorter than her usual uploads, but she had a lot on her plate.

She sat there, sipping her tea and wondering what the hell she was going to do.

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The video, though not nearly as lengthy or impressive or funny as some of AvatarDaily’s other content, received 1,000,000 views within three days.

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“She hasn’t been conscious for half a week… we’re worried that she may have entered a coma,” Doctor Kang, a tall Earth Nation man with brown hair and dark skin, said.

“Is… is she going to be okay?” Pema asked worriedly, clutching onto Tenzin for support.

Ikki, Meelo, and Rohan were all sitting on the couch in Jinora’s hospital room. Their heads were bowed low and Meelo was holding Ikki’s hand. Rohan was fiddling with one of his wooden-bead bracelets in anxiety.

“We think so, though we may be dealing with internal bleeding.”

Rohan felt a little queasy. He excused himself and headed to the bathroom— or maybe he needed a water-fountain. He didn’t like blood or any kind of medical stuff (always walking out of the room when Kai wanted to watch those Hospital drama shows). He almost tripped on a leg sticking out in
the hallway.

Opal and Kuvira were sitting, collapsed on a bench outside the room—the Airbender girl’s head was resting on the Metalbender’s shoulder. He didn’t know either of them very well, but he wondered when was the last time Kuvira had a break.

“You want me to sit with her?” the thirteen-year-old asked.

Kuvira looked up at Rohan and, recognizing his Airbender attire, gave a sad, soft smile.

“Sure... let me just... yeah... lay her down here... okay,” she said. “I’m going to go get a little bit of lunch, be back in twenty?”

“Yeah, no problem,” Rohan said.

He sat down on the end of the bench where Opal’s feet were facing and leaned back against the wall—closing his eyes and realizing just how tired he was.

Avatar Korra: Hey, are you up?

Fire Bro No. 2 (Hikaru): Yeah—heard about Jinora. I’m sorry.

Avatar Korra: I need to get drunk for a while—wanna come over?

Fire Bro No. 2: Sure, but I can’t get a hangover in the morning; I have a test tomorrow.

Avatar Korra: No problem. I just want someone to hang with so I don’t do anything stupid...

Fire Bro No. 2: Like stabbing yourself with a pair of scissors?

Avatar Korra: ... shut up...


“And I-I-I...” she sang back.

“Will always..”

“love yooouu...”

There was a knock on the door.

“Cooooommme iiiiiinnnn!” Korra slurred, not bothering to look away from Whitney Houston.
Asami Sato turned the door handle and nearly laughed when she saw the scene in front of her.

The two women were collapsed together on the couch, watching eighties music videos. Hikaru was tipped upside-down with her legs slung over the back of the couch while Korra had her head on the Firebender’s stomach.

“Hey there,” the engineer said softly.

Hikaru (with her impressive Probending abs) swung up from her upside-down position and waved excitedly.

“Heeeeyyy Asami!!” the Firebender shouted.

Korra drunkenly bit on her nails (a terribly habit that she never bothered to break), and Asami faked a laugh and shushed Hikaru— lest they wake the neighbors. She walked into the kitchen and fetched some water— carefully filling the glass without spilling a drop.

“Here you go,” she said, handing the glass to Korra and walking to the bathroom for some ibuprofen — the Avatar was going to have a wicked headache in the morning.

CRASH!!

Asami groaned and walked back into the room… Korra and Hikaru were sitting upright, looking at the puddle on the floor. The almighty Avatar, master of the Elements and protector of the people, looked up at Asami with puppy-dog eyes.

“Are you mad at me?” Korra whimpered.

This is what the Equalists are going up against? Damn, we might just win.

However, Asami shook her head and smiled.

“No, Korra, I’m not mad. Lift your feet up, and keep them on the couch. Yeah— like that. I’m going to go get a broom and a dustpan.”

Patience is a virtue.

She scooped up the pieces (thank god they lived in an apartment with wooden flooring) and threw it into a little Tupperware container— labeling it broken glass for Opal to properly dispose of when she got back. Back… from the hospital.

It was the real reason Asami had come here. Yes… yes, the Benders were— you know— Benders. But… Jinora, by all means Master Jinora, was only nineteen. And what if she died?

Not that Asami would ever default the Equalist movement.

But she felt as though she had to do something to repair the action of another. She’d come here tonight— hoping that Korra might be sober, and that Asami might spy for information about Jinora’s health. She may be a Triad-fighter, but she was not an extremist. She would fix this— Airbenders had no qualm with the Nonbenders. Yet.

“Look… equality is really important— and as the Avatar I promise I will do everything in my power to help Nonbenders and Benders live on this planet peacefully. But… violence… violence against innocent civilians doesn’t make you revolutionary. It doesn’t make you “heroes fighting for the common man”. It makes you a murderer and a terrorist.”
Yes… yes, she’d watched the video. Who hadn’t? It’d been all over the web recently— Korra’s announcement of the ‘terrorist’ attack.

Terrorist.

What… what a word.

Asami looked out the window of the apartment— at the glistening lights of Republic City. Cars beeped and honked their way through traffic lights. Cars that Asami had designed herself. Pedestrians held up little black umbrellas— making the sidewalks look like large, gray ladybugs. She liked the system of the City, and how everyone moved to and fro— like blood cells in a network of arteries. Republic City would only be a healthy body if all these cells could get the nutrients and oxygen and water they deserve.

Equilibrium in a body; equality in a city.

She turned and glared at Korra and Hikaru. Benders— the both of them. One of them sold her “witchcraft” for money— like a gladiator in the Coloseum. A Firebender; the worst kind. People like her had destroyed her house, her mother, and her life. The other… she could only be described as The Bender of All Benders. Even worse.

But… Hikaru’s mouth was slack open as she napped on one side of the couch— her socks pressing into Korra’s cheek, who snored with the ferocity of a Badgermole. Dorks, the both of them. Could the Lieutenant really contemplate murdering everyday people like them? Could Asami?

Am I a terrorist? she asked herself.

Asami had yet to kill anyone… but the plans… what the Unobtainium could do… it could change the world…

Spirits, this is only going to get worse.

Chapter End Notes

¯\_(ツ)_/¯
Chapter Summary

"I didn't think there was this much green in the whole galaxy..."

-Rey; "Star Wars: The Force Awakens"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Opal’s eyes fluttered open. There was grass beneath her, and air in her lungs. And yet neither of those things felt… real. Of course, it had nothing to do with the fact that the sky above was green and yellow. The Airbender sat up with a groan— noticing that her stomach wasn’t hurting.

Had she… had she accidentally meditated into the Spirit World? Oops?

Opal tried to sit in the Lotus Position and meditate back into the physical world. Ten minutes passed— and she began to grow frustrated. She let out a huff and stood suddenly.

A green, leafy-looking spirit waddled up to her. “You look funny— your face is all red. Is that normal for Hoo-mans?” it asked.

Opal let out a sigh and kneeled down, “No… I can’t figure it out. I don’t know why I’m here. I’ve… I’ve never been able to meditate into the Spirit World before. I guess I’m not as spiritual of an Airbender as the others want me to be.”

“Well… if it’s any consolation, you’re nicer than the other Hoo-mans who visit,” the leafy spirit said, bobbing their head up and down. “Except perhaps Ava-Tar.”

“Wait… you know Korra?”

“Yeah!” the leafy spirit said, nodding their head. “Kor-Rah is real nice!”

Opal smiled, and held her hand out. The leafy spirit nudged her fingers with both of their stubby little arms and she smiled.

A handshake. Of sorts.

“I’m Opal.”

“Hi there, Oh-Pall!”

“Um… what’s your name?”

“What?”

“What do… other Spirits call you?”

“They don’t!” the light spirit said cheerfully, swaying back and forth.
Opal slowly stood. “Oh… would you like a name?” she asked.

“Sure!”

She thought about it for a sec, and then snapped her fingers.

“I’m going to call you Aina. How does that sound?”

The leafy spirit hopped up and down and flew up to rest on Opal’s shoulder. “I like that. I like it a lot! Three cheers for Oh-Pall!”

“Pipe down over there,” the tree looming over them blurted.

“Oh shush, Ichiro,” Aina said.

“Harrumph!”

“Where are we going?” Opal asked.

“I don’t know… do you have any ideas?”

It wasn’t as though Opals “Spirit Body” conveniently carried her cellphone, too. And bending was out of the question— not that she was remotely ready for Spiritual Projection. But… perhaps there was another option…

“Hey… I don’t know how you’re doing after I called 911 for you the other day… but I need your help.”

 Barely three seconds passed before she got her response.

“OH THANK RAAVA! I’VE BEEN TRYING TO CONTACT YOU FOR DAYS!! I THINK MY BODY’S IN A COMA AND I’VE BEEN TRAPPED IN THE SPIRIT WORLD FOR GOD KNOWS HOW LONG — AND THIS ALREADY FUCKING HAPPENED ONCE WITH FUCKING UNALAQ, WHY IS IT ALWAYS ME!!?“

Opal took a breath and tried to project her thoughts.

“Woah there! You sound like my friend, Ikki. Slow down.”

There was radio silence for a few moments… moments turned into minutes… Opal wasn’t sure how much time had passed in the Spirit World— never mind the real world. She was about to give up after twenty minutes, sitting under a tree and playing with Aina in anticipation… and then;

“You know my sister Ikki?” the voice asked calmly.

Opal fell to the ground— causing Aina to go tumbling off her shoulders with a squeal. No. No, it wasn’t possible. It was just… no. It couldn’t be. She smiled— as wide as The Great Divide. She let out a laugh and picked Aina up and tossed them into the air. Twirling around with… with a sense of freedom… she looked up at the sky and sent a message, grinning from ear to ear.

“Hello… Beifong here.”

“O-Opal?!”

The voice was no longer a garbled jumble. She knew exactly who that tone belonged to. She’d spent
all too long listening to it during training and meditation and… and pining over its owner.

“Hey there… Jinora.”

“But… does that mean…”

“Yeah… I think so…”

“Oh… OH!!”

“Where are you? I wanna get us out of here,” Opal thought to her.

Jinora was currently sitting at Iroh’s tea shop— having spent the last few days (or had it been weeks? Months? Raava forbid she’d be an old lady Airbender when she woke up) casually having tea. At first she’d been afraid— she was terrified. She couldn’t get out of the Spirit World, not matter how much concentration she put into the meditation.

“This is a terrific brew— Iroh,” she said, gratefully having a sip.

“Oh thank you!” the old general merrily chuckled, “It’s my favorite recipe— perfected in Ba Sing Sei just before the Coupe. Those were some… energetic days.”

Jinora, who’d always been a fan of history, took another sip (even though she didn’t feel hunger, thirst, sleep or… you know) and leaned forwards, “Wasn’t that right about the time that Fire Lord Zuko began his… road to redemption?”

“He was certainly having doubts about his morals then, yes. It’s funny how physically altering a change in values can have in your well-being. Why, after he’d set your grandfather’s bison free, he passed out on the floor in shock!”

The spirits surrounding them laughed aloud— cackling and screeching, but Jinora paid them little mind. Finally, she had someone to talk to about her grandparents’ epic adventures— her siblings had the attention span of a Fire Ferret (no offense, Pabu).

“Hey… I don’t know how you’re doing after I called 911 for you the other day… but I need your help.”

Jinora shot out of her seat and spat her tea out all over a mini Elaphant-Koi spirit. It shook itself off and, irritated, swam away through the air. She could have just… thought her response, but instead she shouted it aloud;

“OH THANK RAAVA! I’VE BEEN TRYING TO CONTACT YOU FOR DAYS!! ITHINKMYBODY’SINACOMAANDI’VEBEENTRAPPEDINTHESPIRITWORLDFORGODKNOW — AND THIS ALREADY FUCKING HAPPENED ONCE WITH FUCKING UNALAQ, WHY IS IT ALWAYS ME!!?”

She was panting heavily, having jumped up and down— cursing at the sky… which… Airbending Masters really aren’t supposed to do… but it was true… she was always the one to be stuck in the
Spirit Comas. Just for once, couldn’t Kai or Bumi do the “getting stuck in the Spirit World for a week thing”?! 

“Woah there! You sound like my friend, Ikki. Slow down.”

Holy shit… holy shit WHAT?!? Her soulmate knew her sister? What the fuck?!

Jinora, her jaw dropped to the grass, nearly collapsed then and there. Fortunately, Iroh caught her and merrily carried her inside his tea shop, laying her down on a couch while whistling a tune (that suspiciously sounded like the Secret Tunnel song). She stared at the ceiling— contemplating what this could mean.

- She could have already met her soulmate— on multiple occasions.
- She could be friends with her soulmate.
- Her soulmate could be one of Ikki’s friends from school (though Jinora didn’t really want her soulmate to be a freshman… like… ew).
- Her soulmate was one of the baby Sky Bison that Ikki had tea with on a regular basis.

Dismissing most of the theories (except maybe the last one), Jinora thought of when she’d been shot… how long ago had it been? A year? No… only a few months, surely…. a few days… hours? Hmm… her soulmate had been quick thinking— instantly deducting where Jinora had fallen within minutes. That was some good detective skills.

She wondered if her soulmate was a girl or a boy…

After a while of sitting on Iroh’s couch and thinking— she realized that she had yet to answer the question (time was still so weird here; she might have waited a year to respond).

“You know my sister Ikki?” she asked with a small sigh.

A few moments passed.

“Hello… Beifong here.”

Jinora jumped out of the couch and nearly screamed. The voice was no longer jumbled; where she couldn’t understand what age or gender or accent her Soulmate was. No— it was the voice belonging to the one person Jinora wanted to talk to most.

“O-Opal?!”

“Hey there… Jinora.”

Jinora began laughing and gasping for air, and Iroh walked up behind her with a tea tray and thumped her on the back. There were tears sliding down from her eyes.

“But… does that mean…”

“Yeah… I think so…”

“Oh… OH!!”

Opal Beifong was her soulmate. Jinora couldn’t believe it. These feelings she had for the other Airbender— albeit only awakened recently— they were… they were meant for each other…

“Where are you? I wanna get us out of here,” Opal asked her.
Opal waited, pacing around the grass with Aina nestled in her arms (she was quickly growing fond of the little spirit). She looked up at the horizon, where a rainbow of colors made up such… such a strange environment. She wondered where Jinora was.

“I want you to think of Iroh’s Tea Shop. Very clearly in your head. Just focus on that and focus on me.”

Opal tightened her grip on Aina and took a breath. She was expecting to be lurched forwards… but… it felt as though she was on one of those horizontal escalators at an airport. Only going thousands of miles an hour. She supposed that physics didn’t really apply here— she felt no whiplash in her neck as she stood there, speeding past forests and temples and spirits.

I can’t wait to get back to the real world.

Suddenly she felt the lurch as her body shifted course and headed straight for some sort of yellow rainbow. Oh, those were the Spirit Portals.

No, no, no. I still want to go to Iroh’s Tea shop. Besides, I can’t go through those— I’m in Spirit-Body-mode.

She shifted course again.

A building was fast approaching, and before Opal knew it— she had stopped and was engulfed in the biggest hug she’d ever received. There are the hugs you give your friends, there’s the hug that you give your family, there are the hugs that you give your romantic partners. And then there was the hug that Jinora gave Opal.

Jinora smelled like lavender and… well… cleanliness. Which, Opal supposed, was appropriate for an Airbender. The Beifong girl buried her face into the younger girl’s shoulder and closed her eyes as the girls sank further and further into each other’s arms. This was… this was—

“Oi! Get a room, you two!” a frog spirit hollered from the Tea Table.

Blushing furiously, the girls broke apart. They smiled at each other and Opal felt a surge of optimism coursing through her. Whatever happened next… she was with Jinora.

“Oh shush, Lopo,” Iroh mused, pushing his way past the pair of Airbenders. “He’s just upset that nobody wants to play ‘Pin the Tail on the Tree of Time’ with him.”

Jinora showed Opal inside Iroh’s Tea Shop, and they sat down on the couch. The old Fire Nation General (who had been good friends with Opal’s grandmother) set out a tray of tea for the girls and left them in peace with a knowing smile.

“So…” Opal trailed off.

Jinora’s hand crept along the couch and she intertwined her pale fingers with the Beifong’s ivory ones. The blue arrow on the younger’s hand made the combination look even prettier.

“So…” Jinora smiled.
“It’s… it’s been three days, Kuvira… should we take her to the hospital?”

“No… whatever’s happening to her, I don’t think we should move her. Just keep her body healthy.”

Opal was laying, unconscious, in the bathtub. She’d been here for a few days—Korra trying to keep her spiritual energy flowing the way Kya had done to Jinora during Harmonic Convergence. Kuvira was sitting on the edge of the tub—stroking her sister’s hair and sadly smiling.

“She’s going to be alright— they both will.”

“How… how do you know?”

Kuvira shook her head, “I don’t know… I just have a gut feeling that wherever they are… they’re okay.”

Korra pondered this for a moment, “Perhaps I should meditate into the Spirit World and look for them?”

“No… I think they need their alone time… soulmate stuff…”

“Oh… OOOOOOOOHHHHH!”

Kuvira snorted a laugh and playfully hit Korra, “You’re the Master of the Elements, but not quite Master of Looooooovvvveeee!!”

Korra thought of her own soulmate and shook her head, “Eleven more months to go…”

Chapter End Notes

Aww!!

Next chapter... we learn something important about Unobtainium...
Chapter Summary

"You must not fight too often with one enemy, or you will teach him all your art of war."

-Napoleon Bonaparte

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Baatar Sr. and Jr. were in the workshop, inspecting the curious metal on the table. Suyin had pulled a lot of fucking strings for this, but she’d managed to import a handful for the right price. It wasn’t just the mystery of why someone would work so hard to demolish an important building for this stuff— what could it be used for? If some sort of weapon… they would have to alert the Avatar right away.

So far, the stuff looked useless. It broke apart easily, and all the chemical analyses showed that it hardly reacted with anything. They’d spent all day in the Palace workshop (designed by the both of them), poking and prodding the Unobtainium for its secrets.

“Sirs… lunch is ready; shall I bring it to you?” a servant politely asked.

“Yes, please, that would be wonderful,” Sr. answered without looking up from the table. “Would you mind fetching Matriarch Su as well?”

“Yes, of course.”

The servant bowed and walked away with a hum.

“So… what are you going to tell Mom?” Jr. curiously asked.

“That I don’t have a damn clue what good this stuff is. You can’t make weapons out of it, it’s too brittle— too fragile. And what good is it for anything else? Not reactive, not pretty. You couldn’t make a bomb with it and you can’t sell it to make a profit as jewelry. I don’t know what to think of this…”

Suyin walked in and handed her husband and son some plates with lunch and a couple of water bottles, “Working hard, boys?”

Jr. graciously accepted the food, “We have no idea what we’re doing.”

Suyin frowned, “Kuvira wouldn’t ask you to look into this if it wasn’t important.”

Jr. averted his eyes. He knew that this was as much a distraction for her as it was for the father and son. They’d received word from Kuvira a few days ago that, while perfectly healthy, Opal was likely trapped in the Spirit World. Korra was watching over her body— but how can a brother not be worried?

Suyin straightened up a little, “Do you both feel that?”
“Feel what?”

“The metal! I feel… different.”

Baatar Sr. raised an eyebrow in confusion, “What do you mean?”

Su shook her head, “I don’t know.”

Jr. had an idea.

“Mom… try bending the metal.”

Suyin Beifong, one of the best Metalbenders in the world, raised her hand and tried to manipulate the little handful of rare ore on the table. Nothing happened. Frustrated, she moved into a proper Earthbending stance and took a deep breath— trying again. She looked a little silly waving her hands around with no effect.

“Try moving the other metal objects in the room,” Sr. observed.

Suyin took a breath and focused on a pair of scissors and tried to move them from the desk they were resting on. Nothing happened. The Matriarch’s eyes widened. She motioned for the pair of men to follow her outside the room. The walked up to a metal decoration and Su took another breath. Holding her hand up— the decoration floated easily off the wall.

“Strange. Go back into the Workshop, dear.”

She walked back in and frowned, immediately feeling a change. Su raised her hand, but none of the metal in the room— metal she had shaped and molded herself to build this city— none of it moved.

The Unobtainium prevented her from Bending.

“Impossible…”

“No wonder we didn’t notice anything special,” Baatar Jr. joked to his dad. “It’s not like we were noticing a change in our nonexistent Bending.”

Suyin looked at her husband and son with concern, “There’s only one group of people who would be after a material with this kind of unique property.”

“Mommy?”

“Yes, sweetie?” Yasuko asked, picking her daughter up and setting her in her lap.

“We learned about… about… eye color! In school, today!”

“Oh, that’s so interesting! Tell me more!” the mother said sweetly, kissing the top of the toddler’s head.

The five-year-old began singing a song,
“Water Tribe kids have blue eyes
Just like Republic Cities blue skies
And here to blow the clouds away
Air Nomads eyes are gray!
Fire Nation eyes are amber,
Cause they like to use proper grammar!
Earth Kingdom eyes are green,
And the Avatar’s eyes shine and gleam!”

Yasuko laughed and clapped, “Bravo! Bravatismo!”
The girl looked up at her mother’s amber eyes.
“Mommy?”
“Yes, Asami?”
“If you’re Fire Nation… and Daddy’s Fire Nation…”
The child didn’t notice Yasuko tensing up.
“… then why are my eyes green?”
“Well, you see, I’m half Earth Kingdom. My mother was from—“
“Dinner’s ready!” Hiroshi called, popping through the doorway wearing a Dad’s the Best apron. It was Rogan-Josh Curry Night (Asami’s favorite day of the month). The toddler hopped off of her mommy’s lap and ran into the kitchen, squealing with joy.

Yasuko sighed. It was going to be a story for another day.

Underneath the mask, Asami grinned from ear to ear. Finally.

“Ai, Jiang, are you in position?” she asked, speaking into the microphone taped to her neck.
“Yeah, Boss. Say when.”
“Go ahead and take them out.”

She signaled for her group to follow her, weaving through the tunnels that ran under the city. A week ago, they discovered a hidden metal door in the sewers. Sawing it open, they realized that the tunnel ran directly under the Art Museum. They could get a bucketful of the ore before dawn and begin prototypes on the Sato’s newest design.
Above ground— in the Museum, Ai and Jiang waited patiently. Sure enough, a pair of security guards walked around the corner of the hallway. If they weren’t taken care of, they would hear the jackhammers below the foundation— drilling through the rock.

Jiang took a step.

“Who’s there?” the new guy asked.

“It’s just an echo— this place has incredible acoustics,” the senior security guard said casually.

Jab! Jab! Jab!

Jiang took out the older guard with a series of Chi Blocking hits.

“What the fuc—“

Jab! Jab! Jab!

The new guy fell to the floor, the cold linoleum pressed against his cheek being the last thing he remembered.

“And that’s the other one,” Ai said, the woman smirking underneath her Equalist mask.

The two infiltrators dragged the bodies to a storage closet in an office— pushing a desk against the door. Not that the two of them would be awake anytime soon. Fortunately, the other security guards were on the second and third floors, where the drilling couldn’t be heard.

“Red Leader, targets have been secured, you are good to dig,” Jiang said into his hidden mouthpiece.

Asami let out a chuckle and motioned for the team to begin drilling. They had to be careful not to dig into the basement, but at least they could get a handful of the stuff for testing.

Korra was sitting in the chair made of her textbooks and Jinora’s two-foot-tall dresser for a desk, making a copy of her Calculus homework for Opal— though the teacher had already excused the Airbender’s absence, Korra didn’t want her falling behind.

“You know, you don’t have to stay 24/7,” Kya said sadly. “If she wakes up, I’ll text you.”

They’d moved Opal to Air Temple Island yesterday, when Kya had texted Korra that a ship had arrived from the North Pole with some spirit water— a gift from Eska and Desna. Seeing as it would do a better job— and require less effort than regular water— they went ahead and moved her. Plus, Kya and Korra could swap shifts, along with some of the Waterbending White Lotus guards stationed on the island.

“I… I just want to be there for her. I love her like a sister. Jinora too. And, thank you for helping me,” Korra mumbled, looking up from the makeshift desk.

“No problem, kid. All of us… what we’ve been through… we’re a family now.”
“Incredible,” Hiroshi said, leaning back in his chair and inspecting a piece of the Unobtainium, “And no one saw you?”

“Not a soul, though the news says that the security guards were found locked in a closet— strangely none of their precious art was stolen…” Asami said with a smirk.

Hiroshi laughed, “Not to worry, they can keep their trinkets, the Unobtainium is the real price. Good work, ‘sami.”

He stood and walked around the desk— engulfing his daughter in a large hug. The heiress let out a huge breath and sank into her father’s arms. It almost felt right. Almost. Asami excused herself and walked down the staircase to her personal workshop. Sitting down on her little red stool, she closed her eyes and pinched the bridge of her nose with a frown.

What was she going to do about the Jinora situation? They were supposed to be targeting the Triads right now… all of the other Benders would be dealt with in time… and if she wanted to keep up appearances… perhaps she out to give the girl a… a token of apology? Yes… when the Airbender woke up from… whatever “coma” she was in…

A pencil rolled off the desk, snapping Asami out of her train of thought.

Right. Back to the objective at hand.

Asami slid the box of Unobtainium that she’d recovered last night over to her table and pulled out her prototype plans to examine them. She let out a large yawn and reached for her cup of coffee as she looked over the design.

Yes… this would work against Benders rather effectively…

It would be most useful during Triad raids, though she could picture using it for… political confrontations. Certainly not up close— no, they would still need their specialized hand-to-hand combat and their electric gloves. But… they could turn the tides with this… if her prototype was successful. Unfortunately, she would have to test it in the field. On a Bender.

“Can I ask you something?” the voice asked.

Asami smiled. She was beginning to learn how much of a total dork her soulmate was— she couldn’t wait to meet him.

“Sure, what’s grinding your gears?”

“Well… since we’re not going to be meeting for another eleven months… I was wondering if I could have your permission… to ask this really cute girl out?”

Total dork! Asami couldn’t help but laugh, nearly dropping her pencil from shaking with giggles.

“Of course! You’re a free person! Besides, I know she’s not going to actually keep my man in the end!”

There was silence for a few moments, and Asami wondered if she’d said something wrong. Oh, what if she was being too unrestricted? Maybe it had been a test from her soulmate? Oh, jeez… she didn’t want to start off on the wrong foot…
“Uh… well… I don’t mean to surprise you too much… but I’m a girl.”

“Oh!! I’m so… sorry…”

Asami leaned forwards and put her head in her hands. Fuck! How embarrassing was it to assume?! Great job, Sato— you’ve just made things totally awkward. She… she hadn’t even contemplated that her soulmate could be… female. It’s not like she’d never felt attracted to other women… but she always assumed that men were more her thing.

“But we know so little about each other! Like, I don’t even know your name…”

Asami hesitated. What if her soulmate was weirded out at the name “Sato” and thought the engineer was just some prissy, rich girl? Or… or what if the Neo Equalists were somehow revealed? She didn’t want to meet her soulmate to know she was a… well… technically… a criminal. A virtuous criminal (from her point of view)—but still breaking the law, nonetheless. She wanted to wait until the date— stall her soulmate as long as she could from learning the truth.

“I’d like to remain anonymous, if that’s okay with you. I just… identity is something that… I guess you could say I struggle with it a little.”

That much was true.

“I totally understand!” her soulmate said, “If you knew who I was, you’d freak!”

Asami pondered if her soulmate was perhaps a mover celebrity or a politician.

“I’d better get back to… well, I’m helping out a friend… sort of.” her soulmate thought to her.

“It’s alright, I’ll see you later! Oh… you know what I mean!”

“Smooth talking, sweetheart.”

Asami turned back to her work, smiling widely. She was starting to like her soulmate a lot.
Chapter Summary

"When you find yourself craving connection with another, look inside and check whether you haven't in fact disconnected from yourself."

Sidonie Bouchet

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

By Iroh’s suggestion, they had decided to approach the Tree of Time. The soft glow of the nearing Spirit Portals shone down on the two girls— and the more that Opal looked, the more she couldn’t help but notice how pretty the yellow-green light looked illuminating Jinora’s hair. Aina shifted their weight on Opal’s shoulder and snuggled themselves into the side of her neck.

They climbed up to the hollow trunk that was once Vaatu’s prison. Out of the corner of her eyes, Opal saw Jinora take an anxious breath.

“You okay?”

“Bad memories. I was trapped in the Spirit World before— but under horrible conditions.”

“Oh… maybe there’s another way out of the Spirit W—“

“No. No… I need to get it out of my head.”

“Okay.”

In that moment, Opal knew that it was probably inappropriate to show PDA in… the most “Spirity Place of Spirits in Spirity Spirit Land” … but sometimes people really need the affection.

So, in the hollowed out trunk of the Tree of Time, Opal lifted Aina off her shoulder and set them down, and then cupped Jinora’s cheek and kissed her on the forehead. And then, ever so slowly, she lowered her lips to the other girl’s. It was a slow and pressing kiss— not perfect and not terrible. It was… it simply was… and Opal wouldn’t have it any other way.

“We’ll make it through this,” she murmured, her lips still against Jinora’s shocked mouth.

“If you insist,” the Airbending Master said shyly (though there was a smile peeking through).

“Enough of that silly rubbish!” a voice to the left of them chided.

Startled, the pair jumped apart.

A girl, perhaps Kuvira’s age, was sitting on the edge of the entrance to the Tree— cross-legged and leaning back a little in amusement. She had short brown hair (a lot messier than Korra’s) and a horizontal pink scar on her cheek (under her right eye). Her irises were stormy gray.

But what was most intriguing about her… were her yellow and orange robes— and a blue arrow on
her forehead. The pattern of her Air Nomad tattoos were… of the ancient style. Intricate and beautiful and unlike anything Opal had ever seen in the little literature that had survived the Hundred Year War.

“Who are you?” Jinora asked curiously. Surely there weren’t any other Airbending Masters in the world besides her and her father.

“Samsara,” the girl said, casually playing with Aina’s leafy ears.

Opal looked at Jinora, whose eyes widened in excitement.

“But that means…” the younger girl trailed off.

Samsara let out a hearty laugh, “Of course! I am the successor of Avatar Wan—first Air Nomad Avatar. Let me tell you, it was a nasty shock when I first bent water and accidentally pulled my brother into a lake! Or when I buried myself into a hole because I’d stomped my foot too hard on the ground! Or the time I accidentally burned down my village’s public garden! Mind you, Wan did a lot for mankind, but it’s not like everyone in the world was expecting another Avatar— I had my work cut out for me!”

“You’re Avatar Samsara!? The second Avatar!!”

The sitting girl raised an eyebrow, “Yes… that’s what I just said.”

Opal raised a finger, “I thought Korra’s past lives were destroyed.”

“No, no, no, no, no! Avatar Korra’s connection to her past lives—including me—were destroyed. But she pulled Raava out of UnaVaatu, and we’re a part of Raava too. Since our souls were neither human nor spirit… we all kinda just… reformed… and were released out into the Spirit World. But before that happened, I got to see some of the shenanigans she pulled! Man, she’s hilarious! And all that pro-sports stuff—“

“Probending,” Jinora corrected.

“— I wish I got to have all that! Instead, now I just kinda… wander around the Spirit World. In fact, if you were to look hard enough, there’s 10,000 years’ worth of Avatars walking around out here! Pretty sure when Kuruk’s spirit reformed after the recent Harmonic Convergence, he just went right back to lookin’ for Koh. And I think Kyoshi’s out in some bamboo forest with a Panda Spirit, practicing her pretentious fan stuff (or whatever it is she does). The rest of us… we’re… well… we’re not sure what to do with ourselves.”

“What happens to normal people when they die?”

“How should I know? I’m not a normal person. I was technically Korra… but when that ‘Una-loser’ guy brought back Vaatu and broke the connection… I just kinda… wound up here.”

“So how come Korra can’t come to the Spirit World and talk to you?”

“We’ve all tried. After she was poisoned by ‘Za-freak’, she spent a lot of time coming in here to connect with Raava. I was waving my hand in front of her face and shouting at her and everything. But she couldn’t see nor hear me. I don’t know… I guess all the Avatars are just kinda… ghosts now.”

“Can we help you somehow?”
Samsara broke into a smile, “I don’t know what you can do, but I’d love some new friends.”

By sheer luck, Aang and Roku had stumbled into each other during Harmonic Convergance—spending most of their days together now as they learned news of the world from the Spirits that could come and go freely.

“Isn’t it wonderful?” Aang asked Roku, moving a Pai Sho tile forwards.

“What? That Avatar Korra opened the portals? It certainly seems… strategic.”

Roku moved a tile and Aang looked past the rolling hills of pink grass. All in all, it wasn’t the worst afterlife. He couldn’t help but worry about Korra—as a predecessor does. Roku didn’t seem to mind too much—so long as the Fire Nation was at peace once again, he’d felt as though his legacy had been fulfilled. But Aang worried for Republic City.

“You’ve heard the news, about the Neo Equalists?”

“Yes, silly bunch—those buffoons. Nothing a good dragon couldn’t take care of.”

“You sound just like Kyoshi,” Aang huffed.

“Where do you think I got it from, lad?”

The Air Nomad war hero moved a tile, “I believe that’s three points for me.”

Roku leaned forwards, “That’s not a legal tile.”

“Yes it is, the White Lotus tile. Your great-grandson taught it to me.”

“Oh, yes. And how is Zuko doing these days?”

“Enjoying retirement, as far as I know. His grandson Iroh is quite the handsome devil, it’s a wonder Korra didn’t chase him too.”

“You kids and your hormones.”

“Says the guy who married the first girl he laid eyes on.”

“So did you!”

“Where do you think I got it from, gramps?”

Roku let out a puff of fire in annoyance, though it’s not like it could harm Aang—they were little more than ghosts.

The sounds of footsteps grew closer, and Aang’s heart fell. It was probably Korra, and as much as he’d tried to talk to her—she simply didn’t have the connection anymore. He looked up from his Pai Sho game with Roku and his brow furrowed in confusion.

Approaching him was Avatar Samsara—who he’d met on multiple occasions during his past life; for
when he’d been rebuilding the Air Nation, he wanted to interview and record as much as he could. Next to her were two other Airbenders— living, as far as he could tell. The two girls were holding hands and looking right at him, as though… they… could see him…

One of the girls was tall, with dark skin and short black hair. Aang was surprised, for she was an Airbender with green eyes— oh! Of course! A Spirit had informed them a few years ago that new Airbenders were popping up all over the world after Harmonic Convergence. He’d been too distracted with his new afterlife to notice. She looked a little like Lin and Suyin had as kids.

The other girl… looked… like… like…

“Grandpa Aang?” the shorter girl asked.

“Jinora… it’s so wonderful to finally meet you!”

“I can’t believe that you earned your tattoos at such a young age,” Aang said proudly.

Jinora blushed. Aang had earned his tattoos at twelve, making him the youngest Airbending Master in history— until after the Red Lotus attack when Jinora earned hers at eleven.

Aang put his hand on her shoulder, and even though he was part-ghost… she still felt a warm presence of a hand, which she covered with her own. The yellow-green sky of the Spirit World seemed to glow a little brighter.

“I couldn’t help but notice… that girl with you… is she a Beifong?”

Jinora laughed, “She’s Suyin’s daughter, Opal.”

“She’s a striking image of her mother, and I see a little of Toph in her as well.”

“She’s certainly as stubborn.”

Aang laughed, and then leaned down to whisper in her ear, “Well, if she’s got her Aunt Lin’s temper, I can only hope that you have better success than your father.”

Jinora blushed again, far more profusely this time. She took his advice to heart, though. When Tenzin and Aunt Lin had broken up, apparently Katara had to call Toph in to fix the foundation of Air Temple Island. You don’t mess with Beifong girls.

“So… what brings you to our humble, uh, home?” Aang asked curiously.

Jinora scratched her head in embarrassment and looked at Opal, who was currently having a conversation about dragons with Roku.

“Well… we can’t seem to find our way out of the Spirit World.”

Aang chuckled, “Well, that makes two of us.”

Jinora looked down and scuffed the grass with her feet. A face popped out of the ground and scowled.
“You stop that! Bad enough that I have to taste your sneakers all the time, and now you’re literally rubbing it in my face?!”

Jinora jumped back a little, “Sorry.”

Aang waved the Spirit off, “Don’t be, it seems I can’t find a decent place to sit without it being another living entity. I’m jealous of the Avatar who studied under Laghima and learned the method of flight.”

Jinora looked up at her grandfather, “So… you don’t know if there’s a way out of here for Opal and I?”

Aang scratched his beard in thought, “Hmm… I’ve rarely used it… but I wonder if Energy Bending might solve your problem?”

“But we can’t Energy Bend.”

“You can’t, but I can.”

“How can you bend? No offense… but your… you know…”

“You can say it, I died. Life goes on, Jinora. And… I’m not quite sure how, but we still have… a fragment of what our bending once was. I wonder…”

Aang walked over to Samsara, who was currently sitting on the ground, playing with Aina. She looked up at him with a kind smile.

“Did you ever learn Energy Bending?”

“Did I— DID I LEARN ENERGY BENDING?! I lived when all the Lion Turtles still roamed the Earth, of course I know Energy Bending! I was the first Avatar to learn it!”

Roku and Opal broke into fits of laughter, and Aang looked away sheepishly. Jinora decided that she liked Samsara.

“I think… perhaps… if all three of us were to Energy Bend these two… we might be able to send them back to the Mortal World.”

Roku stood up from the Pai Sho table and brushed his pants off (though, seeing as they were ghosts — it wasn’t as through he actually had dust on his robes).

“Well, it’s worth a shot,” the old Firebender said, walking over to the trio. Opal followed him.

The three Avatars surrounded the girls in a triangle, closing their eyes and focusing their breath. They began moving around the girls— unanimously, as though they were dancing. A golden light began whirling around Opal and Jinora. The two Airbender girls silently held hands (an unspoken agreement).

The last thing Jinora saw was a bright light— and… a little off in the distance… a blue Spirit that looked like a kite floating around the three former Avatars; she was slightly transparent and fading away though. As if she was following Opal and Jinora back into the real world.

Chapter End Notes
Okay... to be fair... it was Korra's "connection" with her past lives... right? I mean, Aang was able to talk to Tenzin in the Fog of Lost Souls without Korra... so I'm taking that as the Avatars are still their own person, just that Korra can't connect with them. To make up for it-- I made them weaker. I've come up with a new JinOpal arc centered around this, so bear with me.

Also, I have a headcannon that the second-ever-Avatar was really confused because, like, nobody was there to explain to her that she could magically bend four elements and her eyes would sometimes glow white and shit would get rekt. If you were that scared and confused... you'd probably be really freakin sassy like Samsara, so I'm going to enjoy including her in the story :D
Supergirl

Chapter Summary

Deception may give us what we want in the present, but it will always take it away in the end.

-Rachel Hawthorne

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Rohan heard a cough from the other side of the room and looked up— only to see that his sister was awake with a smile on her face. He scrambled off the couch (pushing his brother and sister off of him in the process) and rushed to his oldest sibling’s bedside.

“Hey there, shrimp,” Jinora said.

Rohan didn’t know what to say, but he let out a small sigh and pressed his forehead against Jinora’s. He was the calmer brother, and was closest with his older sister.

“I love you,” he murmured, tilting his head up and kissing her forehead with his eyes closed.

Jinora chuckled quietly, “I love you, too.”

She reached out and grabbed his wrist and held it in both her hands.

“How’s the stomach?” Rohan asked, moving to sit in the stool next to her hospital bed.

“Hurts,” Jinora said nonchalantly. “I suppose that’s a good sign, though.”

“You gave Mom a few more gray hairs, you know.”

And then they were both hugging and laughing— waking up the rest of their family. Jinora couldn’t be happier.

Kuvira rolled off the bench she’d been napping at on Air Temple Island when she heard Korra scream. She readied a Metalbending stance and prepared to have to fight off Neo Equalists or Dark Spirits or Red Lotus assassins.

But she didn’t expect to see a yellow mass slamming into her.

“NO AIRBENDING IN THE HALLWAYS!” an Acolyte yelled.

“Oh stuff it!” Opal shouted back.
Kuvira was crying. This great, Metalbending warrior was reduced to tears, sobbing into her sister’s shoulder.

“Don’t you ever fucking scare me like that again,” the Captain whispered.

Kuvira squeezed tighter and Opal let out a groan, “Watch the stomach, it’s still sore.”

“So… you figured it out? Who your… you know…”

“Yeah,” Opal whispered, and Kuvira saw a glint in her eye.

Just then, Korra walked up and engulfed both of them in a hug—picking the sisters up off the ground and spinning around using her Airbending.

“Ow! Watch it Avatar!” Kuvira grumbled as her head hit the wooden ceiling.

“What did I just tell you?!? Take it outside!!” the same Acolyte ordered.

They excitedly ran out into the courtyard.

“So if you’re awake… then that means…” Korra trailed off.

“Yeah, she should be too,” Opal whispered happily.

“Well, by Raava, let’s go see her!”

They ran to the shed with the gliders and grabbed a pair of staves enthusiastically. Springing the gliders open, Korra and Opal looked at each other, and then at Kuvira mischievously.

“Hang on now, what are you going to—“

The duo ran at the Metalbender with a swiftness that only Airbenders possess. Grabbing her underneath the arms, they both shot a gust of air and up the trio soared.

“No, no, no! I have a fear of—
HHHHHHHHHHHHHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHH!

The trio flew to the hospital, with poor Kuvira screaming the whole way.

“Medically speaking, you healed exceptionally quickly,” Doctor Kang said with a smile, as a nurse took a blood sample.

“Just relax your arm… yes, like that…”

“We think, if you’re feeling up to it, you should be ready to walk today. Only if you have the energy for it, though.”

Tenzin and Pema helped Jinora sit upright and slowly move to the edge of the bed.

“Feeling alright so far?”
“Uh, a little pain, but I can handle it.”

Jinora steadily rose from her seat and straightened out her hospital gown. She couldn’t wait to get back into a pair of jeans and a tank-top. Her hair was also a rat’s nest— she really wanted a shower.

“Well, it’s alright if you want to go slower— you took quite the hit.”

Jinora moved around for another fifteen minutes, and then asked her family if she could be alone for a bit. She walked to the bathroom (each step growing more and more steady), and stripped her clothes off. The hot water of the shower felt amazing, and even though there wasn’t any soap or shampoo, she felt loads better with a stream of water running through her hair.

Someone, probably her mother, had left a towel on the wooden bench in the bathroom, along with a fresh change of clothes. No doubt they’d been spending a lot of time here— her dad’s razor kit was here along with Ikki, Rohan, and Meelo’s toothbrushes. Jinora looked at herself in the mirror. There was a bruise on her chin, a mixture of purple and yellow, from when she’d crashed into the building after being shot. She pushed on the soap dispenser and washed her face a second time. There’s nothing an Airbender likes more than being clean. Looking at the foggy mirror, and then at her father’s razor kit… she thought it might be time for a change of style…


Avatar Korra: Hey… I was wondering if you would like to go out sometime?

A few minutes passed (the message said “Read 1:51 pm” on it, so Korra knew the engineer was thinking about it).

Asami Sato: Sure, where do you have in mind, and when?

The Water Tribe girl let out a whoop as they walked through the hallway of the hospital— Kuvira raised an eyebrow at her and a nurse put a finger to her lips.

Avatar Korra: Have you ever been inside the Art Museum?

Asami Sato: … not quite… I wouldn’t mind seeing the layout of the building— and, you know, the art too.

Avatar Korra: lol, it’s okay— I really love the architecture too! Saturday afternoon? There’s a new pottery exhibit from the Earth Nation!

Asami Sato: Alright Bandit, it’s an… outing.

Avatar Korra: I don’t have the burn marks anymore!!! Ugh, whatever… see ya later, Widget.
Opal, with clearance from the nurse, took a deep breath and knocked on the door. She heard a muffled “come in!” and hesitantly pushed the door open.

“Hey!” Jinora said, her face brightening up like Glacier Spirit Festival fireworks.

“Hey… You shaved your hair off??”

“I… Samsara had me thinking of the ancient Air Nomads… I thought, as a Master, I didn’t want to hide my Tattoos under my hair— I’m proud of them.”

“I’m proud of them, too. And you’re rocking the look.”

The two girls embraced, alone in the room (for Korra and Kuvira had the kindness to wait out in the hallway). Grips tightened and sighs were let out of lungs that had missed their owners for a number of days. Butterflies swarmed in a tornado in Opal’s stomach, but she repressed them as she moved from the embrace.

“It wasn’t a dream— right?” Jinora asked, a hint of worry on her face.

Opal smiled softly and kissed Jinora, right then and there.

The younger Airbender’s lips tasted sweet and felt as soft as the silk robes Opal used to wear in Zaofu, and when Jinora took the lead and swiped her tongue between the Beifong’s teeth, Opal realized something. She realized that this was real— that the body she was holding was not a soul pulled into a world where physics didn’t make sense. The body pressing against her was soft and demanding and full of life.

So she eagerly pulled Jinora up by her thighs until the younger Airbender’s nimble legs were wrapped around her waist and their abdomens pressed as tightly together as possible. Opal felt an aching in her stomach, and for a moment she paused. Was Jinora still in a lot of pain? Was this too much? The younger answered that question with a growl as she gripped Opal’s hair tightly, smashing their lips together in excitement and intensity.

They were no longer the kids they had once been, and as a familiar, longing hunger grew within Opal, she couldn’t help but wonder if Jinora was thinking about—

“I thought Airbenders took an oath of nonviolence,” a familiar voice chuckled from the doorway. “It’s lookin a little—”

“Ix nay!”

Korra nudged Kuvira in the elbow and cleared her throat to politely announce their presence. Opal and Jinora broke off their kiss, and the Beifong leaned her forehead against her soulmate’s.

“Kuvira… you have three seconds to scram before I break that oath,” Opal threatened.

The Metalbender, having grown up with the… cantankerous… girl, let out an “oof!” in fear and quickly rushed from the scene (likely going to wait outside). Opal set Jinora down with a smile and turned to Korra, who looked a little frightened herself.

“Sisters,” Opal said, jokingly rolling her eyes.
“Uh-huh… it’s good to see you, Jinora!”

The Airbending Master slowly (but steadily) walked over to the Avatar and gave her a strong hug, which spoke thousands of words in its own way.

Asami gripped the rail as the ferry sailed its course through Yue Bay. She took in a deep breath and let it out slowly.

_In… one… two… three… out… one… two… three…_

She adjusted the parcel tucked under her arm so that sharp edges of the cardboard wouldn’t stick into her ribs so much and continued to breathe in and out at a snail’s pace. And though the breathing and the way the cold mist washed over the deck of the boat and onto her face were slightly calming, she still felt the familiar, unpleasant lurching in her heart of an anxiety attack.

She sat down on the stair steps that led up to the helmsman’s position—staring out at the ever-nearing sight of Air Temple Island.

What am I thinking? she asked herself, these are Benders, for crying out loud! If the Lieutenant or Dad knew I was here…

She shuddered at the thought. No, they were not to know of this— she was coming as... as a diplomat… yes… she could live with that notion…

Asami looked down at the package and frowned. The tinkerer had spent all week mathematically calculating and designing it with all too much energy. She’d spent all last night making it just right—and though the thought of its purpose disgusted her… she owed it to the kid. And besides… it was flawless engineering. Even her father would agree.

So, when she stepped off the dock, Asami Sato put on her mawkish, nauseating face and reminded herself to use honeyed words—tone of voice reserved for making deals with slimy executives and politicians. In that moment, she went from a scientist—semi-exhilarated about her newest invention—to the world’s preeminent stage actor…ready to be worthy of rivaling the character Iago in deception.

Knocking on the door to Jinora’s door, the heiress’s expression faltered for a moment when, instead of the Master Airbender, she was suddenly face-to-face with Opal Beifong. The girl’s hair was messy and her jacket was askew, her lips slightly parted—Asami didn’t need private eye expertise to ponder that what they’d been doing in there transpired the boundaries of...mere friendship.

“Good day, Opal… is Jinora around?” the engineer teased.

“Oh, uh, one second!”

The door shut and Asami repressed a smirk. Teenagers first… Benders second.

“Hey there… Asami… w-what can I help you with?” Jinora stammered out as she closed the door behind her, the lass’s face as pink as a Valentine’s Day card. The girl had shaved off all of her hair—which only pronounced the red tinge at the tips of her ears.

“I have a gift for you,” Asami said, overenthusiastically pushing the package into the younger girl’s
“A gift?” Opal said skeptically. To be fair— Asami and Jinora weren’t inseparable friends; they’d only hung out… what… three or four times?

“It’s a late ‘get-better-soon’ present,” the heiress said, flashing a forced grin. *It’s actually a “I’m-sorry-that-my-Equalists-shot-you-with-a-steel-bolt-I-designed-myself” present,* a voice in the back of her mind whispered.

Asami took a deep breath and ignored the thought as she watched Jinora curiously open the package. An outfit fell out into the younger girl’s hands— red and silver and gold all sewn together by Asami’s hands themselves.

Opal took the cardboard shell out of Jinora’s hands as she held the fabric up in the sunlight. It became clear, by the way that the Airbending Master’s eyes grew wider and wider by the second, that she was recognizing what these robes were.

“It’s what I call a ‘Glider Suit,’” Asami explained, the engineer within her beginning to speak, “It acts the same way as your old staff would, except more of an extension of yourself… I would assume you… manipulate the air currents around you? I’m not sure what it is you… do… but this should be ready to test! Er— when you feel healthy, of course.”

Jinora let out a laugh and rushed forwards, enveloping Asami in a hug. The Nonbender squirmed a little, but the other girl didn’t notice.

“Thank you!! Thank you so much!”

“Yes, well… I hope it’s the right size… you should probably test it over the water… you know… in case something happened… not that I didn’t design it well!” Asami blurted, putting her hands up to clarify. “But— it is the first prototype, so be careful. Let me know how it goes— if anythings wrong send it back and I’ll keep repairing it until we get you a working suit.”

“I can’t believe it. Opal, I get to be Supergirl!”

Asami bid them farewell and walked down the marble steps of Air Temple Island to the ferry. The engineer in her was squirming, desperately wishing to stay and watch Jinora test her new Glider Suit. But the Equalist inside her heart was fiercely roaring— commanding all thoughts aside. It would sicken Asami too much to stand there, idly watching Bending. And besides… there were important tasks to do.

Still… as she leaned against the rail of the departing ferry, she heard an energetic yell and turned her head to the beach of the island— her heart fluttered as she saw a small, triangular shape take off and climb through the sky.

Like a soul free of all worries and troubles and pains.

Chapter End Notes

aaahhhhh she's so crafty and sinister I LOVE IT!!

My Tumblah:
https://www.tumblr.com/blog/ziraseal

LEAVE COMMENTS PLS
Hello, Tesmaa

Chapter Summary

"We do not follow maps to buried treasure, and 'X' never marks the spot."

-Indiana Jones

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

There was an abundance of Museum goers today— likely people who wanted to get one last glance before they had the city-wide poll and the building was shut down. People like Korra.

A sharp click resonated through the acoustic halls as Asami strode through, glancing up at the paintings hanging on the walls or down at the porcelain vases. The art in here was thousands of years old. It looked at peace— at home in this building.

Well, Future Industries offered to fucking build you a new and improved building for free! Just take the deal and move on with your lives! Asami thought with a frown.

As she looked at a painting of the Air Nomad genocide, she let out a small huff. Benders, always out to destroy each other. Asami couldn’t wait to test her prototype and make the playing field more equal. And yet here she was, on a date with The Bendiest Bender to Ever Bend. She stifled a groan, and continued walking down the halls.

“Oooh, look at this sculpture!” Korra pointed cheerfully.

It was a statue of some Airbending Avatar from way back when; a girl with messy short hair and a scar under her cheek. The plaque read “Thought to be the only visual representation of Avatar Samsara. Born roughly around 9783 B.G.”

“I always loved the look of the ancient tattoos,” Korra said, bowing in front of the sculpture.

“Why’d you bow?”

“Well, I can’t exactly call her up and tell her she’s looking good.”

“I thought you’re a reincarnation of her… a little narcissistic, don’t you think?”

“Sure, fine— look at this statue of me, Asami. Don’t I look cute?”

The engineer playfully rolled her eyes and continued down the hallway.

Hikaru pushed the door to the warehouse open, and motioned for the other two members of her
probending team to follow. The cautiously walked into the empty building and stood in the middle.

“H-hello?” she called out.

“So… you want to be heroes?” a boy’s voice called down from the rafters.

“We want to stop the Neo Equalists from bullying everyone and pushing people around!” Mula, her team’s Earthbender declared.

A boy used a pair of water tendrils to swing down from the rafters of the warehouse and stopped in front of them. He had dark Water Tribe skin, but his hair was dyed red. He had the same kind of smirk that Korra often had on her face.

“My name’s Tesmaa,” the boy said, extending a hand out to Hikaru, “I’m leading a coalition of Benders to help combat the Equa-losers.”

He turned around and whistled. Thirty people slipped out from crevices and cracks and all sorts of hiding places in the warehouse. All three elements were here (though it would be cool if a rouge Airbender showed up, Hikaru thought), mingling and mixing among themselves.

“It’s alright, they aren’t cops!”

“Of course they’re not cops,” a sassy girl’s voice echoed through the empty building. “They’re the Probenders from Ba Sing Se! Listen to a radio once in a while, Tesmaa!”

The red-haired boy rolled his eyes and gave the team a grin, “That’s our good ‘ol Earthbender, Bao.”

“So where do we begin?” Mula asked excitedly.

“We have a plan to advertise ourselves as a new Triad. We’ll stage a raid in a week and a handful of us will lead them through a chase until we corner them and ambush them in a back alley on Third Street.”

“Wait, are you meaning you’re going to kill?”

“What? No! No, we’re going to rough ‘em up a little and show them that they don’t own the city!” a Firebender called out from the group. The other kids cheered.

“How old are you?” Hikaru asked Tesmaa.

“Nineteen.”

She turned to her team, “Oh great, he’s nineteen.”

Her teammate, Eun—who was of half Earth Nation and half Water Tribe descent (but still born a Waterbender)—rolled her bright green eyes, “It’ll be alright.”

Twenty-Five Years Ago:
“So,” the twenty-three-year-old girl said, flopping on the hotel bed, “What’s on the agenda for today?”

Her sister, five years older than her, jumped on top of her with a laugh and gave her a nuggie, while her mom only smiled and continued wiping her make-up off by the sink.

“We’re going to the Temple of Jiao-Long, along the Eastern River,” her mom casually commented, glancing down at the map. She was getting a little old for this.

“What’s there?”

“Should be some ancient Air Nomad artifacts,” her mom replied. “Avatar Aang and his son will be happy to see these!”

The younger girl, who was trying to escape her older sister’s grip, let out a grunt as she rolled off the side of the bed. Screaming something along the lines of “uncle!”, her sister finally relented with a laugh.

They took an ostrich-horse carriage to the site of the temple, where a guide was anxiously waiting for him, bobbing up and down on the soles of his feet.

“Hello there!” he said, excitedly shaking the mother’s hand. “My name’s Qiang! I’m your guide through the temple!”

“Ah yes… are you Fire Nation?”

“Descended from the Colonists, yes.”

Her older sister nudged her in the ribs, “He’s kinda cute.”

The younger girl playfully rolled her eyes. “He’s all yours,” she whispered back. “I’m a married woman.”

“No need to remind me, I can’t stand your husband.”

Qiang and her mother didn’t seem to hear them, because they’d moved to a table outside of the excavation site that the Republic City Council had commissioned. Apparently, Mom had a friend on the Council that she was doing a favor for.

They wrapped up what plans they were studying and motioned for the girls to follow. Ducking under an archway (and her mother using her old sword to slash through some vines), the pair of sisters let out a gasp as they saw what was inside the temple.

Part of the mausoleum was built into some sort of glade, where a stream ran through. There were old, large fruit trees that hung over ancient stone benches, and an old marble arched-bridge stood guard over the stream. Statues of Airbender poses were seen in a courtyard, and the natural skylights of the cave and the main room provided the perfect amount of sunlight to make the place shine and glimmer just so.

“This is beautiful,” her mother said in awe.

The younger sister agreed— in all their years of searching for art, this was by far the best discovery that they’d come across.

“Come on, let me show you our coolest find,” Qiang said cheerfully, beckoning for them to follow.
There was, like most of the Air Temples, a room filled with the statues of the Avatars— though it had, of course, stopped at Roku. The younger girl looked up and smirked at the serious expression on Kyoshi’s face, and then continued walking through the room.

There was a sculpture, near the end of the line, of a girl— roughly her age, it seemed. She had wild short hair and a scar on her cheek. The younger girl admired the intricate patterns on her forehead— she was, of course, and Airbender. Of all the statues in the room, this appeared to be the most thought out and delicately carved.

“Hey Mom!” she called out, her voiced echoing and bouncing off the statues.

“Coming!”

Her mom walked up to her and put an arm around her shoulders, kissing her long, black hair.

“What do you think?”

“I can see where Aang gets his funny side,” her mom smiled. “This girl looked like she had a lot of fun in her lifetime.”

“How you imagine, being the second Avatar though? She must’ve been all alone. At least the Wan guy had that big blue spirit to guide him,” her older sister said, walking up to the pair and peering curiously at the sculpture.

“We ought to bring this one back— I think Avatar Aang would like it,” the younger sister said, looking up at her mom with bright green eyes.

“Alright, but according to the literature that survived the burnings during the War, there are some rituals we have to do before we remove art as crucial as this.”

The older sister scoffed, “Like, a Dragon Dance?”

“This is serious, Shun.”

“Kidding! I was kidding! You know how much I love culture!” the older sister said, playfully punching her mom in the arm.

The younger girl shook her head and looked back at the statue of the Airbending Avatar— if she looked at the sculpture just right… it seemed like the Avatar was smirking at them in amusement.

Her mother and Shun walked out of the room to go back and join Qiang, but she remained in the room— sitting cross legged and looking up at the statue, as though she was expecting the smirking bust to start talking to her.

They were on the third floor, where the light beams fell upon paintings and urns perfectly— Asami did admire the careful architecture that’d been put into this.

*Whoever designed this building is making my job more and more difficult,* the engineer thought, her brow furrowing in annoyance. She didn’t want to sympathize with the Art Lovers.

There was a room filled with old mosaics, huge stone slabs guarded by velvet ropes— and Asami
stopped to try and decipher what they meant.

It appeared to be a picture of the Kyoshi Warriors, led by none other than the Big K herself. They were standing on a cliff, valiantly watching with their swords drawn as Kyoshi moved the cliffs apart with the Avatar state. A man was also depicted falling into the sea—he must’ve been Chin the Conqueror. Impressive.

“Ooh! This is a good mosaic of Avatar Yangchen defeating the giant Spirit— General Old Iron.”

Asami walked over. The artwork was… detailed, but perhaps a little unrealistic? She doubted Yangchen had just picked him up with her bare hands, even in the Avatar state, and tossed him into a canyon. Avatar aside, she was an Airbender— Asami was fairly certain that she’d learned this story in school—they’d struck a deal, right? Nobody died and nobody got tossed into a canyon by a pro-wrestler.

“I’d love to go visit the Yangchen Festival, and the sacred site—once a year they visit and worship nature.”

“It sounds… peaceful,” Asami said.

“It’s too bad you’re too busy making weapons to appreciate how beautiful peace is,” a voice in her head echoed.

Shut up, Asami thought, closing her eyes. She was getting a light headache. She, of course, didn’t notice Korra walk away and press a finger to her temple in annoyance. Asami got a drink from the water fountain in the hallway and rejoined her… her date.

She wondered if she ought to… initiate… some sort of… relationship? With the Avatar? Hmm…

Pros:

- Well… she’d get to spend more time spying on the Avatar— with a reasonable excuse in the Bender’s opinion.

- Or… she’d get to be spending more time making out with a hot girl— with a reasonable excuse in her father’s opinion.

To be perfectly frank… yes… yes, Asami had an attraction to Korra. The girl was very beautiful, without a doubt. She had perfect skin and short chestnut hair that the engineer wanted to run her hands through—and her eyes were so wide and full of energy. Asami didn’t know how amazing the color blue could look until…

This is pathetic… let’s run through the cons.

Cons:

- SHE’S A BENDER. THE BENDER. THE BENDIEST BENDER OF ALL BENDERS
• Asami could be discovered more easily.

• She already had enough on her plate.

The engineer looked over at the big grin on Korra’s face as she strode throughout the room, admiring pieces of artwork (though Asami had a funny suspicion that Korra had seen these pieces fifty times over).

Asami was about to resort to “eeny, meeny, miny, moe” or perhaps flipping a coin, when she heard the Avatar’s voice call out.

“Hey come read this plaque!”

Asami weaved her way through the stone tablets and pretty tile arrangements, and when she stopped at the Water Tribe girl’s side— she gasped, startled at the words.

_This Museum’s Collection was Generously Donated by the Family of Yasuko Sato_

Chapter End Notes

LEAVE COMMENTS BECAUSE I NEED YOUR LOVE (AND YOUR HATE, IF I'M THAT BAD AT WRITING)
Korra was surprised when Asami nearly stumbled after reading the plaque. She put her arm around the engineer’s shoulders while the older girl looked in shock.

“… I didn’t know…”

Korra smiled, “I thought you might appreciate the Museum; not a lot of people know that your mother donated all this stuff— I think she wanted to keep a low profile.”

Asami looked… defeated? Broken? Korra didn’t understand— this wasn’t how the date was supposed to go. Perhaps… perhaps it was a little too personal?

“Are you alright?” the Avatar asked.

Asami didn’t answer, so Korra led her over to a wooden bench in the hallway.

“I-I’m sorry, I didn’t mean t-to upset you,” Korra stammered, “I just thought—”

“Korra.”

The Water Tribe girl stopped speaking.

“I… appreciate the gesture… it’s a lot to take in… I think I want to go home, though…”

“Oh.”

“It’s… it’s not anything that you did… I just don’t feel so good.”

“It’s a long way to the Estate— my apartment is just down the road; would you care to crash on my couch?”

Asami looked up at Korra with wide emerald eyes. She looked like a puppy, pouting her lip out a little, and Korra’s heart melted inside. She… she was pretty damn hooked. Asami looked down at the marble ground for a moment and then stood up.

“Y-yeah. Just for the night— I have work in the morning.”

They walked down the streets. Both girls had their hands in their pockets— and Korra wondered if she’d just fucked everything up.

And then, in the elevator up to Opal’s apartment, Asami leaned against Korra and closed her eyes.
The almighty Avatar didn’t know what to do— so she just wrapped her arms around the engineer and let out a small sigh. She felt tears on her hands, and realized that Asami was choking back a sob.

Hesitantly, Korra reached up and ran her fingers through Asami’s hair.

“It’s okay, you can let it out if you want.”

In that moment— layers of walls began crashing down to rubble as the heiress collapsed against the Avatar and began wailing. She buried her face in Korra’s shoulder, who scooped her up and carried her through the elevator.

There was… there was a pain in Korra’s heart, but she waved it off. Now was the time for Asami.

Thankfully Opal had left the apartment unlocked (they’d passed her at the gas station next to the complex buying ice cream), so after Korra fiddled with the door while cooing the older woman—they swiftly moved through the room and the Avatar set her down on the couch.

“I’m sorry— I didn’t mean to ruin your hoodie,” Asami sniffled.

Korra was going to suggest cooking some dinner, but instead, the raven haired woman simply curled up against her and continued silently crying. This was not how the date was supposed to go.

Asami woke up on a comfortable couch with a warm blanket on top of her. How strange.

She sat up and realized that she was leaning on top of Korra— there was a note on the table from Opal, stating that she found them like that, put a blanket over them, and thought they were cute together.

Together.

Oh dear.

The engineer closed her eyes and thought of the pain of yesterday’s discovery. She’d broken down. Because everything about that Museum was a fucking lie. Did Dad know about this? How could Asami possibly hope to destroy the Museum?! When it’d been designed and built and cared for by her mother?! Of all the people in the world!?

She couldn’t give up her struggle for the Equalists… but she would have to make them think that the Unobtainium was worthless. She would hide the prototype, or pretend to test it and declare it a fruitless task. They… they still had their Chi Blocking and their explosions and their Shock Gloves.

Asami would not tear down the one thing that remained of her mother.

She looked down at the snoring Avatar— she’d read in a book once that Airbenders were the second loudest snorers in the world; behind their Sky Bison. With a smirk, Asami thought that the trait applied to Korra as well.

What was she going to do about—

The Avatar stirred at the sunlight creeping through the window.
“… five more minutes… I don’t wanna train today… can I go home yet…”

Asami remembered Korra telling her that she grew up alone in a compound full of White Lotus soldiers. That must’ve been awful.

_don’t personify Benders_, her father’s voice rang clearly. It’d been doing that over and over, but something else stirred in the engineer’s gut.

_Just this once._

Asami leaned forwards and planted a light kiss on Korra’s lips— she tasted like mint chapstick. But when the heiress drew back, she stifled a snicker— the Avatar had not woken up, but there was a smile on her face.

It was a private moment, just for Asami. She leaned back with her fingers touching her lips— trying to comprehend what she just did.

_F-fuck_, she thought. I just f-fucked up.

The engineer scurried out of the door; leaving a scrawled note for Korra and thanking her for letting her spend the night, not realizing that during the kiss a certain Avatar’s eyes had fluttered open.

“I don’t know… she seemed a little scared to me…” Korra trailed off hesitantly.

Opal threw the rubber ball, watching as Naga scrambled over Spirits and napping couples to go fetch the toy. They were in the park.

“We all have a reason to be scared,” the Airbender commented wisely, “But don’t you think the two of you deserve a little happiness?”

Korra looked out over the pond at the city. Cars were locked in an endless grip with each other as people tried to move about their businesses. The air was clear and the sun was ridiculously bright. But the best part was the beginning of buds sprouting on the flowers.

Spring would be here soon.

She turned to Opal, “I don’t think she wants to be in a relationship.”

“I think she doesn’t know what she wants. And I don’t mean just you,” Opal said, holding her hand up to Korra’s impending interruption. She continued.

“Asami’s under a lot of stress as a soon-to-be CEO. And can you imagine the pressure the Equalists are putting on all the Nonbenders around the city—”

“That’s silly, Asami would never join the Equalists!”

“I know that!” Opal said quickly, “I’m just saying, she probably feels a lot of stress about being surrounded by Benders all the time. I think we’re the only friends she has.”

“You’re probably right.”
Naga returned, bounding happily with the big rubber ball. She set it on the ground with her tail wagging, and Opal kicked it— adding a little extra air to the swing. They watched the ball go soaring as the Polar-Bear-Dog chased after it.

“Shit, that was a nice kick.”

“Airbenders would have been master kickball players.”

“We’ll have to start a team, since there aren’t enough of us to do Probending.”

“Tenzin would never condone Probending— too violent. You only got in because you’re a whiny asshole!”

“Hey!”

Korra pushed Opal into the pond with a snicker; knowing that the younger girl could just use Air to dry herself off. The Beifong shot out of the water with a column of air, tackling her as they rolled around laughing in the grass.

Asami held up a bow— or, at least, what was supposed to be a bow. After two weeks of work, she’d finally finished the prototype. Actually, the bow wasn’t the prototype; more of a side project.

The engineer sat down on the stool with a sigh. Here she was, making weapons to fight Benders, when only just this morning she’d kissed the Avatar.

No, I kissed Korra, she thought. And I think I’m slowly realizing that she’s more than just the Avatar.

She let out a yell and slammed her fist on the table— tools and pencils jumped around. What the fuck was she doing?! WHAT THE FUCK IS SHE FUCKING THINKING FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK!!!

She’s not a person, a sickly voice grew from within— the voice of her father, She’s the reason your mother died.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHH
Asami stood up and threw her wooden stool at the concrete wall. It creaked a little, and a piece chipped off— but it was not enough. She grabbed it again and this time brought it down against the floor—

CRASH!!

YES! YOU ARE ANGRY! the voice whispered, YOU WANT REVENGE! Who killed your mother? Benders.
... and who did you just kiss? the voice chided.

The Avatar. The ultimate Bender, Asami thought, her shoulders slumping.

And who’s memory are you shaming by doing that?

My mother’s.

Pieces of wood splintered everywhere, but the Equalist inside her was furious. She needed more.

Asami kicked the remnants of the stool aside and grabbed the biggest wrench she could find. The heiress looked at the engine— an abandoned project ever since the Neo Equalists had become active — and looked back at the wrench. There was a snarl forming at her mouth.

She let out a scream and furiously hit the engine; denting and destroying the tiny, fragile metal parts that her own careful hands had spent weeks crafting.

CRASH!! CLANG!! BAM!!

More, the voice cooed. More. You don’t want to hurt a piece of metal. You want to go out and hurt a Bender— make them pay for what they did!

With a final strike, she brought the wrench down with a howl and the engine split in two with a groan and a creak. It was a shitty design anyways.

Asami walked over to the closet in the workshop, fiddling the lock with shaky hands, and grabbed one of the Equalist outfits inside. She suited up and threw the Mask on. There was a glove on her belt— but she didn’t want to use it… she wanted as accurate of a shot as possible.

The arrows had Unobtainium flint heads— delicately crafted, and Asami threw them into a quiver she’d sewn when she’d first conceived of the prototype.

She fetched the bow and flipped her cellphone open— dialing a number only reserved for emergencies.

“What?!” the Lieutenant’s scruffy voice answered.

Underneath the mask, Asami smirked.

“Wanna go hunt some Benders?”

Like Cat-Owls, the pair of Equalists silently moved along the rooftops of the shopping district— leaping from building to building as they moved closer to the Benders.

They’d found out via word-of-mouth that some teenager punk types had created a Bending group to take down the Equalists. Hah! As if.

The Lieutenant pointed at the duo of Benders. Though the kids had on masks (clearly a parody of Amon— not that it would scare Asami), they were wearing colored scarves of blue and green over their black clothes.
That’s such a stupid idea, she thought with a smirk, now you have no element of surprise if I know what you’re going to Bend.

Asami took the bow off of her back and she heard the Lieutenant chuckle next to her. Clearly, he had as much anticipation as she did to see it work.

She didn’t have a lot of training in archery— but really, how hard could it be? They were only, what, thirty feet away?

Knocking an arrow to the string, she took a moment to appreciate the Unobtainium arrowhead for what it was. If this worked… it would change everything…

The kinder voice spoke, But are you willing to sacrifice your mother’s greatest piece of work for this cause? Would she be proud of you?

Asami aimed the arrow at the Bender wearing the green scarf, I wouldn’t know. Benders killed my mother.

She let the arrow fly.

Clearly she hit her target— Asami watched as the green-clad Bender fell to the ground, kneeling and reeling in pain. The blue-clad Bender began shooting fire randomly.

Trying to fool us which Element you use? Maybe you’re smarter than I thought.

Asami knocked another arrow to the bow and pulled back, taking a shaky breath and letting go of the string.

She hit the Firebender in the shoulder, and the girl fell to the ground with a cry. Asami motioned to the Lieutenant and they moved closer.

“Oh Spirits! I… I can’t bend!” a boy’s voice cried.

The blue-clad Firebender tried to summon a flame, yelling when she produced nothing.

She sounds familiar…

Asami peered over the roof of the building next to the two teenagers. The arrows were working their impossible magic, it seemed. Their Chi would be permanently blocked— for the rest of their lives.

The Firebender took her mask off, and Asami saw tears streaming down the girl’s face. She let out a gasp, for she knew all too well who that face belonged to.

“No…” Hikaru cried. “No— this is my life!”

Asami’s eyes widened, and the Equalist ducked behind the roof.

“What’s the matter?” the Lieutenant whispered with a sneer. “One of your Bending buddies?”

Asami heard scrambling footsteps as Hikaru picked the boy up by the scruff of his neck and they fled the streets.

“That’s right!” the Lieutenant shouted. “That’s what happens when you cross the Equalists!!”

He turned and clapped Asami on the back.
“Good job! Let’s get back to your father! If we mass produce these—we’ll be ten times more successful at this campaign than we ever were with Amon!”

Spirits… what have I done?

Chapter End Notes

Well you got... your... uh... kiss...

Poor Hikaru :(
Bolin absentmindedly rubbed his shoulder as he played checkers with Ikki—having a nice relaxing day on Air Temple Island. The sun was just beginning to rise—even though it was nine-o-clock. Having trouble sleeping, the Lavabender had walked around the island until he’d come across the seventeen-year-old Airbender. They decided to play a board game together, seeing as neither of them could sleep.

*With everything Team Avatar has been through, it’s a wonder we catch any zzzzz’s at all,* he thought.

He looked at Ikki, who was pondering over the game pieces and rubbed his shoulder again. It was awfully sore—even though he hadn’t sparred with anyone yesterday.

“So… when are you going to earn your Tats?” he asked, clearing the still morning silence.

“Eh—I’m only three or four tests away,” she said, her mind clearly on the game.

“You sound… calm?”

Ikki shrugged, “I mean, what’s going to change? Everyone already treats me like a Master—the only thing I’m going to get is the right to tease Meelo.”

“Oh.”

Bolin looked out to the slowly rising sun… there were two silhouettes making their way towards the courtyard, one holding up the other. They looked injured.

The Earthbender jumped from his seat, spilling the game pieces everywhere.

“Really?” Ikki groaned as she picked up the board and blew the dust off.

Bolin began sprinting at the pair when he recognized Hikaru holding up a young boy.

“What happened?!”

“Ughh…. we were attacked…. Equalists,” the boy whimpered.

There was an arrow sticking out of each of them.

“Crap… Ikki! Go get your Aunt Kya!!”
The girl bent an airscooter and sped towards the dormitories.

“Oh jeez, oh jeez… uh… just… just sit down here… easy does it… oh bananas….”

He heard someone yell, “HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU ALL NOT TO AIRBEND IN THE HALLWAYS!!”

“STUFF IT YOU OLD SOD!” Kya yelled back.

The older Water Tribe woman fled down the stairs to where Ikki was pointing. She turned and saw the trio— and she relaxed when she realized that their injuries weren’t life-threatening. Ikki had a tendency to… overexaggerate.

“My name’s Kya,” the healer said softly, her tone beginning to calm the two kids down.

“I’m Hikaru, I’m a friend of Team Avatar— this is Mula,” the Fire Nation girl said, gesturing to the boy.

“You’re Probenders aren’t you? I think I’ve heard your names on the radio,” Kya said, inspecting the arrows.

“We… we were.”

Kya didn’t understand what he’d meant by that, but she slowly began healing the wound. When she pulled out the arrow— she realized that the tip had broken off inside the boy’s back; she tried to feel for the arrowhead, but there wasn’t anything there. Oh, fuck.

“I don’t understand. I’m not sensing any shrapnel inside of you…”

She tried to do the same to Hikaru, and found that the point of the arrow was nowhere to be found.

“Go get Kuvira,” she said to Bolin and Ikki, “She can sense what kind of metal we’re dealing with.”

Raava forbid it was something poisonous— though they looked healthy… healthy but… depressed about something…

Bolin had a funny feeling that they didn’t need the Metalbender to identify what it was. Nonetheless, he dragged Kuvira out of bed (the poor woman hitting her head on the end table as she was violently rolled off the mattress) and brought her to Kya.

Kuvira rubbed an eye groggily and put a hand on Hikaru’s shoulder (the one that hadn’t been shot). She froze— there… there were tiny traces of metal throughout the Firebender’s body. Kuvira moved her hands, as though she were scanning the girl with a metal detector (hardy har har), and realized that the Unobtainium had spread all throughout her body.

If what Bataar had said was true… Hikaru and Mula would never be able to bend again.

“The arrowhead disintegrated and the traces of metal spread through your body,” Kuvira said dropping her gaze to the ground, “Being in the same room as a small chunk of Unobtainium inhibits bending. Having it in your body… I’m… I’m sorry.”

The boy’s eyes widened, “You can’t bend it out?”

“I’m surprised that I can even bend near you. It… I suppose it blocks your Chi permanently…”

They watched as Hikaru stood up suddenly and walked to the staircase where her arms crossed,
staring at the rising sun. Kuvira made to follow her, but Bolin pulled her back.

“Let me go talk to her.”

He walked up next to her and offered a sat smile, waving his hand to indicate that they should sit down.

“… I can’t feel it.”

“You can’t feel what?”

“The sun,” Hikaru explained, “It’s always felt like a part of me… and… suddenly it’s gone. Like when we had that solar eclipse a year ago, and I was too afraid to go outside in case a Terra Triad or a Red Monsoon jumped me.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. I was stupid enough to want to do something about the Equalists. I won’t make that mistake again.”

“You shouldn’t have to give up because—"

“Who said I’m giving up?” Hikaru said, flashing Bolin a sly grin, “I was trained by the Best Kyoshi Warrior in the world. The Equalosers won’t know what hit them when I’m through. Republic City’s going to fear me!”

Bolin realized then and there that he had a massive crush on the former Firebender.

The phone rang three times before Suyin picked up.

“Hey, sweetie, why are you calling so early?”

“Mom…” Kuvira looked at Mula, who was sitting on the marble bench being comforted by Kya, “… I need to ask you a favor…”

“Anything, for you!”

“I need to hand in my resignation as Guard Captain… something happened last night with the Equalists… I need to protect my sister at all costs…”

There was nothing but silence for two minutes.

“Mom? Are you there?”

“Yes. Yes, I’m still here… as your Matriarch, I have to say I’m disappointed that you were only my Captain for four years…”

Kuvira’s mouth upturned into a sad smile.

“… but as your mother, I can only tell you that I love you— and that you had better not bite off more
than you can chew. You understand?"

“Yes, yes of course… can you put Jr. on the line?”

“Sure… one sec. I love you so much.”

“I love you too.”

There was scuffling on the other end of the line, and Kuvira heard Su calling for Bataar. She almost let out a cry of relief when he quickly picked up the phone.

“H-hello? Kuvira? Love, are you okay?”

“I’m fine… you were right about the Unobtainium… a friend of ours lost her Firebending.”

“Oh…”

“I’m going to stay in the city and protect Opal.”

“But… but that’s so dangerous!! Kuv… you can’t risk your bending—”

“I’LL DO ANYTHING TO PROTECT HER!!”

There was silence… she didn’t mean to yell… no, there was… clicking?

“What are you doing?”

“Looking up apartments for two in Republic City— it’s not like they can take away my nonexistent bending.”

“Baatar, no!”

“Baatar, yes.”

Kuvira sighed and rubbed her forehead in annoyance. Part of her loved Jr. for how stubborn he was, but most of her hated him for it.

“I’m ordering a train ticket right now,” her fiancé said cheerfully.

“I’m loathing you for the next three years!” she spat into the cellphone.

“That’s going to put a setback on the wedding…”

“I’m not having sex with you for a month!”

“Still looking at apartments…”

“I’ll kiss Master Tenzin on the mouth!”

“Booked a first-class ticket…”

Annoyed, Kuvira kicked a nearby rock, her Earthbending adding a little extra *oomph* to it, and she watched as it went soaring into Yue Bay.

“I’ll see you Tuesday,” Baatar said sweetly.

“I love you too,” Kuvira grumbled, clicking the “end call” button.
She didn’t want to put him in danger— but she couldn’t stop him from coming to Republic City. He loved her, and what is it they say? *Love makes fools of us all.* A part of her glowed inside, for she knew that she, too, loved him more than she feared the Equalists.

Jinora looked at herself in the mirror. There was a slight layer of fuzz on the top of her head, and she pulled out her razor from the restroom to clean herself up. Though the lack of hair made the outside air feel a lot colder— she also appreciated how the wind felt on her scalp.

More importantly, she appreciated the way it felt when Opal woke up, walked over to her, and began kissing her— starting from the arrow on her forehead, over the top of her head, down her neck… and then…

Opal slowly shrugged Jinora’s Glider Suit off (she’d made plans to go flying today, but clearly those plans were to be shelved) and continued kissing down Jinora’s spine— making the younger girl shudder. Before going too low, the older girl put her hands on Jinora’s hips and flipped the Airbending Master around so that they were face to face.

Technically, there’s no rule that says you *can’t* have sex on the Island… if you’re quiet about it.

Jinora’s soulmate looked at her with questioning eyes— did she have the nineteen-year-old’s permission to go on? The younger girl happily nodded, and Opal leaned forwards with a kiss, captivating her lips. Opal shrugged Jinora all the way out of her Glider Suit and Jinora energetically pulled Opal’s yellow hoodie up and over her shoulders.

“This shirt,” Jinora said teasingly, “has got to go!”

“Oh, I agree, but I just can’t seem to reach—”

Aaaannnnddd it was on the floor.

For a moment, Jinora froze. She’d never been this far with a girl— or a boy— before. W-what was supposed to happen…

Opal took the lead and passionately kissed Jinora, breaking off to kiss right underneath her jaw— *Oh right there! Yes!* She nipped and sucked and bit her way around the younger girl’s neck, and Jinora vehemently ran her fingers through Opal’s short, black hair. *Spirits…*

There was a hand slithering behind Jinora’s back, and when she heard a *click!* she realized that Opal had managed to undo her bra one-handed. Impressive. The lacy, black garment fell to the floor.

Jinora had been self-conscious about her chest her whole life— peer-pressure from school and sexy starlets in movers didn’t make it any better. But… but the way Opal was looking at her… with such pride…

No words were spoken as the Beifong girl picked Jinora up and moved the two of them to the bed. The Airbending Master laid back against her pillows and let out a sigh through her nose. Opal hunched over her and began kissing and biting and sucking *exactly where it mattered most* on her chest.
“Oooopppaaaaaallll!” she whispered.

“Mmmm?” a muffled voice responded.

She’d never felt anything as amazing as this. This was heaven, this was enlightenment, this was—

There was a knock on the door.

FUCK!!

Jinora blasted her girlfriend off the bed with a big puff of air, and jumped up, grabbing her robe.
Opal threw her hoodie on just as person knocked on the door a second time.

“O-Opal?” Kuvira’s voice called through the wooden door, “Are you up?”

“C-come in!”

Kuvira hesitantly opened the door and peered through. The Metalbender looked at the two of them, and then at Jinora’s bra on the floor (which she immediately kicked under the bed). She offered the two of them an apologetic smile. It was clear she wasn’t here to tease them— though she knew perfectly well what they’d been about to do.

“Sorry… but… can I borrow my sister for a bit?”

“Return her when you’re finished,” Jinora said playfully.

“Wait what?”

“Will do,” Kuvira said, returning the smirk.

Jinora sighed and flopped on the bed as the two sisters exited the room (Opal’s face had the biggest pout ever). With a frustrated huff, she decided to open the book she’d checked out from the Library;


Chapter End Notes

You guys get this chapter early because I'm going to be busy most of tomorrow. :D

Bataar, yes.
Garden

Chapter Summary

It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation, and only one bad one to lose it.

-Benjamin Franklin

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hikaru’s hand hovered over the doorknob— how was she going to tell her little sister that she’d just lost everything. She’d been at RCU on a Probending scholarship. I’m sorry, maybe you didn’t hear me; a Pro-BENDING scholarship. And now she couldn’t even breathe a puff of smoke.

All she’d wanted, all she was trying to do was keep her little sister safe from the Neo Equalists. And now Hikaru— no. No, you know what? She’s still going to fucking protect her Suki. No one was getting near the kid.

So she lowered the key to the lock and opened the door.

“Huka!!” her little sister said, running through the room.

“Hey there!” the former Probender laughed, picking the little girl up and spinning her around. “How was school?”

“So much fun! We did finger painting today!”

Little Suki raised her hands up and Hikaru could smell the acrylic (rather strongly, too). The former Firebender missed kindergarten— you know, when the world made sense.

“Let’s go get you cleaned up, Kiki!” the older sister chuckled, using her little sister’s nickname.

While “Kiki” was in the bath, “Huka” walked over to her bedroom. She hadn’t opened the closet… not since Mom had passed away. A few boxes threatened to teeter over when she pushed the wooden doors open.

“— CAN YOU TELL ME HOW TO GET! HOW TO GET TO SEEESAMMEEEEEE STREET!!!” her little sister’s voice rang out from the bathroom.

Hikaru wiped a tear away.

This is just for emergencies, her mother’s voice said, proudly. Use it when you need it most— and remember what you learned.

Hanging up in the closet was a very specific set of armor— belonging to a very specific Kyoshi Warrior… it’d been her grandmother’s. Hikaru knelt down and picked up the sword, running a lone finger over the still-sharp blade. She set the gear out on the bed and went to grab some varnish to polish the metal.
If she was going to be a Nonbender; she was going to properly fight like one.

The next day, Hikaru strolled into the abandoned warehouse.

“We… we heard what happened,” a voice called up from the rafters. “We wanted to tell you that we didn’t mean for that to happen—”

“Oh, stuff it up your backside,” the former Probender said. “I’m not finished here.”

She was clad in green, and wearing the traditional make-up, too. The only way she could be recognized was by her hair— which she kept the same. It was in a Fire Nation bun, a salute to her ancestry. Well, part of it.

Tesmaa swung down the rafters via water tendril and looked at her with a gaping mouth, “You—you still want to work with us?”

“I have a plan,” Hikaru said with a smirk. Avatar Kyoshi would approve. As would her Grandmother.

Asami was knee deep in the dirt— today was her day off from work and from… you know… the other thing.

She was currently in the garden at the Estate. Surrounding her were all sorts of vines and vegetables and fruits and roots and mushrooms and all kinds of greens. She wiped a bit of sweat off her brow and continued to dig.

This had been her mother’s garden.

Asami had always loved taking care of plants. Though they weren’t machines or inventions of any sort— they were wild and unpredictable and rewarding. Just stretching a finger down to say hello to a little sprout that was beginning its journey— or taking care of a patch of flowers that had been blooming every single year since she was five… it was an art of sorts.

Here.

Here she was not Asami Sato, Heiress of Future Industries. Here she was not Asami the Equalist. Here… she was nobody in particular. If only she could stay in this garden forever… I mean… there was certainly enough food to last… hmm… two weeks? If she rationed she could stretch it to three—

She heard footsteps behind her but didn’t turn.
“Dad, I don’t want to talk about the prototype,” Asami called to the person behind her.

“Oh— that’s cool cause I’m not your Dad,” Korra said cheerfully.

“How did you get through the gate? It’s usually locked.”

“I have a glider staff?”

Right. Because she’s a Bender— and they can do unnatural shit like that, the Equalist Voice said.

Oh shut up, she’s cute, the Annoying Voice (that started to sound familiar, but Asami couldn’t quite place it) whispered back.

Asami pinched the bridge of her nose and stood up— dropping her mother’s yellow trowel into the bucket filled with dirt. She turned to face the Avatar.

“What can I do for— oh!”

Korra had a bouquet of flowers; red roses and pink chrysanthemums and white tulips set in a pretty arrangement that was as big as a Satomobile Engine.

“I… I… I thought you could use some f-flowers!” the Water Tribe girl said with that crooked grin of hers. “I mean… I suppose you already are surrounded by flowers… I didn’t think this through.”

Asami reached out for the bouquet, and she realized that it wasn’t wrapped in paper or plastic.

“Did you… did you cut these yourself?”

Korra shyly rubbed the back of her neck, “Yeah— I may have thinned the Air Temple Island landscaping a little bit…”

Asami blushed. She’d had bouquets delivered to her from sons of Execs and Business partners, but not a handpicked selection of fresh flowers…

The engineer bent down a little and kissed Korra on the cheek.

She killed your mother, the Equalist Voice growled as Asami pulled away from the red-faced Avatar.

No, your mother’s death was an accident— thugs and criminals, not innocent civilians, the Annoying Voice chided back. Most Benders are peaceful people, like… you know… Hikaru.

Shut up, Asami thought to the Voices.

Korra looked at the plants surrounding the two girls, “Wow— you put a lot of work in this?”

Asami nodded, “It was something my mother and I worked on together. I come in here to calm down.”

Something that you and your mother used to work on, the Equalist hissed. Until she was killed by Be —

How is it Korra’s fault? She would have only been… what… seven? the Annoying Voice retorted.

She should have been there!

Korra was locked away in a compound—
“SHUT UP, SHUT UP BOTH OF YOU!” Asami screamed into her head.

The engineer dropped down into the dirt, silently running her hands through the fresh, loose soil. She hated her life. She hated herself. She hated what she was doing and yet she needed to do it. She had to be an Equalist. She had to eliminate Benders—

“Hey there,” the younger girl said, dropping to the ground. “You okay?”

“I’m tired, Korra,” Asami whimpered. “I’m so tired.”

Unfortunately, Korra took it literally.

“Here, um… yeah! I got an idea!”

The Avatar turned and slowly moved her hands. Earth rose up, gently forming a dark, dirt bench in the garden. Pebbles floated in the air—arranging themselves up and along the sides of the armrests. Asami watched in wonder as Korra took a breath and wiggled her toes further into the ground. With on final swipe through the air—the dirt suddenly packed and solidified into a study seat.

Korra offered a hand to Asami, who just sat there—staring at the bench.

The Avatar had just Bended. In front of her. In her mother’s garden. The one place Benders and Equalists couldn’t touch her. It was as though Korra had crossed a boundary; pushing too far. The extremist inside her began stirring and Asami closed her eyes… ready to snap at the disgusting witchcraft she’d just witnessed…

*It’s actually kinda pretty, isn’t it?* the Annoying Voice cheerfully chuckled.

Asami opened her eyes and looked up at Korra who was still holding her hand down but had a worried expression on her face.

“Shit—shit I should have asked before I did that. This is your garden and I didn’t mean to—”

Asami pulled Korra’s hand down. Hard. The Avatar fell down with a yelp and two pairs of lips crashed together. But then the younger girl eagerly reciprocated, pressing her mouth firmly against Asami’s. The heiress moaned as the Avatar bit and sucked on her lower lip.

Mmmmmmmmmmm.

The engineer wasn’t the most muscular Hulk Hogan in the ring, but she did work out enough—and with a growl, she lifted Korra by the thighs and moved them to the earthen bench. Korra eagerly kissed back with all her built-up enthusiasm. It felt good. Too good.

Too good to be true.

Asami felt herself slipping away…how strange…

She became aware that someone was trying to speak to her.
"Are you okay? You were yelling just now... but... like... in your head?" her Soulmate’s voice rang out. "Like, you were yelling ‘shut up! Shut up!’ and for a second I was worried you were mad at me. Yo, dog... are you there?"

Asami woke up with a start. Her face was pressed in the dirt, and there were a few particles on her cheeks—threatening to bury themselves in her eyes and make her day even worse. Her mother’s yellow trowel was not in the bucket, like she’d dropped it earlier, but still in her hand.

She sat up.

Korra wasn’t there. There wasn’t a bouquet of flowers in her hand. No pretty dirt bench in her garden.

I... I must’ve fallen asleep in the heat, Asami thought.

What heat? It was April. She must’ve... passed out from stress... it was the only logical explanation. She let out a huff—there was a burning desire deep in her abdomen, in a nether region that only meant one thing; and she felt absolutely horrible knowing that she’d let a Bender put it there.

"Earth to Soulmate, you home?"

In fact, instead of heat... Asami was feeling awfully cold without Korra’s warm body pressed against her. She sighed and closed her eyes, leaning back against the fence post that marked the entrance of the garden. Fuck her life.

"Yeah... yeah... I'm here... I just had a bad dream..."

"Oh," her Soulmate said. "Uh... anything I can do to help?"

"Can you distract me?"

"Sure... what should I say?"

"What are you doing right now?" Asami asked, slowly standing up and failing at brushing the dirt off her clothes. Maybe her Soulmate could... help with the burning deep down.

"I’m waiting at the Train Station with a friend— we’re picking up her fiancé."

Asami sighed. Clearly her Soulmate didn’t have as dirty of a mindset as the engineer. Ah well, might as well continue the conversation.

"Is your friend anxious to see them?" she asked.

"You have no idea— she keeps tugging at her braid and stepping on my feet. I think... just maybe... quite possibly... she misses him."
Asami laughed and wiped away a snuffle that she’d been holding in.

“Are they Soulmates, too?”

“Yeah— sheer luck they grew up together.”

“Wow, that sounds… wonderful…” Asami thought wistfully.

“No siblings?”

“Nope. You?”

Her Soulmate was silent for a few moments, and Asami wondered if she’d touched a sore subject. The dirt beneath her toes crushed into fine powder as she waited. At least she’d gotten most of her work done in the garden— before she’d passed out.

A minute later, the voice spoke up again;

“Nada. I grew up alone.”

“I’m sorry… I kinda did too,” the engineer answered truthfully.

“Maybe that’s why we’re meant for each other?” her Soulmate asked. “So we can grow up, again?”

Asami felt like crying. Whoever this woman was… she needed her right now. She needed her Soulmate holding her and whispering that everything would be okay…

“I’d like that,” Asami thought, wiping a tear away.

But she… she couldn’t ruin that bond… she would meet her Soulmate after all this stuff… with the Equalists… after it was all over.

At least for now— for now she would settle for Korra.

Chapter End Notes

Figure out who Hikaru’s nana is?

Also… looks like Asami’s dreaming of a certain someone…
Xai Bao's Grove

Chapter Summary

"Help others achieve their dreams and you will achieve yours."

-Les Brown

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Opal had been practicing her Airbending Sets on the roof of the apartment (she was lucky to have the fire escape outside her living room window), when she heard a tiny “helloo-o-o” from next to her left knee. She stopped blowing gusts of air into the sky and looked down.

Aina was sitting on her left foot, patiently waiting for something. Opal picked them up.

“How have you been doing?” she asked, giving the leafy-spirit a hug.

“I’ve been good, Hoo-man! I’ve met over fifff-tee Avah-Taars in the Spirit World!!”

Opal’s eyes widened. She’d forgotten about all that… it must be pretty lonely to be stuck in the Spirit World while life goes on without you… she wondered how her Airbender friend was doing…

“How’s Samsara?”

“She sent me to find you!” Aina said with wide, happy eyes.

Opal raised an eyebrow, “Whatever for?”

“She wants your helpies!”

“My… ‘helpies’?”

“Oh-huh!” Aina nodded excitedly.

“Oh… uh… alright… I’ll just go downstairs and…”

“Just meditate!” Aina blinked, not missing a beat.

Opal bit her lip— what if something happened? At least she could lock the windows and door downstairs… but maybe the little spirit was right…

So, she sat down in the Lotus Position and raised an eyebrow inquisitively at the spirit.

“Where am I going?”

“Ummm…. Xai Bau’s grove?”

“Why there?”
“Samsara said so,” the spirit said, swaying back and forth.

The Airbender let out a sigh, “Alright, see you there.”

“Yay!” Aina cheered, bouncing up and down.

Opal straitened her back and ignored the way the wind whipped around her hair. She could only hope that nobody tried to do anything while she was so vulnerable like this. The Airbender closed her eyes— thinking of nothing but the name Xai Bau…

Xai Bau…

Xai Bau…

She felt the familiar pull and smirked, opening her eyes to an orange sky above her. This was the first time she’d meditated into the Spirit World on her own… successfully, at least. No doubt, she’d tried multiple times, each time growing more and more frustrated until she finally gave up and pursued other interests.

This time, though… this time it’d worked.

Opal stood up and walked through the grove to look for Samsara.

Zaheer looked up. There was an Airbender walking around in the Spirit World— but not one of the ones he knew… no… she was the Beifong girl… hmm…

He followed at a safe distance, curious about what she was up to.

Not that he could try anything— he was still stuck in prison. Still… the more one learns…

“Good day, Opal!” Avatar Samsara called out to his right.

Zaheer flew up into a tree to watch the scene unfold. For once, it was nice not to spy for the intent of harm… no, he was merely curious. It’s not every day one of the most influential Avatars in the world talks to some random scrub.

He leaned back against the tree and listened to the conversation— but after a while grew bored. They were just talking about petty Airbending; small meditation tactics that he was far beyond. Why strive for higher when you can already fly?

So, he turned around and left. Perhaps he could find some new place to explore…

Samsara turned looked to the left and waited.

“Hmmm… yeah, he’s gone.”
“There was someone there?” Opal asked, curious.

“Yeah, some bearded dude with long gray hair—I think he was an Airbender.”

Opal’s eyes widened, “Oh… that must’ve been Zaheer! Korra told me that he could meditate into the Spirit World!”

Samsara waved her hand, “Relax—I don’t think he’s going to harm anyone. Spirits have told me that he’s pretty much locked away in a mountain for the rest of his life, right?”

Opal nodded. She didn’t care much for the man… but it wasn’t as though he could do any true harm.

The Avatar beckoned for Opal to follow, “Right, well, now that he’s gone, I can actually talk to you.”

“What about?”

“I want to test a theory.”

“What theory?”

“If I can bend in the Spirit World,” Samsara demonstrated, producing a small whirl in her hands, “Then I am now… like… permanently spirit.”

“Or you entered through a Spirit Portal,” Opal pointed out.

“Which wouldn’t have happened because I died thousands of years before Korra opened them again.”

“Well… you got me there.”

“Okay, so I was thinking…. what if I tried to meditate back into the real world?”

“Huh?”

“You can meditate here… you’re just not… like… fully you… you know?”

“No.”

“You’re a… like a projection of yourself… I was thinking…”

“— that you could maybe reverse that and go into the Mortal World?” Opal asked with a raised eyebrow.

“Yeah!”

“… well if Zaheer can fly and Korra can become a giant blue spirit and arrows can take away your bending… I suppose a dead Avatar can meditate back into the Mortal World,” the Beifong girl sighed. 

“Erm…”

“Yeah?”

“I’ve tried to meditate out of here before… I couldn’t do it…”

“You want me to guide you?”
“That’s what I was wondering… can you… can you help me?”

Opal smiled, “What are friends for?”

Jinora was sitting in the gazebo, reading the book she’d loaned from the library.

*Avatar Samsara was one of the most significant Avatars in our history— helping create the four nations before she’d reached the age of thirty. She was known for her humor, stubbornness, and desire to solve things with as little violence as possible.*

*Born to a village of Air Nomads who had left their Lion Turtle city during the lifetime of Avatar Wan, Samsara was documented to have been a rowdy, energetic child— only amplifying her chaotic nature when she discovered Waterbending and Earthbending at the young ages of nine and ten.*

*Keep in mind that not many people in the world had even heard the word “Avatar” before. Feared as a warrior, her village asked her to leave when she was fifteen.*

Jinora closed the book and looked at the sky.

The ancient Air Nomads had been peaceful… but to kick out a girl because she could have been violent… that seems a little harsh.

Mula—the boy who’d shown up a few days ago injured—was currently watering the flower patch nearest the gazebo. Her father had approached him yesterday and asked if he wanted to stay and work on the island (lest he end up on the streets from not being able to Probend). Mula had gratefully accepted.

Jinora stood up and walked over to him.

“Hey,” she said, quietly and shyly.

The twenty-two-year-old nearly dropped the garden hose. “Oh! Hey there! You’re… uh… Master…”

“You can just call me Jinora,” the Airbender said with a smile.

The ex-Earthbender set down the garden hose and extended a muddy hand, “I’m Mula! F-former Probender and current gardener!”

Jinora looked down at the patch of flowers— which were a little over-flooded and swamped. She stifled a giggle.

“Are you liking life on the Island?”

Mula scratched the back of his head, “I’ll admit… I miss my old job… even though it’s only been a few days… I am grateful and all!!”

Jinora held up a hand, “I understand completely. My life was flipped around a few years back after Harmonic Convergence, and suddenly I had all these roles and responsibilities… it can be hard when your life drastically changes… but you ought to know that you’re welcome here.”
The ex-Earthbender looked at the ground and kicked a pebble with his shoe, “Thanks… truth be told… I don’t know what I’m going to do with my life now…”

“We’ll figure something out.”

“We?”

“Airbenders always help those in need.”

“Close your eyes and follow the sound of my voice. Focus on it, and draw yourself to it.”

Samsara did so… relaxing as she felt a slight pull of her spirit. Aina was sitting in her lap—having promised to watch over the Avatar’s body in the Spirit World.

*Sammy… Sammy are you there?* a boy’s voice called out. *Sammy, I’m scared.*

“I- I can’t do this,” the Airbending Master muttered.

“Yes, you can,” Opal retorted. “Concentrate…”

*Sammy, I love you! Don’t leave me, I’m begging you!!* the boy’s voice pleaded.

The former Avatar gritted her teeth, “It’s not working!”

“Relax and listen to the sound of my voice… think only of my voice…”

“I… I can’t…”

“You’re already here,” Opal said with a smile.

Samsara opened her eyes, and the first thing she saw was buildings. Nothing but buildings for miles—she’d never seen so many people!! This was the… this was the most magnificent thing she’d ever seen!!

“Stand up and take a breath.”

The Airbending Master did so, and nearly cried at how the sensation felt. She’d missed air. So much. But when she tried to move the currents of wind around her, nothing happened.

“It’s the exact same as when I enter the Spirit World via meditation,” Opal realized.

“Ah well, it’s good to be back in the Mortal World.”

Opal reached forwards and held out her hand. Samsara tentatively raised her fingers. They brushed once, twice, and then the girls grasped hands together in a firm tangle.

The Avatar choked back a sob. It’d been more than 9,000 years since she’d last had physical human contact. It was… it felt… unreal…

Opal pulled her forwards into a hug, and Samsara had to take a deep breath. She clutched at Opal’s shoulders and looked out at the horizon of the sprawling metropolis.
She’d forgotten what being alive felt like.

Korra walked through the living room of Opal and her’s apartment. Baatar and Kuvira were out shopping for somewhere to live, Asami was at work, Mako and Bolin were training at the Probending Arena, and Jinora was training Airbenders like usual. She was utterly bored.

The window to the fire escape was open… huh… well, the fresh air was nice.

She sat down on the couch and kicked up her feet… oh, it’d been a while since she’d relaxed… ahhhhhh…

Opal climbed through the window sill and motioned to someone to follow— but there was nobody there. She carefully tried to tip toe through the apartment, but something knocked over a textbook on the coffee table, and Korra raised an eyebrow. She must’ve accidentally Airbent it or something.

“Hey, what were you up to?” she asked curiously.

Opal jumped and looked back at Korra, darting her eyes between the Avatar and… thin air? Weird.

“Oh, I was meditating into the Spirit World,” the Airbender explained.

“On the roof?”

“A spirit told me to.”

Korra laughed and went to grab a beer from the fridge.

“Really?” Opal asked with a raised eyebrow.

“What? It’s five-o-clock somewhere! Besides,” Korra said, cracking her neck with a pop, “I spent all day talking to the City Council about the Art Museum… I deserve a break.”

Somewhere in the room, the Water Tribe girl heard a huff, and someone whispering something like, “Please, I was busy twenty-four-seven and I didn’t take breaks!”

Korra looked around, but no one was there.

She turned to Opal, “Did you hear that?”

The Airbender noticeably gulped, and the Avatar knew she was hiding something, “Notice what?”

Korra narrowed her eyes, but didn’t press the matter, “Nevermind.”

She didn’t need Opal hiding anything from her… but she also didn’t have it in her to pry into the Beifong’s personal life without permission. And besides, she trusted Opal with her life. The kid wouldn’t be sneaking around unless she had a damn good reason. So, the Avatar flopped back down on the couch and gave the Airbender a wave goodbye as she opened the door and walked out.

Korra could have sworn someone ruffled her short, chesnut hair and said, “Good luck kid”, but when she turned… no one was there and the door was shut.
Humph! she thought, grabbing the remote and taking a sip of her beer.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, cool beans.

So... this may be confusing to some, but my headcannon for this story is that Samsara can enter the Mortal World through meditation, but she always has to be guided in, and the only person who can see or interact with her is the person who guided her in.

Though I had fun imagining her poking fun at Korra...

P.S. Zaheer is not making a comeback—he was just a filler POV. I hate him too much to even want to write a story for him.
Hikaru was on Air Temple Island, practicing her stances. She was moving slowly, with balance and poise.

“You do have a great gift for the art of swordplay,” Tenzin complimented, pouring himself some tea on the table he’d set up.

“Grandma Suki wanted someone to pass the tradition down,” Hikaru called to the Airbending Master, as she whirled around with the blade.

“Ah yes, Suki was a darling— always bringing Earth Kingdom gifts to me and my siblings,” Tenzin laughed. “When I first met you the other day; it gave me quite the shock! If it weren’t for your black hair… you’re a spitting image of her!”

Hikaru smiled, and continued her sets. She remembered sitting on her grandmother’s lap and listening to Suki sing;

“There are loved ones in the glory,
Whose dear forms you often miss;
When you close your earthly story,
Will you join them in their bliss?”

“How is Suki doing these days? It’s been some time,” Tenzin said, taking a sip of tea.

Hikaru missed a swing and her blade fell, sticking into the grassy ground. Did he… did he not know? She looked over at the sunset and closed her eyes.

“She passed away last year.”

“Oh,” Tenzin said, setting down his cup, “I didn’t know.”

The Airbending Master stood and walked over to the ex-Firebender.
“Will the circle be unbroken
By and by, by and by?
Is a better home awaiting
In the sky, oh, in the sky?”

Hikaru let out a sigh, “It’s alright. She died with a fan in her hand and a smile on her face.”

“She was quite old…”

“Actually, she died defending Kyoshi Island from bandits.”

“Oh… I see…”

“The entire town held a funeral for her— a big green canoe going into the lake. I shot an arrow and it lit the boat on fire… it was beautiful.”

“In the joyous days of childhood,
Oft they told of wondrous love,
Pointed to the dying Saviours;
Now they dwell with them above.”

“You’re holding the sword wrong,” Tenzin said softly.

“I’m holding it how Suki trained me to.”

“Uncle Sokka taught Bumi, Kya, and I to hold it this way— here. Did… did Suki ever tell you about him?”

“Yeah! She liked to talk about his ‘Trusty Boomerang that took out the Supernatural Firebender and saved the day’! Or the magic space sword that he made— and the time the two of them bust out of prison with Fire Lord Zuko!”

Tenzin chuckled, “Bless that man, but he never shut up about the boomerang.”

Hikaru nearly dropped her grandmother’s sword from laughing so hard.

“Will the circle be unbroken
By and by, by and by?
Is a better home awaiting
In the sky, oh, in the sky?”
You remember songs of heaven
Which you sang with childish voice,
Do you love the hymns they taught you,
Or are songs of Earth your choice?”

Tenzin sat there all afternoon, watching her go through the beautiful motions— delicately balancing the sword in her hand as she moved it through the air. Heck, she could have been born an Airbender; she was that graceful.

“Will the circle be unbroken
By and by, by and by?
Is a better home awaiting
In the sky, oh, in the sky?

You can picture happy gath'rings
'Round the fireside long ago,
And you think of tearful partings,
When they left you here below.”

“Do you have any family?”
“A sister,” Hikaru said, jabbing the little practice dummy that Bumi had brought out for her.

“What of your parents?”
“I haven’t seen my father in years… he was the Firebender side of me, of course— though Grandma Suki married a Fire Nation colonist named Yat-Sen.”

“What about your mother?”
“Died giving birth to my sister.”

“Oh… I’m sorry.”

“One by one their seats were emptied,
And one by one they went away;
Now the family is parted,
Will it be complete one day?”

Hikaru took a deep breath, and slowly moved her sword back to aim a strike at the dummy, “Life keeps moving forwards, Master Tenzin.”

“Do you have any living family members besides your sister?”

“I think I have an aunt… I don’t know her… my mother and her lost contact after a falling out… Grampa Sen is still on Kyoshi Island— we visit him during the holidays.”

“You take care of your sister all by yourself?” Tenzin asked with concern. His brow was furrowing, but Hikaru kept training.

“Yes.”

“Will the circle be unbroken
By and by, by and by?
Is a better home awaiting
In the sky, oh, in the sky?”

“What are you going to do now? You… you aren’t able to stay in school anymore, are you?”

Hikaru suddenly swung the sword into the dummy and left it stuck in the straw shoulder. She dropped to the ground, crying. A flash of orange and yellow and red rushed over to her and Tenzin pulled her up against his chest.

“Don’t hold your emotions in, dear,” he said softly. “It’s okay to feel pain.”

Hikaru gripped the cloak resting on his shoulders and buried her face into the sunset-colored fabric. Her life had been ruined by that goddamn Equalist who’d shot her.

Asami Sato stepped off the ferry and onto the dock of Air Temple Island. It felt strange to be here… but she didn’t really have anywhere else to go. Certainly not to her father and the Lieutenant— who would want to talk about nothing but the prototype. And not to Korra— who she was so confused about her feelings for. She couldn’t stand to watch Probending. There was no more work to be done at the factory today. She knew that… at least perhaps she could have dinner with some of the Nonbending acolytes, who were somewhat friendly.
Instead, she walked up the marble stairs and saw Tenzin sitting with… a Kyoshi Warrior? Whoever it was, it looked as though she had been crying— her beautiful white make-up had been stained and was running down her face.

Wait… was that… Hikaru?

Oh spirits…

“Ah, Miss Sato— could you please come and sit with our wonderful friend while I fetch us all a nice pot of tea?” Master Tenzin asked.

“Oh… um… sure…”

The engineer tentatively sat down on the stone bench. Hikaru looked up at her with bloodshot amber eyes, and then went back to sharpening the sword in her hands.

_Uh… why does she have a sword?_

“Hey there…” Asami said, nervously trying to initiate conversation, “What are you up to… with that… blade?”

Hikaru looked up at the falling sun, “I’m training.”

“F-for what?”

“I’m going to…” the ex-Firebender let out a sigh, “… forget it… Tenzin wouldn’t approve if he found out, anyways…”

“You can… you can be honest with me, I won’t tell anyone,” Asami said, meekly putting a hand on Hikaru’s shoulder.

_How can you ask her to be honest with you?_ the Annoying Voice asked, _You fucking shot her!

Asami, with her free hand, nervously dug her nails into her thigh. Not right now— the voices could not be bothering her right now. The nails would leave little tiny red marks.

_“Ouch, cut it out!”_

_“Opps! Sorry, Soulmate,”_ Asami thought apologetically. She lifted her hand and settled it in her lap.

Hikaru fiddled with the sharp edge of her saber and looked into Asami’s green eyes, “I’m going to go after the Equalists…”

“What?”

_What?!?_ the Annoying Voice asked skeptically.

_What?!?_ the Equalist Voice growled.

“I said I’m going after the Equalists… I can’t do anything else… maybe after I get some revenge… I’ll sell the sword… it’s the only thing I have left of any value…”

“What do you mean?”

“I was kicked out of RCU— I was in on a Probending Scholarship…” Hikaru muttered, looking at the ground and scuffing the dirt with her shoes.
“Oh. I’m sorry.”

“I’ll be alright… It’s my sister I’m worried about. We got by because the scholarship paid for food and board… but if I don’t find work soon we’re going to… we’ll end up on the streets…”

Hikaru looked up at Asami with tears in her eyes.

“I don’t want them to take away my sister,” she cried.

You ruined her life.

She deserved it.

What have I done? the heiress thought, feeling her heart drop into a bottomless pit.

And then the Equalist and Engineer, Asami Sato, did something that her father and the Lieutenant would have considered very, very stupid. The words flowing out of her mouth felt unfamiliar, and nothing like her at all;

“I can get you a job at Future Industries,” the engineer said, putting a hand over Hikaru’s.

“You’d do that?”

Asami gave the ex-Firebender a sad smile, “It’s the least I can do.”

Ask yourself… would your mother be proud of you? For… for doing this to people? the Annoying Voice asked.

The Equalist Voice tried to interject, Asami wouldn’t know—

No… no she wouldn’t be proud of me at all, the engineer thought miserably. But… maybe I can give her a reason to be proud of me again…

Chapter End Notes

Here’s my favorite version of the song that Suki was singing:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0e4Crth_Hb8

Another chapter to come tonight (maybe)...
Bender’s and Nonbender’s Coalition

Chapter Summary

"Anyone who has ever looked into the glazed eyes of a soldier dying on the battlefield will think hard before starting a war."

-Otto Von Bismark

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“What’s the plan?” Eun asked.

Five members of the Bender’s and Nonbender’s Coalition were hiding in an alleyway; the Waterbenders Eun and Tesmaa, the Earthbender Bao, and the now Nonbenders— Mula and Hikaru. The Ba Sing Sei Badgermoles had technically disbanded from the official Probending League… but they were a family, and family sticks together.

“We charge in— this is a warehouse filled with Equalist paraphernalia. We plant these and run,” Bao said, holding up a bag of homemade explosives.

“How the hell did you make those?” Hikaru asked, warily eyeing the bag.

“I may be an Earthbender— but I’m also a chemistry major. Think of it this way, a spoon full of sugar can make more than just medicine go down,” the Earthbender countered with a sly grin.

“I don’t know about these suits,” Mula said nervously.

They were in unique, heavy outfits made of tiger seal skin. Tesmaa, being of Northern Water Tribe descent, had the theory that the blubber would absorb the electricity from the Equalist gloves and… make them impervious somehow? Hikaru was still convinced it was a sketchy idea. She scratched at her grandmother’s armor— which she’d put on underneath— and tightened her grip on her sword.

“We’ll be okay… just stay away from them and let us take out the Missiles,” Eun said.

“I can do more than just stand there,” Mula grumbled.

Hikaru put a hand on his shoulder to reassure him. Tesmaa motioned for the group to follow and they looked at the doors of the warehouses— guarded by Equalosers wearing those ugly bug-eyed masks.

“Go!” the Waterbender whispered.

Looking back on it, the scene was both terrifying… and beautiful in some aspects. Having planned it out beforehand, Eun and Tesmaa made sure to soak the Equalists in as much water as possible— a handful of the idiots forgot the important science lesson in middle school… you know… the lesson where you learn that water conducts electricity? Yeah, it was kinda funny to watch them fry themselves.
Meanwhile, Bao kicked ass— covering herself all over with Earth (leaving no part of her unprotected) and charging the Missiles (the Coalition's name for the assholes who used the Unobtainium Arrows). Hikaru and Mula helped where they could— having shed all fear of the arrows taking away their bending. Besides, it wasn’t as though their toothpicks could do any serious physical damage— ouch, no, that arrow hurt a bit.

Hikaru pulled the point out of her hip and continued fighting on the ramp.

Training against a standing dummy and fighting against an armed and skilled combatant are two very different things. Her current opponent was good; ducking and leaping back whenever she tried to slice at him…

Which was perfect because he backed right into Mula, who knocked him out with a pipe to the back of the head.

“Nice going!”

“Thanks!”

An arrow whizzed past her head. Hikaru turned and snarled. She began to run at the Missile.

“Yeah?” she shouted, “Try and stop me!”

The ex-Firebender felt an arrow in her thigh, and then one in her ribcage, but she kept going—racing forwards with her sword. She ran up the metal catwalk and dodged another arrow, pulling her sword back just enough for the perfect jab.

“Wait! Wait! Wait! Please!”

But it was too late.

The Equalist slumped against the wall with a blade in his stomach.

*Oh fuck. Oh shit oh shit oh shit!!*

Hikaru bent down and took his mask off. She was staring at a boy, not three or four years older than her, with fair skin and brown hair. Oh jeez— his mouth was bleeding… she must’ve hit his lung…

“Why?” the boy asked, whimpering a little.

“I… I don’t know…” Hikaru trailed off.

Anger had come over her. How could she have done this?

“What’s your name?”

“Oh-Hikaru… what’s yours?”

“Iang…”

“I’m sorry I did this.”

The boy looked up at her with sad brown eyes and coughed, spraying blood all over Hikaru’s perfect white Kyoshi Warrior make-up.

“Occupational hazard,” the boy said with a small chuckle.
And then he went still.
Hikaru looked at him with wide, disbelieving eyes.

*I've just killed a person...*

She ran to the entrance and joined up with the rest of her group as Bao set the explosives.

*I've just killed a person...*

“*You hear the news?*” Korra asked Mako, handing him a soda.

“*About the warehouse being attacked? Yeah— apparently it was Equalists against that new Bending group… what was it? Bender’s Coalition?*”

“Something like that.”

They sat in silence and looked at the sky. Korra leaned back against Naga and ran her fingers through the blades of grass— occasionally taking a sip from her soda.

“*A lot of injured, and one killed,*” Mako said, reading the news off of his phone. "*And the building was blown up.*"

“*This is horrible… the last thing I want is death,*” Korra sighed, running a hand through her short, chestnut hair.

“What are you going to do?”

“I’ll post a video tonight, and then I’ll go to the Bender’s Coalition. Maybe… do you think I should visit the family of the deceased?”

“It depends… he or she openly hated benders, and you’re the Avatar… might not look good to the family…”

Korra let out a puff of fire through her mouth. Being the Bringer of Balance was hard.

“Hey there…” a voice said, as a person walked up to the pair.

“Asami! It’s good to see you!” Korra said, eagerly standing up (and sloshing a bit of soda on Mako).

The engineer hesitantly stepped forwards and gave the Water Tribe girl a hug. Korra didn’t want to sink to that level yet… but she smelled like Jasmine and… dirt? Not… not like smelly or anything… just like fresh Earth.

“Sorry, my hands are filthy,” Asami chuckled, “I was working in the garden this morning. Calming place, you know.”

“I didn’t know you liked gardening.”
Asami opened her mouth in confusion and then closed it, “Oh. Right.”

“Did you hear the news?” Mako asked, holding up his phone.

The engineer looked at the headline, and then down at the ground with… sadness? Huh.

“It’s a shame…” she said after a few seconds.

“Hey! When was the last time we all went out for something to eat?” Korra asked, trying to brighten the gloomy conversation.

“Oh… uh… never?”

“Well come on!” Korra said excitedly.

“I’ve actually got to get back to work. My break’s almost up,” Mako sighed, standing up with a stretch. He gave Korra a hug and then fist bumped Asami.

They watched him stroll down the park path with his hands in his pockets.

“Sooooooo… would you like to go get some dinner?”

“Oh… you know what? Sure! I need… I need a break,” Asami said wistfully.

Like the total dork that she was, Korra gave the heiress a chivalrous bow and kissed her hand. She felt her heart flutter and looked up at Asami—who was red in the face but also smiling shyly.

“Shall we be off, my good Widget?”

The engineer rolled her eyes, “Take us away, notorious Bandit!”

They climbed on top of Naga and raced through the streets. Somewhere along the way—Korra felt Asami press her cheek against her shoulder and let out a sigh.

Noodles. Noodles fix everything.

She set a course for Narook’s.

Hikaru walked through the door in her green Kyoshi armor—having discarded the Tiger Seal skin at the Coalition’s warehouse. She had been careful to wipe her face clean of the make-up… and the blood. The ex-Firebender let out a groan as she set the sword on the dining room table and flopped down on the couch.

She heard the creak of a door opening and saw her sister Suki peeking her head through.

“You can come on out, it’s not a school night— I know you’ve been up!” Hikaru chuckled.

She’d gone out on another raid this evening… this time being a little more careful with her sword; only disarming and disabling the Equalists…

She let out a huff and picked up her little sister.

“What are you wearing?”

“Oh,” Hikaru looked down at the green and black armor, “This is… uh… this was for a costume party! I went as Grandma!”

“Oh cool! Did you win any prizes?”

*I killed somebody.*

“No,” Hikaru said, shaking her head back and forth, “there were a lot of scary costumes. Maybe next time.”

They watched Disney movies until well past midnight— when the little girl’s head was lopsided and she was curled up in Hikaru’s lap. The ex-Firebender grabbed the remote and pressed STOP— collecting the tiny body of her sister and carrying the girl to her bedroom.

Closing the door, she let out a sigh and walked over to the cabinet— where a bottle of whiskey was waiting.

Asami let out a laugh at Korra’s joke (even though it wasn’t all that funny). She took another sip of her cider and leaned back on the soft couch in Opal and Korra’s apartment.

“So… how’s work?”

*Which job? One of my best Chi Blockers was killed yesterday by… it couldn’t have been… but the autopsy said… wounded by a sword… did she really have it in her? I had it in me… and on top of that the whole damn Warehouse is nothing but rubble… Raava, what a mess…*

Asami shook her head and looked at Korra, “I’d just bore you with the details… you know… business stuff.”

A pair of blue eyes twinkled in the dim light of the candles, “Oh— I don’t mind! I just… I like listening to you… I could listen to you talk about paint drying, and I’d still enjoy it!”

The heiress looked down with a blush, “Well… we got a new shipment of solenoids for improving electronic systems in the Satomobiles— and we’re testing faster motors to improve the automatic window-rollers and…”

Korra was looking at her with admiration, even though Asami was droning on about car mechanics. The engineer trailed off on her monologue and looked at those… those encaptivating cerulean eyes.

The two faces began looming closer and closer.

“Korra…”

“Asami?”

“I… I can’t…”
“Why?”

*Because I’m an Equalist… I’m the bad guy…*

Asami took a deep breath. She could feel the anxiety attack swirling within her and looked down. Korra’s dark hands were creeping towards hers— ever so slowly.

“I… I lead a complicated life and so do you… and…”

Their lips were close enough that Asami could feel Korra’s warm breath. She felt fingers intertwine with hers. Korra’s hands… they were so warm…

“Not right here. In this room… we’re not anybody… I’m not the Avatar and you’re not a future CEO,” the Water Tribe girl muttered. “We’re just *Korra and Asami*…”

*I can… I can live with that.*

Their lips met. Not passionately— with burning blazes and exploding fireworks— but slowly, and with the warmth of a hearth. A soft tangle of mouths and arms and hands and legs, as Korra leaned on top of Asami and pushed her, slowly and softly, down onto the cushions. The engineer let out a whimper and cupped the Avatar’s cheek… she needed more… she needed so much more.

*I guess I’m a bottom… huh… who’d a thought?*

She felt Korra’s tongue swipe between her lips and she groaned. She definitely needed *more of that.* Asami gripped Korra’s short brown hair and reciprocated the gesture— swirling her tongue around with Korra’s, like some sort of dance.

It felt good. It felt *so good.*

She didn’t realize how much she’d needed this until she felt warm lips and hot breath trailing down her neck, and as Korra’s teeth grazed against her pulse point— she couldn’t help but feel like a fool for holding herself back.

“Oh… oh!! Right there!”

She heard a happy chuckle and felt a hum against her neck as Korra continued licking and nipping and sucking along her jaw.

*She’s a Bender,* the Equalist Voice growled.

*Shut the fuck up,* both Asami and the Annoying Voice retorted.

The engineer let out a moan and pulled on the back of Korra’s head, by her short hair. The Avatar’s face looked up and Asami crushed their lips together. Teeth clicked together and tongues were accidentally bitten— but as they slowly fell into a rhythm, the Equalist girl felt as though she was properly experiencing… paradise.

As long as they were here, kissing and holding each other and pretending that there wasn’t a Bender and Nonbender war raging outside their doorstep… Asami could feel at ease.

Chapter End Notes
Oh no! They got together in chapter 17... and it's a 90 chapter fic!!!
Ziraseal, what do you have in store for us??!

*snickers from my apartment in Washington*
“For Every Action There is an EQUALIST and Opposite Reaction”

Chapter Summary

“I guess that’s just part of loving people: You have to give things up. Sometimes you even have to give them up.”

— Lauren Oliver, Delirium

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Baatar and Kuvira were dancing around in their new apartment—listening to indie/alternative and silently embracing each other tightly as they slowly swirled back and forth. Okay… maybe they were also a little drunk.

“I love you,” Kuvira whispered.

“I love you, too.”

They swayed around, listening to Nick Mulvey with their heads on each other’s shoulders. Their eyes were closed and smiles were plastered on their faces.

The music changed.

“Baatar?”

“Hmmm?”

“Did you seriously just put disco on?”

“Maybe…”

“September” by Earth, Wind, & Fire was playing, and her fiancé grabbed her wrists and started dancing energetically around their unfurnished living room. Kuvira laughed when Baatar began lip-synching the words.

“You’re the best fiancé in the world.”

“I know.”

______________________________________________

Opal sighed, rolling over in her bed. She’d made the silly decision to sleep at her own apartment tonight— one that she was growing to regret. Korra and Asami were out having another dinner (the
Avatar wouldn’t shut up earlier today about their make-out session a few days ago); so she was all alone.

“*I miss you.*”

A few seconds passed. But nothing happened.

“*Jinora? Are you there?*”

Still no soulmate. Opal sat up in her bed and walked around the bedroom.

“*Oh god… are you okay? Please say something!!*”

Finally, Jinora answered.

“*Dude, calm down… I was meditating…*”

“*I’m sorry, I’m sorry… it’s just… after you got shot…*”

“*I know… I know— you’re sweet for worrying.*”

“*Would you… would you like to come over?*” Opal asked hesitantly.

There were a few minutes of silence… but the Airbender didn’t push it. She sat down on the couch and curled into a ball while she waited.

“*I’m on my way.*”

She smiled and closed her eyes.

Ten minutes later, instead of a knock on her door— there was a soft *tap tap tap* on her window. Opal jumped and ran to unlock the latch, greedily pulling Jinora in by the wrists and ignoring the topple of textbooks as she grabbed her girlfriend and spun her around with a laugh.

“*Hey there,*” Opal smiled, nudging her nose into Jinora’s cheek.

Jinora responded by letting out a sigh and wrapping her legs around her soulmate’s waist— kissing the top of Opal’s head.

“*Hey…*”

The older Airbender buried her forehead into Jinora’s neck and hummed.

“I’ve missed you.”

“It’s only been three days,” the Airbending Master laughed.

“Three days too long.”

Opal carried Jinora into the bedroom and hungrily pushed her down onto the mattress. Kissing her on her lips, nose, cheeks, one for each eye, and on her forehead— Opal unzipped the back of Jinora’s Glider Suit.

Jinora found a small gap where Opal’s pants met her shirt and exploited it, yanking the shirt the rest of the way out. The skin of Opal’s stomach and sides felt like silk. Jinora had to feel more of it. Hardly realizing where she’d gotten the courage to start this in the first place, Jinora quickly
unbuttoned Opal’s shirt and pushed it off her shoulders.

Her hands lightly grazed over the newly exposed skin and bra. Opal made a noise halfway between a moan and a whimper. Jinora pulled back from Opal, needing to see the other girl, needing to make sure this was all right.

“Please don’t stop,” Opal gasped, meeting Jinora’s questioning gaze.

“Opal are you sure…” she began, but the older girl interrupted.

“Yes.”

And then Jinora was reaching up for Opal’s mouth, ending the conversation quite effectively. Opal was again amazed at the passion in Jinora, and was reminded of something her mother had always said about watching out for the quiet ones.

“Ba Sing Sei,” Baatar mused.

“Are you kidding? And have to watch my back twenty-four-seven for those Dai Li fanatics?”

“Well where do you think we should go?”

“Ember Island.”

“What’s so special about the Fire Nation?”

“It’s warm!” Kuvira huffed, pressing a kiss to her fiancé’s temple.

“Okay, but… uh…”

“You just want to study the palace architecture, don’t you?”

“Yeah,” Baatar said sheepishly.

Kuvira pressed kisses to his face. They were sitting on the floor of the apartment—having no furniture to call their own yet. That being said, the two of them were having the time of their lives.

“You know… what if we compromised and took a road trip?”

“From Ba Sing Sei… all the way to the Fire Nation?!”

“We can take a ferry through the islands,” Kuvira hummed, nipping the pulse just under Baatar’s jaw. “And what if we stopped at the Air Temples along the way?”

“You think they’d let us in?” he asked, gasping at the sensation.

“Sweetie, our sister is, like, fourth in command.”

“Fair point…”

A faint whistling sound could be heard. Kuvira put a hand over her lover’s mouth and shushed him.
She was sensing… some sort of metal… nearing closer and closer to the building… at an alarming rate…

“Do you hear tha—”

**BOOM!!**

All of a sudden, Kuvira grabbed onto Baatar’s flannel as the wooden floor beneath them crumbled and cracked. They tumbled down, crashing into the apartment below them. She tried to keep a hold on her lover, but the fabric she was clinging onto ripped off in her hands as they fell.

**Thud!**

The former Captain of the Guard groaned— she must’ve broken her ribs. But when she touched them with hesitant fingers, all her bones felt fine. She looked over at Baatar. Junior was rolling around groaning— he’d crashed through their neighbors dining room table.

**“Hang in there,”** she thought to him, slinging one of his arms over her shoulder and helping him up.

There was fire everywhere— licking up the walls and blinding Kuvira’s sight.

**A bomb? A missile?**

A woman could be heard screaming, trying to kick the bedroom door open— Kuvira waved her hand and Metalbent the lock, watching as it burst away from the wooden door.

“Oh God, thank you so much!” the woman screamed. She was holding a small boy.

“Come on!” Kuvira yelled to her.

She half-guided, half-dragged her fiancé to the door— which would lead to the stairs.

“MOM!!” a voice called out.

Suddenly… suddenly there was an awful lot of blue— spilling out of the sinks and showers and rushing through the apartment complex. Kuvira looked at the entrance of the home, where a teenage boy was concentrating on moving the water around— trying to douse as many of the sources of flame as possible.

He managed to make a cleared path to the stairway that could lead them to safety.

“Come on!”

“Baatar, Sweetie, just a few more steps,” Kuvira muttered through gritted teeth. It was awfully hot in the building.

The teenager grabbed his Mom and younger brother with a tendril of water and safely guided them down to the streets, and then looked up at the engaged couple. Kuvira felt a cool sensation wrap around her waist— pressing her into Baatar— as they were lifted and moved to the parking lot of the complex. Her ribs felt on fire… her poor fiancé was going to need to have a healer right away.

They were set down on the concrete and the pair limped towards the streets.

“Kuv… listen…” Baatar groaned.

“What?”
She could hear it… the same whistling sound… she quickly looked up at the boy, who was still on the third flight of stairs.

“GET OUT OF THERE!” she yelled.

**BOOM!!**

Baatar moved his hand up and covered her eyes as a blinding red and orange explosion erupted in the complex above. She could feel the heat through his fingers and nearly let out a sob. The boy couldn’t have made it.

“Tesmaa!!” the mom screamed. “TESMAA NO!!!”

There was the sound of screeching tires, and a lone male voice echoed off the rooftop of a building;

“That’s what happens when you fuck with the Equalists!!”

Kuvira laid Baatar down against a street lamp and tried to clear the ringing in her ears… mixed with the sounds of screaming of people in the still burning apartment complex… mixed with the sounds of sirens approaching… mixed with the wailing of a mother who now had to bury a child.

Jinora was laying across Opal’s stomach, lightly tracing the older girl’s faint abs with her index finger. She made little patterns, swirling around her hands as her girlfriend closed her eyes and hummed in approval. They were laying naked, together in Opal’s bedroom— after what Jinora could only describe as the most intimate experience of her entire life.

The way Opal had touched her… kissed her in places that only *her own* fingers had dared to roam… the way the Beifong girl had made her scream into the soft sheets, as though the world was going to end… and then…

When Jinora had worked up the courage to reciprocate such actions… to touch… to feel… to dream no more. She’d been all over the Earth Nation, both the Water Tribes, to all the Air Temples, had visited the Fire Nation islands to see Lord Zuko himself (their families were close for the most obvious of reasons), and had spent an abundance of time in the Spirit World. Yet no place in the world could ever truly be called *beautiful*… unless Opal Beifong had stood there.

Her curves… the tiny scars on her body… the way her eyes closed and her mouth formed a taut “O” when Jinora had managed to reach *that particular spot* inside her…

The Airbending Master never wanted to leave this bedroom for the rest of her life.

“Jinora?”

“Y-Yeah?”

“I’m in love with you.”

The younger girl’s voice seemed caught in her throat. She’d never been *in love* before… but a sensation of clarity rushed through her as soon as she’d heard such a sentence. Jinora leaned forwards and captured Opal’s mouth in a tender kiss— lips sliding together in a dance as both their
breath’s hitched in anticipation. Jinora broke apart their lips with a goofy grin on her face, reaching up to kiss her girlfriend’s forehead.

“I’m in love with you, too. So much… but I’m scared…”

“Love scares you?”

“I’m scared… that I’m going to hurt you… or do something wrong… or screw up somehow… because I’m always off being an Airbending Master… what if I neglect you for my duties and—”

Opal brought her lips to Jinora’s tattooed arrow, “You could never hurt me."

“Anyone can hurt anyone.”

“Not anyone. Not you.”

“… okay… if you insist…”

“I do, Jinora. I absolutely do.”

Jinora leaned forwards so that their bodies ran parallel and her forehead was nestled in the crook of Opal’s neck. They let out a sigh in unison, and then chuckled— perhaps at the sensation of being in love, or perhaps the mere thought that, of all people in the world, they’d found each other. I’m not too sure.

But what I do know is this:

They fit together perfectly… in more ways than one.

Like puzzle pieces.

“Name?”

“Baatar Beifong Jr.,” Kuvira answered, rubbing her ribs as she sat in the hallway of the hospital. Her fiancé was in surgery, but they’d assured her that it wasn’t a life-threatening injury.

“Oh, he’s one of the Beifongs, is he? Always getting into trouble, that family.”

The former Captain smirked and looked down at her shoes. The nurse wasn’t wrong.

“Quite the fall he took, and then through a dining table— you’re lucky it didn’t have much other than placemats and napkins on it… if he’d crashed through silverware we would be facing another set of injuries.”

Kuvira almost chuckled, instead letting a small sigh out through her nose.

The nurse looked down at the clipboard, “His BAC was at .08% when we took him in…”

“We’d had quite a bit to drink… it was our first night at the place and we were celebrating…”

The nurse opened her arms for a hug and Kuvira gratefully accepted it.
“I’m sorry for what happened.”

Kuvira chuckled and wiped her nose, “Well, at least we didn’t spend anything on furniture. I think we might have lost our stereo and a few clothes, but we were going to go out and purchase some fixtures tomorrow.”

“Well, as soon as he’s moved to a room, I’ll bring you a blanket and we’ll make you comfortable.”

“Thanks… could I get something for the ribs? Soulmates, you know.”

“Oh sure thing, dear. You’re so lucky! Most people don’t find theirs within their lifetimes…” the nurse trailed off, walking over to the nearest meds cabinet and unlocking it.

“Baatar and I sure… sure do seem to have a lot of luck,” Kuvira said, looking at the burnt sleeve of her jacket and involuntarily shuddering.

It’d been a close call.

Chapter End Notes

Bye bye Tesmaa...

Don't fuck with the Equalists, kids...
Mandala

Chapter Summary

"Chaos in the world around me does NOT have to mean chaos in the world within me."

-Beth Sawickie

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Suyin let out a groan as the crowd slowly pushed through the doors of the train. Nevermind that it was rush hour— she needed to see her son!!

Her husband put a loving hand on her shoulder, “He’s alright, Su. Kuvira’s with him.”

The Matriarch’s fingers slowly crawled up to fiddle with his as she looked out of the windows of the monorail— though there wasn’t much to see… they were in a tunnel that ran underground the city.

“I know… it’s just… my baby,” she whimpered.

The married couple slowly managed to file out of the metal doorways and Suyin nervously tapped her foot on the ground— listening for the vibrations.

“You’re being paranoid,” Baatar mused.

“Mom taught me to be paranoid.”

“Oh come on, all the cabs are going to be gone if we wait too long.”

They managed to find a taxi to take them to the hospital within twenty minutes… Suyin was gripping Baatar Sr.’s hand and stroking her short, gray hair anxiously as they leaned against the cushions in the back seat. The driver smoked an awful smelling cigar as he nonchalantly weaved his way through the busy traffic— yammering on and on about the recent Probending Scores. Apparently, the White Falls Wolfbats had the advantage… their only competition, some team called the Ba Sing Sei Badgermoles, had dropped out of the league. But Su never had much interest in Probending… that’d been more of Lin’s thing.

Arriving at the hospital, Su was confused to be greeted by a big, blue hug when she got out of the taxi (her husband throwing a wad of cash at the driver). She moved her head back and realized that the tangle of hair and dark skin could only be one person.

“Hey there, Korra!”

The Avatar picked Suyin up and gave her a tight, loving embrace, “Hey there, Mom Number… I think you’re Number Four.”

“Are you serious, Lin proceeds me?”

“No, she’s Five, though she’d rather not admit it out loud… sorry, but Kya beats you (cause of the
time she smuggled me some lillyweed after my fight with Zaheer).”

Suyin let out a laugh and ruffled Korra’s hair, “I’m not going to give you contraband, if that’s what you’re asking. My illegal days are over.”

The Avatar gave Baatar Sr. a bow and showed them to their eldest son’s room. The elevator ride was taxing, to say the least. Suyin felt overwhelmed with anticipation, but she tried to suppress it as she listened in to Korra’s conversation with her husband;

“— I can’t imagine how horrible the Earth Kingdom would have been if Zaofu hadn’t stepped in… I’d probably be fighting some dictator’s army if you hadn’t built that incredible highway to Ba Sing Sei.”

Sr. laughed and put a hand on her shoulder (he was Dad Number 3), “Well, I’m just glad you made a full recovery… after you’d been poisoned, we worried so much…”

The elevator doors opened and the trio stepped out. Korra guided them through the labyrinth of hallways until they reached Room 426. Through the window, Kuvira and Opal could be seen, sitting on the edge of Baatar’s bed.

Suyin took a breath, and with a smile from the Avatar and her husband, knocked on the door and slowly pushed her way in.

“Hey, Baatar,” she said with a soft smile.

____________________________________________________

Bolin, Ikki, and Meelo were sitting in the gazebo on Air Temple Island. Or rather, Bolin was sitting on the railway and watching as Ikki and Meelo carefully moved the colorful sand around.

“Aren’t you worried about the wind blowing away your art?” the Earthbender asked.

Meelo looked up at him with a raised eyebrow, “If an Airbender doesn’t want any wind blowing his way… wind isn’t going to blow his way.”

“Fair point.”

Bolin had done Sandbending before— why, he’d just floated the bags up the island for the kids… it wasn’t too difficult of a discipline. This, however, this was something different entirely. He gazed at the intricate patterns in wonder, watching as Ikki and Meelo carefully sifted little piles back and forth to depict images of Airbending Masters throughout history.

He looked out at the courtyard of the Island, where Hikaru and her little sister were playing horseshoes with Mula and Mako. Tenzin, Bumi, and Kya were sitting and having tea— making up for the lost time that they’d spent apart for the past few decades. Pema was giving Rohan a haircut, and Jinora was practicing the Air Slice with some of the younger Airbenders, like Ryu and Kai.

Asami Sato walked up the marble steps— she had begun frequenting Air Temple Island more and more each week, though Bolin could hardly blame her. Like… like levitation, or the flying of the old Airbenders, this place seemed calming and disconnected from the rest of the world. She approached the gazebo.
“What are you working on?” she asked with a kind tone.

“A mandala!” Meelo answered, turning his head to speak so that he wouldn’t accidentally blow any of the sand away.

“Why are you doing it on the floor? Why not on a surface that you could permanently keep it on?” the engineer asked, confused.

“You’ll see,” Ikki said with a grin.

Asami sat next to Bolin and watched the artwork take construction. Together, the kids worked quickly— having started the project that morning. They emptied a bit more colorful sand from the bags and continued working until the sun began to set.

“There! All done!”

“This is the fun part!” Bolin said to Asami.

Ikki and Meelo gave each other respectful bows and then blew strong puffs of air onto the artwork. Both pairs of green eyes watched— one pair in wonder and the other in confusion— as the rainbow-colored sand blew under their feet, off the gazebo, and into Yue Bay.

“Why did you spend so much time working on that if you were only going to throw it all away?” Asami asked.

“Well… a lot of things are more precious when they’re temporary,” Meelo explained. “Like how beauty slowly changes on a person’s face— until they’re old and wrinkled like Dad!”

Ikki punched him in the shoulder, “Or like how you appreciate a family, because they won’t always be there…”

Out of the corner of his eye, Bolin noticed Asami tense up a little.

“We are taught that life and the material world are ephemeral,” Jinora explained, walking up to the group. “It’s about making something of your experiences… and then wiping it away.”

“Wiping it away…” Asami whispered.

Bolin wondered when the last time she had a break was. He lightly put a hand on her elbow and guided her out of the gazebo, giving a respectful nod to the siblings— who all left to go play games with the other guests on the island.

The Earthbender led the Nonbender to a cliff, where they sat with their legs dangling over the edge.

“Are you okay?”

He’d never talked much to the woman, but he loved making new friends… and sometimes you make your friends by going ahead and diving right in.

“I’m… I’m not sure,” Asami said, pulling her knees up to her chest. “I don’t make good decisions.”

Bolin gave a nod. “I’ve made some bad decisions… like when I tried to raise some money for our tournament and accepted an offer from Shady Shin… and then got captured by Equalists and almost lost my bending… or the time I didn’t listen to my brother about Varrick being a shifty asshole who was funding both sides of the Water Tribe Civil War.”
“— no, I mean bad decisions… like… forget about it…”

“Oh… well, I won’t pry…”

“Do you think life is really like a mandala? If I tried hard enough… I could wipe the bad stuff… away?”

Bolin put a hand on her shoulder, “Maybe… but don’t you think fixing it would be a better thing to do?”

Asami looked out at the sunset, and then leaned against him, her head resting on his shoulder. They watched the sky darken and dot with white stars— each one twinkling and gazing down on them like fireflies.

Suyin, Baatar Sr., and Kuvira were all in the same hotel suite just a block away from the hospital. Opal had offered to stay with Junior tonight, so they retreated to the hotel to try and get some sleep. Noticing the distress in their adopted daughter’s eyes, the married couple offered to let her lie down in between them for a while. Not two minutes later— Kuvira began sobbing.

“If I’d just been faster…” she said between tears, “I could have saved him…”

Suying stroked her daughter’s hair— they’d read the news on their phones during the train ride… several people had been injured, but one boy had been specifically targeted and assassinated by the Equalists. Republic City was a nightmare, to say the least.

“It’s not your fault, ‘Vira,” Baatar whispered, kissing her raven hair.

She sobbed into her mother’s green coat, staining it with tears— though Suyin didn’t mind. Between Opal having that strange “Spirit World” episode, and quitting her job as Captain, and now this… terrorist attack… Kuvira was under a terrific amount of stress. The Matriarch simply cradled her girl in her arms.

Su began singing;

“Lonely days are long
Twilight sings a song
All the happiness that used to be

Soon my eyes will close
Soon I’ll find repose
And in dreams
You’re always near to me”

Kuvira sniffled, and then buried herself further into her parent’s arms. Baatar Sr. cupped her cheeks with both of his hands and wiped the tears off with the pads of his thumbs. He opened his mouth and sang the next bit;

“I’ll see you in my dreams
Hold you in my dreams
Someone took you right out of my arms
Still I feel... the thrill of your charms

Lips that once were mine
Tender eyes that shine
They will light my way tonight
I'll see you in my dreams’’

Suyin, though not as skilled at the art as her mother or Awei, felt Kuvira’s heartbeat start to slow down. The Matriarch ran her hand through Kuvira’s long, black hair (she’d let it out of it’s braid—a once-in-a-blue-moon occasion) and smiled when her daughter joined in;

“Lips that once were mine
Tender eyes that shine
They will light my way tonight
I'll see you in my dreams

They will light my lonely way tonight
I'll...see you in my dreams”

It’d been the first song that Suyin had ever sung to the little orphan she’d found on the streets of Zaofu.

__________________________________________________________________________

Bolin walked up to the ex-Firebender, who was gazing up at the night sky.

“Ferry’s already left,” she said with a chuckle. “I don’t think Suki minds too much—she’s having a lot of fun with the lemurs.”

“Wait till she meets Pabu,” Bolin said with an enthusiastic laugh, “They’ll be fast friends.”

Hikaru smiled and looked up at the moon.

“I heard a story once about a girl who gave up her life to save the Northern Water Tribe, and then she was turned into the moon,” Bolin said, following her gaze.

“That seems highly unlikely...I’m pretty sure the moon’s just a rock floating around in space,” Hikaru said teasingly.

Bolin playfully held up his hands, “Hey, take it to Korra—she claims to be related to the girl!”

“Yeah, well, Princess Water Tribe Glowing Eyes is a little busy at the moment.”

“Oh yeah, I heard about Kuvira and Baatar...I hope they alright...apparently the Equalists had gone after the person living below them...”

“Tesmaa. They went after Tesmaa.”

She’d gotten a text from Bao that morning.
“How do you know?” Bolin asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Because I’m a member of the Bender’s and Nonbender’s Coalition… he and I organized that raid against the warehouse a week ago.”

The Earthbender’s eyes widened, “Oh.”

“Yeah… ‘Oh’…”

Bolin looked up at the moon, which seemed to be glowing softer, as if it was understanding the mood of the conversation.

“Do you regret it?”

“What? Fighting the Equalists? Isn’t that what you did when Amon ruled the turf?”

“Yeah… but… I suppose you’re right.”

“I’m just not sure what to do now… I think his second-in-command, Bao, is going to take over. She’s a little hot-headed… but she’s a good kid.”

“Are you sure this is smart? I mean… now that there are…”

“… deaths? It was going to reach this point sooner or later… now that they don’t have their ‘Bloodbender’ to stand behind… they want violence…”

Bolin turned to her. “What happened to you? You were nice and calm and—”

“I lost my bending!” she snapped. And then she looked away with a tear rolling down her cheek, “I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay… you can’t really hurt an Earthbender’s feelings… unless you break is heart and kiss his brother instead,” Bolin chuckled.

“What?”

“Oh… it’s a long story.”

The Earthbender could feel his heart pounding in his chest, and then made a stupid decision. He took the ex-Firebender’s hand and turned her so that the two of them were nose to nose.

“Why do you think the princess sacrificed herself?” Hikaru asked.

“I think she wanted to do what was right,” Bolin answered.

He wiped a tear away from her face and, in that moment, would have kissed her, but then she threw her arms around him and cried into his shoulder. Bolin let out a sigh and rubbed his hand up and down her back. Now was not the moment.

But perhaps someday.

He wondered if the Bender’s Coalition needed any Lavabenders…
Chapter End Notes

I was going to wait to post again until tomorrow but then... oops my hand slipped...

PLS LEAVE COMMENTS!!

Song: I'll See You In My Dreams by Joe Brown
Chapter Summary

"The greatest slave in a kingdom is usually the king of it."

-Fulke Greville

“Alright,” Opal said, “Let’s try again.”

Samsara took a deep breath and relaxed into the Mortal World. With each trip, it became easier to phase from one realm into another— and when she opened her eyes she smiled.

“I never get tired of coming here,” the Airbending Avatar said with a grin.

Opal held out a hand and Samsara pulled herself up. They climbed down the fire escape and walked through the living room— though the Avatar was disappointed Korra wasn’t here… she liked invisibly messing with the kid.

“Come on!” Opal whispered with a chuckle.

Though they couldn’t fly through the city (thanks to Samsara’s lack of bending), they enjoyed walking through downtown, looking at market stands and watching street performers. Samsara looked at everything in awe— not believing what she was seeing. She stopped at a market stand near the park and pointed at a strange looking instrument.

“What’s this?” the former Avatar asked.

“That’s a flute, I used to play in Zaofu,” Opal answered.

“Could you show me?”

Opal walked up to the vendor and asked if she could test it— but he made her buy it first (being a Matriarch’s daughter, she certainly had the money for it). She dropped a few yuans into his outstretched hand and walked Samsara over to a park bench nearby.

The young Beifong took a breath and began playing.

Samsara had never heard such a beautiful sound… the melody flowed through the air like… like some sort of a sweet scent to her ears…

After two or three minutes… when Opal had finished playing… Samsara didn’t know what came over her… she’d been so fascinated by the music… she lowered the flute away from Opal’s face and kissed her.

It’d been thousands of years since she’d kissed someone. Samsara had forgotten how wonderful— Opal pushed her away in shock, “What the hell?!”
Hikaru was on the Future Industries factory line, nearly falling asleep from lack of sleep. She’d been up all last night— on another raid organized by Bao. This time, they’d taken out a safe house that belonged to the Equalists.

“Wake up there, new girl,” a supervisor chided, passing by with a delicious-smelling cup of coffee. What Hikaru would give for a bit of caffeine.

She sighed and continued checking engines… over and over and over… piece of metal by painstaking piece of metal… bless Asami… but it was tiring work…

At least it paid well.

Someone passed her, accidentally tripping over her ankle.

“Woooah!!” a girl yelled as they fell. The box the other girl had been holding nearly spilled open.

“Hey, sorry about that,” Hikaru said apologetically.

The girl quickly shut the box tight, muttered something along the lines of “no worries” and weaved her way back through the factory line. But Hikaru had seen what was in the box.

It’d been unmistakably full of Unobtainium Arrows.

“Wait, Opal! I’m sorry!”

“Look, I appreciate the… gesture… but I have a girlfriend, and I love her!” Opal called behind her, angrily walking through the park.

“Let me explain!”

“I can’t deal with this right now… I need to find Jinora…”

The Beifong wielded her Glider Staff around, and Samsara watched as it sprang open— wings unfurling and the girl taking off into the sky.

Samsara looked around… none of the humans could see her, but Aina the Leaf Spirit was sitting on a park bench— curiously peering at her. She sat down and buried her head in her hands.

Opal’s wide green eyes… the way her short, black hair had freely whipped around in the wind… the smile on her face… she’d looked exactly like… Basho. How could the Avatar have been so stupid?

“Sammy… Sammy, are you there?” his voice rang out in her head, “Sammy… don’t leave me…"
Aina crawled into her lap and pressed their forehead against hers as tears flowed down her cheeks. She hadn’t felt tears in thousands of years, either.

“I’ll be back, I promise! The world needs me, Basho!”

“I need you too! I love you!”

Samsara took a long breath and ran her hands through her short brown hair.

“I’m so sorry, Opal… I’m so sorry, Basho…”

She sat up and realized that she was back in the Spirit World. Samsara walked away from Xai Bau’s grove and set off to find an Avatar to talk to. She needed the distraction.

Opal landed on Air Temple Island and walked in circles, hyperventilating. She gripped her hair and felt the tears flowing from her eyes.

She loved Jinora.

And yet… a part of her enjoyed the kiss… but why? She knew exactly who her soulmate was.

“How could she?” Opal asked aloud, “How could Samsara do that? Oh… spirits… what should I do?”

Mula passed by with his watering can, humming as he took care of the lovely flower patches that dotted all over the island.

“How… have you seen Jinora?”

“I thought you knew… there was a fire in an Earth Kingdom village, her and Korra flew out late last night to help solve the issue.”

“Oh… okay…”

“Something you need?”

Opal sat down on the marble steps and rubbed her forehead in frustration. Mula sat down next to her. The air was filled with the morning dew that covers the leaves and grass— and it set a cooling sensation upon her skin.

“What’s the oil in your rock then?”

Opal smiled, for she’d grown up with Earthbending expressions back in Zaofu. He’d asked her what was wrong.
“I… Jinora is my girlfriend… and someone else kissed me just now…”

“Well… did you kiss back?” Mula asked with a raised eyebrow.

“Not really… but part of me enjoyed it…”

“Everyone enjoys a little action now and then… you’re only human—”

“Not like that,” Opal shook her head. “Part of me really wanted to kiss her back, as if I had feelings for her… but I’m in love with Jinora… I know that Jinora is my soulmate!”

Mula shrugged, “What is it that you Airbenders do when you’re stressed and you need answers… don’t you guys meditate?”

“I don’t feel like going to the Spirit World.”

“But I thought you didn’t have to go to the Spirit World to meditate… I thought you just sit there and close your eyes…”

*I suppose I could try that.*

“Come on, I’ll join you,” Mula said with a smile.

He led her energetically over to the gazebo.

“You’re awfully interested in Air Nomad culture,” Opal laughed. “Maybe you ought to join the Acolytes…”

“Actually— I was thinking about it!” he said with a big smile, “I really like it here!”

They faced each other and smiled respectfully— Opal closed her eyes and sighed…

_Clear my mind…_

_Clear my mind…_

_Jinora…_

_Clear my mind…_

_Samsara…_

_Clear my mind!_

_Jinora…_

_CLEAR MY MIND!

She let out a huff and opened one eye to look at Mula— who was calmly sitting with a blank expression on his face… his fists pressed together. Opal let out a sigh and tried again… slowing her breathing… slowing her breathing…

Her heart began to slow… and she began to think of… nothing…
Nine-Thousand Years Ago:

Two groups of warriors were facing off in a field— spears and swords were pointed against each other and flames and earth were readied in the palms of hands. They were ready to do battle... growling at each other and spitting threats back and forth.

But then a blast of air blew everybody back. They looked towards its source— where an Air Nomad girl was waiting.

“I’m here to separate your villages,” the girl called out.

“You?! By what right do you claim power to mediate our peoples?!” a warrior yelled.

The girl jumped up with a blast of air and hovered over the two groups with her eyes glowing a brilliant white.

“By right of the Avatar!” the girl shouted— though her voice echoed another woman’s tone. Raava.

“Avatar? Like that ‘Wan’ warrior?”

“Look at her eyes! I’ve never seen such a thing!”

“Stand your ground!” the chieftains on both sides yelled.

The girl leapt down and a CRACK! could be heard as the Earth beneath their feet ripped apart.

“Air... and Earth? How can she wield—”

Water sloshed down the crevice and formed a river— separating the two groups.

“Water, too? What kind of spirit is this girl?!”

“Lay down your weapons and listen to me!”

Nobody moved... and Samsara was about to make another intimidating move when she heard a clang! from somewhere in the Earth tribe’s group.

A boy had dropped his sword. He had scraggy black hair and bright green eyes.

“Didn’t you hear her? Drop your weapons!” he shouted at the rest of the warriors.

The barbarians reluctantly lowered spears to the ground, and set down their elements as well. Samsara looked at the boy, who stepped forwards.

“What do you propose we do with our villages?” he called to her.

Samsara looked between the two tribes, “Those who wield fire shall travel west and form a new Nation... you who throw stones shall walk East— and form a Kingdom!”

“You’d make us pack up and leave?”

“Nonsense... I shall move your villages with my own hands!”
The villagers laughed at her— how silly of a proposition was that? Two entire villages!? With her own hands?!

But then Samsara’s eyes glowed and she stepped into a stance, ripping the grounds apart. The villagers stumbled and tumbled as they watched the earth at their feet separate into two pieces. Samsara spun into the sky with a column of air and pushed the Fire village out towards the sea! As the new continent moved, pieces broke off— here and there— into new islands.

Then she returned, a column of air rushing towards the Earth village, and her eyes glowed a second time. They felt the ground itself lift up as they flew through the air for many days and for many nights— past mountains and deserts— and settled in a grassy land.

“You shall call this new village Ba Sing Sei!” she called down to them from the sky.

The boy who’d spoken out before looked up, “Who shall be King?”

Samsara pondered this for a moment, “The one who builds the best palace!”

And then she left.

They began to squabble among themselves about who could build a taller building, or who could make the prettiest fort. Many of the warriors wandered off with their friends and families— wanting to explore this new territory. But the boy had a clever idea. He stomped his feet and great big walls of Earth rose up. The walls pushed the other barbarians out— far to the edges of the grassy lands. He then stomped his feet again and created another set of walls— as high as mountains, it seemed.

Inside the second ring he carefully crafted a palace, with a giant throne room and many beautiful works of architecture.

A few days later, Samsara had returned.

“A palace fit for a King,” she mused.

“Oh no! This is not for me! This is for you!” the boy said eagerly.

“What?”

“I don’t want to be King! I wanted to build this to say thank you, for bringing peace to our peoples!”

Samsara looked around, “You… you understand that I cannot live here…”

“What do you mean?”

“I am no ruler— I am a Bringer of Balance… I don’t conquer people… but guide them.”

The boy looked away in sorrow, “It’s here… should you decide to return.”

Opal snapped her eyes awake and looked at Mula, who was… snoring.
She heard a large animal bellowing and followed the sound to the sight of Oogi landing in the courtyard— where two girls slid off and stumbled onto the ground. She ran over to them.

“Korra! Jinora!”

Their hair was singed and their clothes smelled a little burnt, but they rolled over and grinned at her.

“Hey!”

“Are you alright?” Opal asked, bending over her soulmate.

“Yeah! The fires were spreading everywhere, but then Korra went all Glowing-Eyes and flooded EVERYTHING! It was so cool!” Jinora said sleepily.

“Mmm the grass is so comfy… we’ve been flying for hours…” Korra muttered, her cheek pressing into the damp dirt that Mula had watered earlier that morning.

Jinora’s fingers reached out and grasped onto Opal’s, “Nighty night…”
"Intimacy is the capacity to be rather weird with someone; and finding that that's ok with them."

-Alain de Boton

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Like a mandala… wipe it away…

She was sitting in her garden again— thinning out the vegetables. Summer was drawing closer each day, and Asami wondered if she ought to invest in a lean-to, or a gazebo— like the one at Air Temple Island… perhaps she could build one today… there was some spare lumber in the workshop…

She heard footsteps and turned around.

“Hey!” Korra said energetically.

Ok… but was this another dream?

Asami pinched her arm as she stood… huh she felt pain. So… it wasn’t a dream? When she looked over, Korra had a frown on her face for a split-second, but then broke into a wide, goofy grin. Asami leaned forwards and captured Korra’s lips in a chaste kiss.

*Keep up appearances*, The Equalist Voice growled. *Yes… very good.*

*Or maybe she’s kissing her because they’re fucking sweethearts— you bozo!* the Other Voice snapped.

*Shut up, you two*, Asami thought.

“How is the… uh… gardening?” the Avatar asked when they broke apart.

“Join me?”

“Sounds perfect.”

Asami turned and knelt back in the dirt, and Korra followed suit— taking the trowel that the engineer handed her. They leaned against each other slightly as they worked in the shade— pulling tiny vegetable by tiny vegetable. Occasionally their hands would cross paths and Asami would feel a spark of electricity.

Like a mandala… wipe it away…

What confused her most… was that Korra could have Earthbent the vegetables out… she could have Waterbent the watering can’s contents instead of patiently walking to the hose and back… she could
have used Airbending to cool herself down… but she was perfectly content just kneeling there and doing manual labor… like a Nonbender.

“Phew!” the Avatar said when they finished thinning the fourth row of carrots, “I could use some shade…”

“Yeah, I was thinking about building a lean-to… or some sort of shelter…”

“Well how about it, then? You have some lumber laying around?”

“You’re just going to build a hut in my garden? Without sketching something out first?”

“With your engineering brains and these babies?” Korra asked, flexing her muscles, “We can do anything!”

Asami playfully rolled her eyes and led Korra over to the workshop— rolling the doors open with an “oomph!” and walking into the cool shade.

“AAAAHHH,” Korra exclaimed, “That feels so much better!”

“Lumber’s over here!” Asami called.

She started looking through the planks… let’s see… what would make a good—

“Hey, what’s this?”

Asami’s heart raced when she turned around. Korra had picked up… an Unobtainium Arrow that she’d left on her workbench. Her father’s newest prototype.

Fuck!

“Uh… one of my employees found that on the street yesterday… I wanted to get a good look at it so that I could make something to prevent Team Avatar from getting shot!” Asami lied.

Fuck, fuck, fuck!!

Korra gave her a smile and set the projectile back down on the table, “Well… I can’t wait to see what you come up with!”

The Equalist inside her let out a great big sigh… but also part of her… felt horrible… why did she just lie to her girlfriend?

You’re a warrior… you have to make sacrifices, the Equalist Voice whispered.

Like a mandala, the Other Voice whispered, wipe it away…

“Well then, let’s move these out to the garden!”

“Korra… we don’t even have a rough sketch!”

“Oh come on, Widget! That’s the fun! It’s like improv comedy!”

“I don’t think architecture follows the same principles…” Asami trailed off hesitantly (though there was a smile on her face as wide as the Great Divide).

The Almighty Avatar loaded the wooden planks into a metal cart and grabbed Asami’s hand. With
their hearts racing—they set off towards the garden. It was only thirty minutes in that the engineer
realized that... somewhere along the way... she had truly begun to consider Avatar Korra her best
friend.

__________________________________________

“Easy does it, love,” Kuvira whispered to Jr.

After withstanding countless pleas from Suyin and Sr. to return to Zaofu— Kuvira and her fiancé
were standing in their new house (they say that Earthbenders are notoriously famed for their
stubbornness). Swallowing their fears that the attack was targeted at them... they decided to try
again. Though only a rental... they’d been sure to move into a safer neighborhood...

Still... they couldn’t help but feel a little jumpy.

Baatar was up and walking around— having recovered from his injury last week. Now, he was
currently studying a painting that Huan had sent to them.

“I don’t think we should hang this in the kitchen...” he muttered, scratching his beard.

“I’m not going to lie; I love Huan... but I don’t think we ought to hang that painting anywhere at
all.”

Baatar looked at his fiancé and burst out laughing. Together they giggled as they wrapped a sheet
around the painting and stored it in a closet down the hallway. They were all finished packing up,
and Kuvira was standing in the living room with her hands on her hips... she looked pretty stunning
with the strands of black hair falling out of her braid and the sweat on her brow... mmm...

“You know... when I first pictured us moving in together— I didn’t expect to be blown up in
Republic City... I was thinking more along the lines of having sex on the kitchen floor in Zaofu...”
Jr. mused with a husky voice.

He approached his girl and bumped his nose against hers as he ran his fingers— as lightly as a
ghost’s touch— up the sides of her abdomen. Her breath hitched but she raised an eyebrow.

“I’m not doing anything with you until your ribs heal.”

Baatar pouted and gave Kuvira the “Puss-in-Boots” face with big, sad green eyes. He even fluttered
his eyelashes like Bambi.

“Oh, yeah, cause that’s really sexy.”

The architect sighed and picked up Kuvira, carrying her to the bedroom. She squirmed and playfully
tried to blind his eyesight as he walked down the hallway with her.

“Ow! Hey! Put me down! I can feel your ribs in pain, you know! This is not the physical therapy
stretching that they were talking about!”

“Oh, trust me, Kuv. You’re just what the doctor ordered,” Bataar whispered into her ear as he shut
the door with his foot.
Needless to say—they didn’t come out of the room for another three hours.

“There! Just like that!”

“This is not structurally sound…”

“Widget… I’m feeling a really pessimistic vibe right now…”

“I can’t help it, Bandit! I was raised to think mathematically… science is channeling through me… whispering to me… that your lean-to is going to fall if you don’t support it right!”

Korra frowned and leaned another board against the building, nailing it in. Asami patiently watched from her seat on the stepping stones. It felt good to… to be filthy and sweaty and wearing a tank top and not feel as though she had to be dressed up for an event.

Thunk!

“Alright! Yeah… that’ll stay up—”

Creak! Groan!

“I’d step away if I were you…” Asami warned.

Crash!!

“Korra!”

The wooden boards of the lean-to had collapsed on top of the Water Tribe girl, burying her in a pile of splinters and nails. The engineer jumped up and ran towards the rubble, feeling a clench in her heart as she pulled four or five boards away. Asami felt a headache but shook it off as she searched through the debris.

“Korra, are you okay?!”

She heard a muffled response as a hand shot out from underneath the dusty cloud and wooden ruins. Asami grabbed onto it and pulled up—Korra broke through the pile with an “Ugh!” and gave a chuckle as she captured Asami’s lips in a filthy kiss. The heiress was startled at first, but then kneeled down and cupped the back of Korra’s head to bring the two of them closer.

“Memo to me… memo to me,” the Avatar muttered, “Listen to my girlfriend when I build something for her.”

Girlfriend.

Huh.

That had a nice ring to it.
Asami grabbed Korra’s biceps and tugged the girl up.

“I’m sorry about the mess,” the younger girl said sheepishly.

The engineer gave a… a genuine laugh and kissed her girlfriend on the forehead. The stood there, in the summer heat, swaying back and forth in an embrace. Asami’s cheek was pressed into Korra’s shoulder as she looked at the former lean-to.

“We can try again,” Asami whispered in Korra’s ear. “We have all the time in the world.”

The Avatar gave her a big, goofy grin, “Alright… I promise to do what you say this time, though… I’ve wrecked half your garden already…”

Truth be told… the engineer didn’t mind in the slightest.

Her mother’s garden had always been… a lonely place… somewhere where Asami could run when she missed her mom… or when the Equalist life was too stressful… or when she didn’t know what to think of herself. For the first time in her life— it felt like a place she could share with someone. Someone like Korra.

“Come on, let’s go inside and get something to drink— and properly sketch a design before we build… our shelter.”

“Ours?”

“Yeah… ours.”

“Are you… sure… like… 100% certain… that the artic-hen is supposed to be cooked at 350°?” Kuvira asked, nervously peering at the bird through the oven window.

Baatar looked up from the couch, “Uh… it’s what the oven said.”

The Metalbender pursed her lips and then shrugged in defeat— worst case scenario they’d order take-out.

“I guess we’ll find out in twenty minutes.”

She flopped onto the sofa and carefully leaned her head on top of Baatar’s chest— being mindful of his ribs. He absentmindedly stroked her raven hair and kissed the top of her head as she hummed a tune that’d been stuck in the back of her head for the past three days. She reached down to his left hand and intertwined their fingers.

“I was thinking…”

“A dangerous activity for a Beifong,” Kuvira noted.

“… I want to apply for a job at Future Industries.”

“What do you need a job for? We’re Beifongs!”
“I don’t wanna get bored while you go off and save the city… or protect our little sister… or kick Korra’s ass… I’m not sure what it is you do.”

“All of the above, potentially,” Kuvira grumbled.

They laid there for a while longer, with the Metalbender’s forehead pressed into Baatar’s neck. She felt her face vibrate when he continued humming the same damn tune that’d been stuck in her head.

*Beep! Beep!*

They both jumped, startled at the noise.

Kuvira inhaled and exhaled slowly— trying to calm herself down.

“It’s just the oven,” Baatar reassured her, putting a hand on her shoulder.

The former Captain looked down at the carpet and tried to stand up, but her breathing was ragged.

“Kuv? It’s not another explosion. Kuv? Are you there?”

Her fingers wandered up to meet his, but she kept staring at the ground.

We’re safe here… we’re safe here…

But another reality stuck itself in the back of her head.

*We’re not going to be safe until those Equalists are dealt with.*

“Okay… look at this support beam,” Asami said, taking a sip of her Mike’s Hard Lemonade.

“I see it.”

“Now… with that here… if I were to take it away… what would happen?”

“The… the shelter would collapse on me… again…” the Water Tribe girl muttered.

“Mm-hmm,” Asami mused, kissing Korra on her shoulder. “So… we’re going to add three of these in… right here…”

They were sitting in Asami’s bedroom at her desk, contemplating what designs would work best out in the garden.

“Okay… so if we put a column on either side…”

“— exactly! You’ll have a supported entrance to the structure!” Asami grinned.

*This is nice… this is… really nice.*
Asami had… forgotten what fun felt like.

The Avatar looked up at the window and frowned, “It’s getting dark… I should head back to the apartment.”

“No!”

Korra turned and looked at Asami with a questioning expression. The engineer looked down at the carpet and scuffed her foot a few times.

She… she didn’t want this to end…

*How can you be… enjoying… a Bender’s company?* the Equalist Voice snarled.

Asami pushed it aside.

“You wanna stay the night?”

Korra looked at her with a jaw that’d dropped to the floor. And then her face lit up like Glacier Spirit Fireworks as she jumped out of the chair— pulling Asami up with her and dancing around the bedroom.

The heiress had never seen a more beautiful sight.

“Wait… what about your dad?”

Asami scoffed. The old man was probably working on prototypes at the underground bunker— he’d likely sleep there tonight.

“Don’t worry about him…”

The engineer drew closer and reached up to stroke a hand through Korra’s chocolate hair. The Avatar closed her eyes and leaned into Asami’s hand— the older girl’s heart leapt at the simple gesture.

Swiftly, with the execution of desire and passion, Asami closed the six-inch gap between the two girls. Korra’s breath was hot and filled with lust… Asami needed more of it. The heiress wrapped a hand around Korra’s waist and pulled them together, tugging at the hem of the Avatar’s jeans.

Their lips slid together with… a sense of expertise… as though in every lifetime they’d been practicing for *this encounter*. Asami whimpered when Korra bit down on her lower lip and tugged a little. The engineer reciprocated by sucking softly on Korra’s lip.

“Mmmm… ‘Sami…”

“Korra… I need you…”

Cerulean eyes met emerald ones and thousands of words were exchanged, silently, between the two girls within a matter of seconds.

“I need you, too.”

That was all it took for the engineer’s willpower to crumble.

Asami growled and pushed Korra down on the bed, who let out a small, timid whimper as the engineer climbed on top of her and… well… let’s just say Asami was now a graffiti artist— and
she’d left her newest oeuvre on Korra’s neck.

*Are you sure about this, ‘Sami? You’ve sworn an oath to rid this city of Benders… you’ve lied to this woman and hurt her friends… can you really break down this barrier? Invite yourself to this intimacy? Can you really claim the right to Korra’s body? What have you accomplished for her?*

Korra reached up and gripped Asami’s ebony hair, pulling the heiress up so that their lips could meet.

*I haven’t done a damn thing to deserve this.*

The Avatar, her eyes looking… no… *begging* for permission from Asami, slowly pulled the zipper of Asami’s shirt down. Without a second thought—the heiress brought her hand to Korra’s and accelerated the process. Korra pushed the shirt off Asami’s shoulders and just sat there, running her finger tips over Asami’s smooth skin.

Perhaps such an action lost the intensity of sexual desire… but it spurred something else in the heiress’s heart.

This was *real.*

And as clothes were cast onto the floor of Asami’s bedroom, the older girl screaming into the night—her cries echoing off the walls of the empty mansion… fingers roaming where… where only six months ago Asami would have absolutely disgusted to even *consider* roaming… as all this happened… Asami realized that, not only was the Water Tribe girl her first *best friend*…

Not only that, but Avatar Korra… in the span of a few short weeks… had become her first *love.*

Chapter End Notes

:*O*
"He who permits himself to tell a lie once, finds it much easier to do a second and third time, till at length it becomes habitual."

-Thomas Jefferson

Two Weeks Later:

Asami woke up and stretched her body with a groan… mmmmmm…

She felt an arm wrapped around her waist and looked to her left. Korra.

This was the fourth time they’d slept together.

The beautiful younger girl was fast asleep— and would likely stay that way for many an hour— her head was a little lopsided on the pillow and she had a little drool falling from her mouth. Her chestnut hair scraggily stuck in every direction— making Asami wonder if the girl was lying about putting effort into it in the mornings.

She heard Korra snore (and simultaneously rock the foundation of Opal and Korra’s apartment complex) and let out a chuckle.

The engineer lowered her face so that they could lie parallel— studying the clear complexion and smooth surfaces of Korra’s face. Every little curve and dip was… flawless. Asami raised her fingertips to a spot on Korra’s cheek where she had two faint pink scars. She traced them— over and over again— running the pads of her fingertips as lightly as she could… so that Korra could continue sleeping.

How? How could she carry on being… being such a monster? Lying to Korra? Lying to her father and the Lieutenant? Lying to herself?

I’m an Equalist. We’ve bombed buildings. We’ve ruined Bender’s lives. All because my father conditioned it into me that… that the people who have these privileges are the same people who killed Mom.

But… but that’s not true.

Right?

Asami twirled a short piece of Korra’s hair around, running it through her index and middle finger as she laid in thought.

I love Korra.

I love the Avatar. The Bendiest Bender to Ever Bend!!
How can I continue doing this?

No.

No— I’ll fix this somehow… I’ll make it so that… so that…

Korra let out a grunt in her sleep and rolled over so that her lips were pressed into Asami’s neck. The heiress looked up at the ceiling and sighed through her nose.

I really want to leave the Equalists, don’t I?

But what of her father? Her company? Was it cowardice to run? To hide? Perhaps— perhaps she could… retaliate. Take them down from within? No… that was too much to ask for. Asami fiddled with Korra’s mocha fingers and closed her eyes.

I can’t leave the Equalists. But… but I can make their lives difficult.

There was an uneasy feeling in Asami’s stomach— as though everything was about to change.

Blue eyes that reminded Asami of exquisite sapphires opened awake. Asami nudged her nose against Korra’s and let out a quiet sigh— almost undetectable in volume. But Korra noticed.

“Are you alright?”

No.

“I’m under a lot of stress. It’s not your fault… or anything to do with you.”

It actually is. It has everything to do with you.

Korra smiled apologetically, “I’m here if you need someone to vent at.”

“Thanks… I’m just worried that I’m going to make a decision soon… at work… that’ll make a lot of people angry,” the heiress muttered.

The Avatar reached up and kissed Asami on the forehead, and then on her nose, both of her cheeks, her chin, her eyes, and then finally her lips.

“Widget… you’re so beautiful.”

“You’re— how can you say that? Korra… you’re an absolute goddess!”

Asami knew she’d hit a sensitive spot— from the way the Water Tribe girl blushed and hid herself in a pillow. She could tell from mere dates when Korra fiddled with her clothes and stole glances at mirrors that the Avatar was unconfident about her beauty. It made sense… when she was growing up, Korra only had time for work or training, and no time to think about what she looked like. For Asami— it was the opposite. She had to look a certain way and hold herself in a certain manner— and those precious few hours where she could escape into a workshop were everything growing up.

The Equalist cradled the Bender’s face, and there was yet another barrier that was torn down between them;

“I love you.”

“Korra…”
“You don’t have to say it back… I’ve just… ever since… we literally bumped into each other and met… I’d fallen in love with you— over and over. Again and again. You make me feel so safe and happy.”

Asami swallowed a million fears and insecurities. This was it. The moment of truth.

“Korra… I love you too.”

There was no going back now.

Hikaru stifled a yawn and checked another engine. Waking up before 8:00 AM should be considered a crime punishable by sleep.

That being said— she was on edge.

Ever since she’d seen those Unobtainium Arrows in the box on the factory floor… she’d been wary of Future Industries and its employees. Was… was the old man next to her an Equalist? Or the supervisor standing on the ramp overhead with his cup of coffee?

She felt paranoid.

She was paranoid.

What… what if this was some sort of set-up? What if they knew that she was part of the Bender’s and Nonbender’s Coalition?

She needed some air. She made a beeline for the employee restroom.

The place smelled pretty… you know… shitty. But she ignored it, hunching over the sink and realizing that her breathing was ragged and shallow. She felt her nails digging into her thigh.

You’re being touchy and overdramatic.

Hikaru looked up at the mirror. Her Fire Nation bun was messy and needed to be re-done. So she pulled it out, letting her long raven hair fall all the way down to her hips. Taking a few lengthy breaths to calm herself down, she carefully wrapped her hair back into the knot and slipped a band around it.

In the reflection… she looked just like her mother.

She wondered if she looked anything like her aunt— but she had no pictures of the lady. Not that she needed them. She knew that she looked… similar…

Hikaru sighed and stepped out of the bathroom. The factory supervisor hadn’t noticed her absence, inattentively reading from a sports magazine about the Wolfbat’s victory at the Probending Championship.

The ex-Firebender continued checking over Satomobile engines as the hours continued to pass at a snail’s pace.

I wonder if I could meditate standing up… and still be able to check over engines.
Lunch break passed. Hikaru sat alone, in the corner— slurping on her cold noodles (everyone was using the microwave, there was no way she’d get to it in time). Back to checking over engines, Hikaru had to remind herself that she was doing all this for little Suki. She took a deep breath and—

Someone passed by, silently pressing a note into her hand. Hikaru didn’t look away from the engine, continuing to check the apparatus over and over.

Fifteen minutes later, she zipped over to the restroom. Locking the door behind her, she reached into her pocket and unfolded the note;

Coalition Member,

I know who you really are. I know what you’re trying to do— when night falls and the criminals are out. You’re trying to stop the Equalists.

I can’t tell you who I am… and I can’t leave the Equalists… yet. But know that I am a high-ranking member, and I’m going to help you take them down.

Hikaru’s breath hitched. Was this a fake note? A trap?

I know that your Firebending was taken away by these people.

The girl’s eyes widened.

I’m sorry that they ruined your life like that. But I’m going to help you get it back. Meet me at the alleyway that’s next to the coffee shop on Hyun Boulevard at 9:00 PM tonight.

It was quite the fucking gamble.

Hikaru folded the piece of paper back into her pocket and abandoned her shift early. She didn’t care anymore about the Future Industries job. She was going to get to the bottom of this.

___________________________________________

Asami tugged at the Equalist mask covering her face and fiddled with the shock glove resting on her hand. She prayed to Raava that this would work.

A figure rounded the corner, as stealthy as a cat-owl.

“You’re the one I’m supposed to meet?” a girl’s voice whispered through the night.

“Yes.”

They stood there, studying each other by the pale moonlight. Asami didn’t know if Hikaru was going to try and attack her or not. She was risking a lot by turning to the Coalition. The other girl was wearing a hoodie and jeans and had her hair down in a wavy tangle under a beanie, making her look like any other college student— but she also had a sword strapped to her side.

A sword.
She was the one who killed Jiang.

“Well, let’s hear what you have to say,” the ex-Firebender spat.

“Look— I’m trying to help you!”

“You know what? You and your lot took my fucking Bending away!”

“I know, I’m so sorry, but—”

“You killed one of my friends… you know how fucking old he was?”

Asami’s Equalist mask shook back and forth. She didn’t know the details of the Lieutenant’s assault — only that it was gruesome.

“He was only nineteen! And when you shot him down, you decided to take down a whole apartment complex!! You know how many people were injured?! How many innocent civilians lost their homes and belongings? And in doing that, your group attacked my friends— Kuvira and Baatar! Just so that you could send a message?!”

Kuvira and Baatar? Opal’s siblings? They were hurt, too? Spirits— what a mess.

“I’m sorry… I wasn’t responsible for that attack—”

“As long as you wear that mask, you’re responsible for every single Equalist crime that’s gone down.”

Asami tensed. But deep down, in her heart, she knew that the amber-eyed girl was right. She knew that she was running away and hiding like a coward under this mask. Hikaru had been nothing but selfless, charging into Warehouses with only a sword to protect herself. And what had Asami done? Built a few weapons and bully a few triads. She felt like a weakling.

“You’re right,” Asami whispered.

Hikaru raised an eyebrow and folded her arms across her chest.

The engineer’s fingers absentmindedly wandered up to the seams of her mask, and her breathing stopped. What was she doing?

Very slowly, like putty rolling down a hill, Asami lifted the mask off from the back of her head. Her hair spilled out everywhere and she gave another tug as the green goggles moved away from her eyes. Another latch, at the base of her throat, snapped apart and the mask fell to the ground. Surprisingly, Hikaru didn’t look shocked.

“I knew it.”

“You knew?”

“From the moment I first met you... I could feel… the way you looked at me… because I was a Firebender.”

Asami’s eyes fell to the ground, glancing at the mask. If she moved her foot just right… she could crush it and… well… not that it would accomplish anything.

“Does anyone else know?” Hikaru asked quietly, a venomous tone seeping out.
“Besides my father? No.”

“Him too? And how many employees of Future Industries?”

“Somewhere around twenty percent.”

“I see.”

The two girls stood there, silently basking in the revelations. The ex-Firebender stepped closer and suddenly they were nose to nose. Hikaru drew her sword and pointed it to Asami’s chest. The sharp blade pressed into her Equalist outfit, but the engineer stood her ground.

“You’re the one who shot me, aren’t you?”

Asami didn’t answer. She couldn’t bear to acknowledge the truth. The engineer could feel Hikaru’s breath accelerating on her cheek and she clenched her shock glove in angst. Suddenly, she felt the body in front of her draw away and heard footsteps leaving the alley— Hikaru kicking over a trash can in anger on her way out.

“Where are you going?”

“Home. I have a little sister to take care of,” she answered, sheathing her sword.

“Hikaru! Wait!”

The ex-Firebender turned and stared with glaring eyes, her pale skin illuminated by the moon’s cloudless night.

“Don’t tell anyone, especially not Korra.”

Hikaru scoffed, “Wouldn’t dream of it.”

And then she was gone.
Most Curious

Chapter Summary

"Success is the best revenge for anything."

-Ed Sheeran

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Bolin scratched at the Tiger Seal outfit— though the Coalition was getting better at making them less and less bulky. They had a name printed on the back of them… Tesmaa.

He walked up to Hikaru and Bao, who were leaning over a table plotting the next… attack. There was a determined fire in their eyes, and it made Bolin shiver a little. He didn’t want them to become too obsessed… they were all just kids.

If they’d seen some of the stuff Bolin had seen… Noatak Bloodbending his very veins, Dark Spirits attacking his friends, a giant rampaging Unavaatu and watching Su have to remove the poison that the Red Lotus had put into Korra’s body. If they’d seen that stuff they wouldn’t be too keen to be out for blood.

Bao went to go talk with Eun and some of the other Benders, and Bolin approached Hikaru.

“Hey…”

She looked up and gave him a smile, “How’s it going?”

“Um… good? Good, all things considered?”

Hikaru smirked and looked down at the plans, “If only we knew where they were hiding… take ‘em out for good.”

“Wait— you mean charge in and wipe them out? Isn’t that a bit dark?”

The ex-Firebender frowned, “Bolin, you know what they did to Tesmaa, to Jinora— they were willing to sacrifice a building full of people, including Baatar and Kuvira! They’re getting dangerous! It’s not about Benders versus Nonbenders anymore. It’s power.”

“Yeah, but why not leave it to the police?”

“All the Metalbenders seem to be doing is cleaning up the mess,” Hikaru grumbled.

Bolin took her hand, “I just don’t want to see you get carried away. You were so full of life when we first became friends— I want to see that Hikaru.”

She sighed and leaned her head on his shoulder, “I know. I want to be that person, too. I’m just so worried about making this city safe…”

“Well… how about we go out for lunch? I’m sure the world won’t end while we get some noodles.”
Ever so slowly, ever so intimately— he unzipped the Tiger-Seal skin jacket and took the belt holding her sword off of her waist. Hikaru let out a sigh and leaned her head forwards on his chest. She laced her fingers through his and Bolin felt his heart skip a beat.

“Okay.”

They walked, hand in hand, through downtown.

Narook’s was terrific, as expected, but Bolin could tell that her mind was wandering. He swallowed another forkful of noodles and opened his mouth— but she beat him to it;

“What are you supposed to do when someone you consider a friend has been lying to you?” she asked thoughtfully.

“Oh coconuts… was it me?” Bolin asked nervously.

Hikaru laughed. A real genuine laugh— a sound that he hadn’t really heard from her in a few months.

“No! No, you’re fine, Bo!” she chuckled, “I have… a friend who wasn’t being honest with me… it’s pretty serious but I promised I wouldn’t tell. Sort of.”

“Oh… uh… did they hurt your feelings?”

Hikaru looked out the window and sighed, “No… no, I was expecting it to happen. It’s the kind of secret that’s going to hurt a lot of other people. The person hurt me… in a different way… and I’m not sure… I just don’t know… what to do…”

Bolin reached across the table and took her hand, “Are you alright?”

Hikaru blew a strand of hair out of her face, “This person… they offered to help me make things right… but I was just so angry…”

“Well— I was once angry at my brother for suspecting that Varrick was up to some shady business… and when it turned out that Mako was right… I’d just felt bad for not believing in him.”

“You mean not believing in him?”

“No… not believing in him. I didn’t think he could solve such a big case all by himself— and I was a little wrapped up in being on the silver screen… but enough of me! What was it that one old dude said? ‘While it’s always best to believe in one’s self, a little help can be a great blessing!’”

Hikaru smiled, “Maybe you’re right.”

“I’m always right! Except… well… a lot of times…”

Bolin, being ever the gentleman, paid for their meals and offered the ex-Firebender a hand up. Looping her arm through his— they walked through the park, stopping to feed the turtleducks some crackers that Bolin had in a bag in his pocket (Hey! He’s a growing boy!). The sun seemed to be shining a little brighter and the cloudy overcast had dissipated.

“You’ve been a good friend,” Hikaru whispered softly— and if he hadn’t been paying attention he wouldn’t have discerned it from the wind.

He looked over at her (she was an inch taller than he was) and smiled, “Of course.”
Her hands moved to cup his cheeks, but then grazed past as she wrapped her arms behind her neck and smiled. His hands found their way to her hips.

“You’re the cutest Earthbender in the world, you know that?”

Bolin blushed and then tilted his head up a little. Their lips met together in perfect harmony.

Saikhan arrived on the scene first—stepping out of the Police SUV to look at the damage. Groaning and moaning bodies were being carried into ambulances via stretchers. The roads surrounding the warehouse were completely ruined—Earthbenders had torn up chunks of stone to use in the fight. Water was spilled everywhere, threatening to roll onto sources of electricity. On top of that, what wasn’t wrecked by dirt or by liquid was burning.

Thank Toph no one lived around here.

He followed some of the Sergeants, who were pushing open the doors of the warehouse.

Saikhan pulled them away by the scruff of their necks when he saw what was inside. There was no mistaking it.

The Metalbender clicked the side button on his radio, “Chief, you’re going to wanna come down here.”

“What’s the damage estimate?”

“It’s not… how much damage they did that worries me… it’s what element they used…”

“Saikhan, you’re not making any damn sense!” Lin’s voice barked through the static.

“Chief… the Coalition… they have a Lavabender…”

There was nothing but silence on the other end of the line. Saikhan watched the magma bubble and sizzle. The heat made his thinning beard scratchy and uncomfortable from twenty feet away.

“I want you to clean up what you can,” Lin’s voice reverberantly called from the radio on his chest. “I have a call to make.”

Saikhan sighed. It was going to be a long night.

Lin arrived on the scene twenty minutes later, dragging a young boy (couldn’t have been older than
twenty-two) by his ear. If the situation weren’t so serious, Saikhan would have laughed.

“Ow, ow, ow! Watch it!” Bolin whined.

“You’re going to fix this right now, or you’re never Probending again,” the Chief growled.

“I’m sorry! I’m sorry! I didn’t mean to, they were just coming at me really quickly and with those arrows and—”

“Bolin! Now!”

Saikhan and some of the other cops snickered at the sight of the mover-star Nuktuk cowering before Chief Beifong. And then their eyes widened as they watched the boy take a deep breath and move his hands around ever so slowly.

The lava began solidifying into rock, making a sort of “crunching” sound as the warehouse began to cool. Bolin moved through the warehouse, stepping on the now-compacted magma as he finished cleaning up his mess.

“There! No harm done!”

“Mmhmm,” Lin hummed with a raised eyebrow. “You know I have to charge you on the grounds of… oh… I don’t know… assault, destruction of property, and nearly melting my cops?!”

Bolin’s face fell.

“Just get out of here kid, and if you’re really hanging around with the Coalition… maybe just stick to the normal Earthbending,” she muttered, low enough that the other cops didn’t hear her (though Saikhan’s ancient ears still worked like radars).

The kid scurried away, behind a back alley— heading in the direction of Air Temple Island.

“You didn’t hear that,” Lin whispered to Saikhan with a wink.

“Encouraging the Coalition?”

“Honestly, they’re a pat on the back for me.”

“Chief… people are getting killed.”

Lin Beifong sighed and looked at the ruined warehouse, “I know… this is only getting worse.”

Hikaru looked at the number. It was so tantalizing. To just press the button and agree to the other girl’s offer… what would it mean in terms of their… could they still have a friendship? Were they ever friends to begin with?

She sat down on the couch and put her head in her hands— between her knees— and took a long, deep breath.
What was she supposed to do?

On the one hand, the Coalition was doing *fine* without the offer. Hikaru knew that if she even *suggested* the idea to Bao, she’d get tossed out of the headquarters and laughed at. They’d managed during their raids (even though Bolin had texted her, saying that he got in trouble for Lavabending) — and though it was slow, tormenting work… they were making a dent in the Equalist’s shell.

On the other hand, it wasn’t enough. Like a hydra, for every head that the Coalition cut off— three more Equalists came to replace their fallen brethren. They weren’t striking in the right places… and Hikaru knew it. Her thumb ran over the screen… once, twice, and then she pressed CALL.

The phone rang three times and then a shaky voice on the other end answered.

“H-hello?” Asami asked.

“This isn’t an invitation.”

She heard a noticeable gulp on the other end, “I understand.”

“Let’s say I wanted to hit them hard… give me an address.”

The engineer sighed, “It depends, how many people do you have?”

“Roughly fifty right now, an assortment of Fire, Water, and Earth.”

“That should be enough. There’s a yellow factory at the North end of Chakrii Avenue. Take it out… they won’t be expecting you.”

“If you’re lying to me,” Hikaru warned, “Korra will find out.”

“Wouldn’t dream of it,” the heiress snapped on the other end of the line.

The call went dead and Hikaru sighed. She stood up from the couch and wrote down the directions. The ex-Firebender didn’t want to be at Asami’s throat… but she was just *so mad*.

“Huka?” a little voice called from the hallway. Suki was in her pajamas.

“Hey Kiki, what are you doing up so late?”

“Couldn’t sleep,” her sister mumbled, rubbing a tired eye.

Hikaru pulled her sister up to her chest and leaned back on the couch.

“Tell me a story?” Suki asked.

The ex-Firebender smiled, “Once upon a time…”

By the time Hikaru was finished reciting one of her mother’s stories about a Northern Water Tribe Avatar from thousands of years ago— Suki was fast asleep. Curled up against her sister’s stomach, the little girl snored as loud as an Air Bison.
Hikaru leaned back against the pillow and closed her eyes.

Puff.

She opened an eye. But there was nothing there. She settled back into the pillow—

Puff.

Hikaru felt it this time. A blast of air on her face, sending her bangs flying everywhere. Suki shifted in her sleep. The ex-Firebender sat there, watching her sister. Suki let out a whimper in her sleep, kicking her foot out.

Puff!

The newspaper flew off the coffee table, and Hikaru’s eyes widened.

“Kiki, you’re an Airbender?” Hikaru whispered. “That doesn’t make any sense.”

Suki didn’t hear her, continuing to suck her thumb (a habit that “Huka” was trying to get her to break) and snuggled back against the ex-Firebender’s neck.

Slowly, at a snail’s pace, she reached over and fetched her phone.

Fire Bro No. 2: You’re not going to believe this.

The Annoying Airbender: You know how late it is? I have an 8:00 AM class.

Fire Bro No. 2: I think Suki’s an Airbender.

The Annoying Airbender: … I’ll be over at 11:00 tomorrow morning.

Hikaru smiled and kissed the top of her sister’s head. Finally, some good news.

Opal watched curiously with a raised eyebrow.

“Okay… Kiki… just go ahead and kick out at me,” Hikaru said excitedly.

Suki smiled and struck her foot out.

Nothing happened.

Opal sighed through her nose and took a sip of her latte— Kai made a terrific brew for her. She blinked and gave Hikaru a small smile.

“T-try again,” the older sister encouraged.

Suki punched and kicked, but Opal felt no change in the air around her. She leaned forwards.
“Hikaru, are you sure you weren’t just really, really tired and imagined it?”

The ex-Firebender tried not to look disappointed. “I was just so sure that… nevermind. Let’s get you to Gyeong’s house— you earned your playdate!”

“Yay!!”

Opal walked with them through the neighborhood, watching as Suki greeted her best friend from school. Gyeong’s father promised to drop Suki off by seven.

“Have a good time!” Hikaru smiled.

The two women walked through the streets, Opal occasionally offering Hikaru a sip of her latte. Though it was summer, the brisk morning air sent a shiver down the Airbender’s spine, and she leaned against Hikaru on the park bench.

"Most curious," Opal said, breaking the silence.

“I suppose I was just… overly… hopeful.”

“You’ve had a long six months… it’s understandable.”

The former Probender felt tears running down her cheek and buried her face in Opal’s shoulder.

“It’s not fair.”

Opal sighed and put an arm around Hikaru’s shoulder, “No. It never is.”

Samsara meditated out of the Mortal Realm and sighed. Jinora joined her.

“I think… I think we’re onto something,” the younger Airbending Master said hopefully.

“Yeah— yeah, sorry… Energybending tires me out. But it does seem to make an effect on Nonbenders near us. I wonder what a proper Bender could do with Energybending…”

“It’s a wonder you could even bend at all while meditating in the Mortal World.”

“I had a funny feeling that you’re Spiritual Aura gave me a boost,” Samsara admitted.

Jinora ruffled her hair and they sat there, staring at the green-yellow sky.

“I have a confession to make.”

“Oh?”

“I few weeks ago… I accidentally kissed Opal.”

Jinora looked surprised… but not angry. “Oh! Oh, alright… well… I’m sure it was just an accident.”

Samsara glanced at the other girl, “Y-You’re not angry?”
“Are you serious? We’re from the same culture! I’m not holding a grudge against you, if that’s what you want. It was an honest mistake—we’re all allowed to make them.”

“No! No… I just…”

“It’s not me you’re worried about. It’s Opal.”

“Yeah. I’m so sorry, I feel terrible about it. I was just wrapped up in the moment and—”

“Have you tried talking to her?”

“No,” Samsara admitted.

Jinora smiled, “Look, I know you’re not going to steal my girlfriend away from me, but there’s more to this story than that. I’m not going to pry. This is something you have to work out with her.”

The Avatar shyly looked away, “Thank you for being… so understanding.”

Chapter End Notes

A lot happened this chapter :/
The Factory on Chakrii Avenue

Chapter Summary

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

- Martin Luther King Jr.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Bao motioned for the team to follow, and they weaved through the front doors of the yellow factory — though the place looked abandoned.

“You sure that there are Equalists here?” she asked Hikaru with skepticism.

“My tip seemed pretty damn confident.”

Right. Apparently Hikaru had “someone on the other side” who was feeding her info. Bao didn’t believe any of that bullshit, but she wanted to smash some Equalist heads together, so they took the chance.

She was nervously Bending a pebble, letting it slip back and forth through her fingers, like a needle sewing through fabric.

“Hey! Where’d you put my beer!?” a voice called out.

Bao ducked behind a crate, and could feel Hikaru’s hand on her shoulder.

“For Amon’s sake, I don’t touch your shit,” a girl’s voice snapped back. “You shouldn’t be drinking on the job, anyways!”

“Ai! I left it on the table! Did you fucking hide it?!”

“Fuck off!” the girl yelled back at him, edging closer to the crate that they were hiding behind. “I can’t believe they don’t pay us for this shit.”

So the tip was right after all.

Bao bit her lip in anticipation and passed the pebble to Bolin— who was a better shot than her. He aimed and…

BAM!

“Ouch! Jeez, what the fuck was that!?” the first voice cried, a man holding his forehead in pain.

“Surprise,” Bao muttered.

And then they struck. Fire and water and earth collided against shock glove. Strangely there were no arrows!
“Shit!” the Equalist girl yelled, “Run!”

Bao smirked and stomped her foot. Earthen walls rose up and blocked the doors. The Coalition members surrounded the nine or ten Equalists that had been in the room.

“What do you want?” the first Equalist asked, terrified out of his wits. “You want money? I can g-get you money!”

“Tell us what’s in here.”

“No.”

Bao turned to the girl, who stepped forwards with her shock glove. Clearly this “Ai” chick wasn’t going down without a fight.

“Filthy fucking Benders— twenty of you here to take out a handful of Equalists? Seems like a little much.”

Out of the corner of her eye, Bao saw more figures seeping through from behind crates. The familiar crackling blue of shock gloves.

“Really? Only a handful of you?”

And then she stomped on the ground, and struck with a boulder straight to Ai’s chest.

“Oomph!”

Bao felt a pang in her ribs, but ignored it as she sent rock after rock flying at the Equalists who were openly attacking her friends. She felt a shock in her back and gritted her teeth as she felt her body tense up in response. She sent a kick to the girl behind her as she fell. Another pang in her ribs.

The Earthbender collapsed to the ground, hitting her head against a wooden crate. Her vision went dark as she saw Ai slump down against the wall opposite, clutching her torso with glaring, tear-stained eyes.

“You’re my…”

Bao couldn’t hear her, though. Blood was dripping from her nose into her mouth, and then she felt her left arm lift up and wrap around Hikaru’s shoulder as she heard Bolin yell;

“The explosions are planted! Let’s get out of here!”

Bao slipped in and out of sight, and as the Coalition ran, a part of her hoped that… Ai got out of the warehouse as well.

The combination of red and orange was a beautiful sight.

Asami looked up as Hiroshi walked in with a sigh. He looked tired, the shadows under his eyes were getting darker each day— from all the time he spent working on new technology for the Equalists.
“You heard the news?” her father asked grimly.

“No— what happened?”

“The factory on Chakrii Avenue was blown to pieces. Two of ours died, and a dozen were gravely injured. Ai’s in the hospital right now.”

Asami glanced up. First Jiang, and now Ai? Her Equalist… comrades… were being picked off, one by one. And she was the one betraying them.

She stood and gave her father a hug, “I’m sorry.”

Though he took it for the sympathetic meaning… she meant it as a true apology.

_I’m lying to everyone I love. When was the last time I actually spoke the truth to someone?_”

Hiroshi ran his fingers through his graying hair and kissed her forehead, “We live… complicated lives, Asami. But… why don’t we take a break and go get some lunch? I haven’t gone on an outing with you in months!”

_Don’t, Dad. Please don’t make this more difficult. Please don’t make me feel more guilt than I have to._

She smiled, flashing a set of perfect, white teeth, “Sure… where to?”

“I heard that there’s lovely Earth Nation cuisine just a few blocks down.”

Asami took her father’s elbow as they walked through the halls of Future Industries Tower. Some of the staff were carrying about their usual business, though there were also some that looked at the Sato’s with grim eyes. They were the ones who’d heard the news.

A car was waiting for them as soon as they stepped through the lobby and out the doors. The driver gave them a bow and they climbed inside of the car.

Hiroshi started snickering.

“What?”

Amused, her father pulled her collar up a little, “Nice… blemish.”

The heiress’s face went red as soon as she realized what he meant. She covered the hickey on her neck. Damn Korra for giving her that yesterday! Embarrassed, she gave him an apologetic smile and he ruffled her perfect hair a little.

“I don’t suppose I get to meet him?”

“Uh… she’s a she, Dad.”

_Might as well be a little honest._

To her astonishment, Hiroshi gave her a surprised smile, “Oh! OHHH!! Well, I don’t mind! I just… oh!”

Asami giggled, “I’m sorry… I should have told you sooner… she’s a little… intimidated by you… I don’t think I should introduce you two…”
Hiroshi laughed and patted her shoulder, “It’s alright… I suppose I wouldn’t have to worry about you accidentally… you know… getting pregnant!”

“DAD!!”

She playfully flicked him on the forehead. It felt good to joke around with her father.

“I’m just teasing!! Ouch, I was just kidding!”

They walked into the restaurant in high spirits (and though it wasn’t the classiest joint on the block, they were too happy to care), laughing and playing around— Asami’s heart felt a little lighter with each passing minute.

Until someone turned on the TV at the bar.

Hiroshi looked up and frowned, “I can’t stand the Avatar.”

Korra was on the big screen, giving a speech to the city. Asami leaned forward, intent on catching every syllable.

— I’d like to remind Republic City and particularly its youth that the Coalition is not an approved force to combat the Neo Equalist Terrorism. I do not condone this action. The City Council does not condone this action. The Republic City police will prosecute and arrest known members of the Bender’s and Nonbender’s Coalition alongside members of the Neo Equalists. Lin Beifong has assured me that city officials are doing everything in their power to tranquilly put down both of these movements, and we as a whole city are going to work together to make sure that Benders and Nonbenders can live peacefully together!

The reporters began asking questions, but Lin put a hand on Korra’s shoulder and steered her away from the crowd.

“Good speech, kid.”

“Thanks, though I hope you’ve got something up your sleeve. Raava knows my approval rating is low enough,” Korra sighed.

A man approached the two of them, “Excellent speech, Avatar Korra.”

Lin waved him off, “No questions at this time.”

“Oh, I’m not here to ask questions.”

Korra raised an eyebrow, and her fist clenched. The old Korra would have summoned fire and pushed him out of the way or maybe grab him by the scruff of his collar. But she would hear what he had to say—
He pulled out a detonator and pressing the little red button on top. Korra realized that there were little wires sticking out from his wrists and neck, and her eyes widened.

“This is for Amon.”

Lin tried to pull the Avatar away, and the last thing Korra remembered was the smirk on the man’s face as an explosion rippled through the air.

Hiroshi was watching a reporter relaying the announcement to the camera when the explosion could be heard on the TV. His eyes widened—it wasn’t one of theirs! The Neo Equalists hadn’t been planning an attack for another week!

Suddenly Asami dropped to the ground, screaming in pain and clutching her stomach.

“OH GOD!!” she cried, tears flowing freely down her cheeks.

“Asami!”

In a flash, he was out of his chair and down on the ground next to her, clutching her shoulders. Nothing seemed wrong with her…but that meant…

“Is she alright? Should I call a doctor?!” the waitress asked with wide eyes.

On the TV, the reporter began speaking;

“There appears to have been…some sort of attack…Feng, I don’t know quite what’s happened…the Avatar has been wounded!”

There was a shot of Avatar Korra writhing on the ground next to the fallen Police Chief. Blood was everywhere. Then the camera was cut off with a yell—turning back to the stunned, clean shaven man who began filling in details back at the News Station.

Asami screamed again, clutching her stomach.

Hiroshi froze, his eyes darting back and forth between the screen and his daughter.

But that meant…

They were…

Oh no.

Apparently the waitress had called 911, because they were suddenly surrounding Asami and putting her on a stretcher, interrogating Hiroshi for medical details.

But he was in too much shock.

“My daughter…” he whispered. “My daughter and the Avatar are…”

Someone pulled him up, asking him if he wanted to ride in the ambulance with her. Dumbstruck, he
climbed in and gripped the hand of his sobbing baby as she cried out in pain, over and over.

Impossible, he thought.

When he began hyperventilating, an EMP gave him a mask to breathe through. It smelled kind of funny, you know, like how hospitals have that certain smell. He began to realize that his heart was slowing and his eyes were drooping a little.

A medic put a hand on his back, trying to calm him down, and the last thing he remembered was watching a Waterbender heal his daughter’s stomach.

Don’t touch her, you filthy Bender! he tried to scream. But his mouth felt glued together.

Chapter End Notes

SORRY I AM A TERRIBLE NOODLE ALSO SORRY THAT IT’S A SHORT CHAPTER-- I'M POSTING A LONGER ONE TONIGHT!!
And All Would Be Well

Chapter Summary

"If you want to know what a man's really like... take a look at how he treats his inferiors, not his equals."

-Sirius Black, "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“Well… good news!” Opal said, reading the newspaper to a hospitalized Korra. “Apparently your approval rating went up when you got bombed!”

“Cool!” Korra said, leaning up to take a sip of the drink Kuvira was holding for her. “That’s great!”

“Oh… it says that your rating went back down when people learned that you were still alive!”

Korra and Kuvira burst out into laughter and Opal set the paper down with a smirk. There were scratches and scars all along the Avatar’s face, and she’d almost been blown to smithereens—though Lin took a bit more damage (and according to Jinora, her aunt Kya fainted on Air Temple Island… hmmm…). There’d been a massive hole in her stomach, but enough Waterbending Healers had been present—some of them were reporters—that they managed to keep the Avatar and the Chief of Police stable.

Indeed, it was rather odd for Korra to wake up with Kuvira laying in the (already small) hospital bed next to her. But when she looked over and smirked—explaining that they shared the same blood type and holding up a tiny red tube that connected them together—Korra couldn’t help but let out a sigh of relief. At least, if Miss Metalbender was smiling, everything was okay.

Three days later and she was sitting up and giggling with her best friends.

“OHH! Ouch! D-Don’t make me laugh!” Korra wheezed with a great big smile on her face.

Jinora slinked an arm around Opal’s waist. “How are you feeling?” she asked Korra.

“Eh— they have me on something strong,” Korra admitted.

“It was great—yesterday she kept asking over and over why Opal was a Waterbender and when I was going to marry Mako,” Kuvira smirked.

Korra blushed, “I can’t help it! It’s the medicine talking!”

Opal put a hand on the Avatar’s shoulders, “Well... we’re all glad you’re okay.”

“Aw, com’ere.”

They all surrounded Korra and gave her a great big bear hug.

“I hope the medicine is helping,” Korra thought to her soulmate. “I’m so, so sorry about the pain.”
Korra wondered why Asami hadn’t come to visit her yet.

The green-eyed heiress woke up and felt a tremendous amount of pain in her abdomen. She felt someone running his fingers through her hair.

“Dad? W-where are we?”

“Sweetie! We’re home… this is your bedroom.”

Asami’s eyes began to focus, and she relaxed at the familiar sight of her room surrounding her.

“You gave me quite the scare.”

“What happened?”

Hiroshi hesitated.

“You… you remember how long I was out when your mother…”

Asami smiled and took her father’s hand. Of course she remembered. He ran his thumb over his knuckles and looked at the ground.

“Dad, what’s wrong?”

“Asami,” he sighed. “What do you know about your soulmate?”

The engineer stiffened a little in the bed, and then looked at their hands.

“I-I know that my soulmate is a girl and that… that she gets injured a lot.”

Hiroshi nodded, “Anything else?”

“Not much… she grew up alone… we were planning on having a date at Kwongs in a few months. We agreed not to tell each other our identities until the date— didn’t want to scare each other off before we got to know one another.”

There were tears in his eyes and he wiped them away.

“A-are you alright, Dad?”

“Yes, pumpkin,” he said, kissing her on the head. And then he stood and left.
The Lieutenant sighed and smiled. His plan was coming into place. He was going to rid himself of the Sato’s once and for all. With them out of the way— he’d be unstoppable.

“Sir, just say the word.”

“Not quite yet… I want to make sure… she’s there as well.”

Hiroshi tried to keep his cool throughout the Estate— throughout the backyard, but he was trembling by the time he reached the underground bunker beneath the Estate. And something in him snapped.

He grabbed a pipe and ripped it off the wall. Steam flooded the corner of the room and then dissipated.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

He ran towards the nearest mechasuit, smashing the pipe over and over on the metal limbs.

SMASH! CRASH! CLANG! BANG!

It wasn’t enough. He climbed up the later and shattered the cockpit window of the mechasuit, until all the glass was gone— falling to the floor. Some of it had cut through his hands and fingers, and it felt good to see the blood drip down his wrists. But it wasn’t enough. He ripped joysticks and seatbelts out, smashing buttons with the pipe. With unprecedented anger coursing through his veins, he kicked.

Both the ladder he was on and the mechasuit fell over—the device’s shoddy craftsmanship on his peon’s behalves.

“ARG!” he cried, landing on his thigh.

He laid there, staring at the ceiling and clutching the pipe in his hand.

Did she know? Did the Avatar fucking know?! No… no— there’d been no indication that they were anything more than “friends”. But, Asami had grown… liberal… around Korra… in recent months. It wretched and twisted Hiroshi’s heart to see her among benders… but surely…

He cast his mind back to a few weeks ago;

“Oh!” he exclaimed, surprised at who he’d literally run into.

“I’m so sorry!” a girl exclaimed.
Not just any girl. The Avatar’s sickening blue eyes were staring up at him.

“You must be… Korra.”

“Yes? Yes! That’s— that’s me!” she chuckled nervously.

He stuck out his hand, as was the manner of a professional, and then prayed that she didn’t notice him wipe it away. Couldn’t spread any of that Bending filth around, of course.

“So… I can’t help but notice… that it is 3:00 AM,” Hiroshi said with raised brow.

“Oh! Um… yes! Yes, it is! I… well… Asami offered to let me… sleep over… you know— girl’s night! Shopping, make-overs— that sort of thing!”

“I didn’t realize you were into that sort of… girly… lifestyle.”

Korra’s eyes widened, “Oh, well, anything for Asami!”

“Really?”

“I mean, she’s my best friend… yeah… we’re just the gals of pals!!” she chuckled.

Korra excused herself and bolted down the hallway. Hiroshi closed his eyes and rubbed his temple. Sacrifices had to be made— even if the Avatar had to “sleepover” in his Estate— that they might rid the world of Benders once and for all.

He was hyperventilating, clutching the metal pipe as tears flooded his eyes. His daughter… the only family he had left… was… involved… with a Bender. And… of all the Benders… the Avatar! Was this a trick, a lie? Was Asami doing this to help out the Equalists? To gain the highest level of trust and break! Break the Avatar’s heart? Yes… that had to be it.

No… no it wasn’t.

Oft the Lieutenant would ask for Korra’s secrets… secrets about her fighting techniques and her personal life— things that they might use to expose the Avatar and bring her down.

Oft they would talk of ambush and kidnappings and assaults.

Oft they would plot.

But always just Hiroshi and the Lieutenant. Asami might feign some excuse— claim that she had something to do or that she simply had not acquired the information needed to execute plans.

A hundred times over they could have demolished Avatar Korra.

A hundred times over, Asami had held back information.

She was in love with Korra, wasn’t she?

The plan had backfired; the connection had transpired— the Equalism in her heart had expired.

Hiroshi curled up as much as he could (he was, after all, a rather large man) and broke down. His gold-rimmed glasses fell to the ground, covered in tears and filth, as he sobbed— facing into the concrete. His daughter was… no longer… the woman he’d raised.
He reached out, clutching a shard of glass that’d broken off of the Mechasuit. He clutched it in his hand and tried to let the physical pain overcome the emotional suffering he was experiencing.

Could he break Asami’s heart and kill Korra— even if she didn’t know that they were soulmates?

The CEO’s mind wandered to the time when Yasuko had died. He’d… he’d felt as though he were constantly falling— tumbling down. As though, in those precious moments before one finally drifts off into dream, one’s heart begins racing and they jump up suddenly. Though, instead, it had felt like a constant effect. For a year on end.

Could he… could he do that to his own daughter? His baby girl?

He hated Benders, of that much he was sure… but did he hate them enough?

Enough to destroy Asami?

What if he were to take her away?

Yes!

YES!

That would solve a problem or two— if he were to remove his daughter. Give or take, send her to Ba Sing Sei? Or perhaps the Fire Nation?

She would be safer.

And AWay from the villainous and venomous arms of the Avatar.

Perhaps… perhaps then she would be to fall in love with another… perhaps then she would be to forget… perhaps then…

Then he could take care of the final piece…

And all would be well.

________________________________________________________________________

Interestingly enough, it was only a week later that Asami learned of Korra’s… ill-fated encounter. According the News… and… well let’s just say inside sources… the attacker had been lone in his plots and deceptions— acting out of the angers that’d been brewing within ever since the Arena and Amon. He had no membership connection to the Equalists, of that she’d been assured.

So why was she staying up, late at night, pondering what’d happened?

Quite simply, the odds of the situation. That she’d felt a great deal of pain from her soulmate AND Avatar Korra surviving an excruciatingly painful bombing— and having it be merely a coincidence?

Not likely.
Asami was Korra’s soulmate. Korra was Asami’s soulmate.

How is she so sure that it’s Korra? What if it’d been a reporter on the scene (or, Spirits forbid, Lin Beifong)?

The day she’d awoken, it’d been because she’d heard a voice. And not just any voice.

“I hope the medicine is helping,” Korra’s voice had called out to her. “I’m so, so sorry about the pain.”

Did the Avatar know?

Again— the odds, the math, the calculations. The science and reasoning that Asami had been taught to worship from, well, *practically birth*. The signs did not point to Korra knowing.

Her father knew. Of that much, she was convinced. This struck a great deal of fear within Asami. And yet he hadn’t come after her, in the week that she’d been recovering.

What the fuck was she going to do?

She knew one thing for certain… she *couldn’t* tell Korra about this.

*I’m still willing to lie? After all this? I am the devil incarnate— I am not worthy of Korra. Perhaps if I were to hide myself away, she would forget about me. Move on! Go and find another person, a better person… please…* 

_______________________________________

Jinora sat up very suddenly.

Opal rolled over, “Mmm, what’s wrong, sweetie?”

Her heart was pounding and her breath was ragged.

“Something’s wrong!”

“What do you mean?”

“Get some clothes on!” Jinora shouted, tossing a pair of jeans and a tank top at her lover.

“These aren’t even the right size— what’s going on?!”

How could she explain. She stopped short of running out of the doorway and gripped the wooden frame with her fingers. Her heart felt… in agony? No… dread.

“Please…” she begged.

Opal’s eyes lit up, “Yeah— um… sure… one sec.”

Once her soulmate was dressed, Jinora took her hand and led her to the rooftop. Jinora grasped the wings of her gilder suit and Opal twirled her staff to open its wings.
“Are you sure?”

“Yes… I think she’s trying to assassinate Avatar Korra. I know that she’s working with the Equalists,” Hikaru said.

Bao swallowed nervously, “If we’re wrong, or if the Police catch us— we’re not getting away with this one.”

“Trust me— I’m not wrong. She’s working with them.”

“I hope you’re right.”

Hikaru nodded. Ever since the attack… she’d been suspicious. Asami had to be up to something— it was the only logical explanation. She’d been getting closer and closer to Korra to lower her trust… and then… she would…

She’d offered to tip them off so that Hikaru wouldn’t catch onto her trail— even if it meant revealing herself. But then she sent that man to kill Korra. In front of City Hall…

The woman had to be stopped before she could get the chance to try again.

“Listen up!” Bao’s voice echoed through the abandoned Coalition warehouse. Benders, scattered here and there, looked up from idle conversations.

“We’re raiding the Sato Estate— we believe they’re connected with the Equalists… and we want to put an end to that, don’t we?”

Earthbenders, Firebenders, Waterbenders, and the handful of Nonbenders who’d stuck around after losing their bending all snickered. Readying themselves for a fight, Hikaru wondered if what she was doing was the right thing.

“Please.”

“No! You’re still injured!”

“I have a gut feeling! Trust the Avatar’s gut feeling!” Korra whined.

“You have to heal!!”

“Kuvira, I think something bad is about to happen!”
“I don’t care if your Spidey Senses are tingling! You were just blown up! What are you going to do in a fight, Glowstick?!”

“Glowstick!?”

“The Avatar eyes, numbskull.”

“Look— I think that something bad is about to happen, and I need to leave. Do you trust me?”

Kuvira hesitated for half a second and then slumped her shoulders, “Yes.”

“Please.”

The Metalbender bit her lip and then unhooked Korra from the machines. An alarm began beeping, but Kuvira quickly shot a piece of metal through the electronics.

“I hope this doesn’t kill you.”

“Same.”

“Where are we even going?” Kuvira asked. The late-night nurses were approaching. They had to move, quickly.

“The Sato Estate? I think?”

“You think? Vaatu dammit, I hate you!”

There wasn’t enough time to have Korra walk, so Kuvira picked her up— bridal style— and ran. Thank Raava she was athletic.

The automatic doors slid open and Kuvira tried to ignore the shouting of the nurses, screaming that Korra couldn’t leave and that she had to return!! But unfortunately for the hospital— _Korvira_ had a getaway car.

Naga lowered her head and Korra climbed on with a groan. Kuvira stomped her foot and flew up using a chunk of earth. And then they were off.

“You certainly do get around, Glowstick!”

“Shut up… Metalgirl.”

________________________________________

“Sir!” an Equalist ran up to him, “We’ve received word that she’s left the hospital!”

“Perfect,” the Lieutenant sneered. “Time to strike.”

________________________________________
The Coalition members slithered through the streets, or on motorcycles and riding in cars, until they could meet up with Bao and Hikaru.

“Here we go,” the Earthbender smirked.

*Thank Raava that Bolin got sick and stayed home,* Hikaru thought— her heart tugging with anxiety.

“Why are we heading towards the Sato Estate?!” Opal called over the wind.

Jinora gulped, “I just— I have a really bad feeling about tonight!”

*That makes two of us,* the older girl thought.
So This is How it Ends?

Chapter Summary

"In another moment, down went Alice after it... never once considering how in the world she was to get out again."

-Lewis Carroll, "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Asami knew something was wrong when she realized that the Estate was filled with smoke.
And not just any kind of smoke.
It was from Firebenders.

She reached into her closet for her Equalist mask— which could filter out smoke and toxins (a handy idea that she’d come up with a few years ago). She grabbed her jacket and used a sock to defog the green goggles on the mask, and then slipped the headgear on.

The Estate looked strange in green.

Shouting could be heard down the hallway, and Asami cursed herself for not having her shock glove. She would have to make do with normal hand to hand combat.

Something big collided with her.

“Asami?! Is that you?” her father’s voice hissed in the dark.

“Y-Yeah. Dad, what’s going on?”

“I don’t know.”

He handed her his spare shock glove and she felt a bit more at ease. They quietly slithered, hiding in shadows and crevices that they knew existed. Soon… it became very apparent what was happening;

There was an all-out war in their living room.

Equalist Chi Blockers were going head to head with Firebenders, Earthbenders, and Waterbenders. Asami saw the familiar glow of the Lieutenant’s batons as he faced off against an Earthbender girl and… was that Hikaru?! Out of the corner of her eye, she saw a flash of orange up on the stairs. She looked up.

Jinora and Opal were here!? They were trying to hide— thank goodness they didn’t recognize her in the mask.

And then… and then it got worse.

The front doors were blown off their hinges and a white mass let out a roar. Metal began flying in all
directions and... and...

Glowing white eyes were suddenly face-to-face with her as Avatar Korra sent a puff of air to her torso. Asami hit the opposite wall with a groan.

_The mask. She thinks I'm one of the Equalists._

“Not my daughter, you bitch!” Hiroshi bellowed.

Asami, clenching her teeth and blinking her eyes to regain her focus, watched as Hiroshi dodged move after move of Benders and Chi Blockers— making his way towards Korra. But then his focus was shifted when the Lieutenant began fighting _against_ him. But... did that mean the Equalists were... here to kill the Sato’s?

“Asami?!” Korra’s voice called out amidst the brawling.

“Here,” she whispered feebly.

She finally felt as though she could stand again, but there was already someone in front of her.

“Where’s Asami?” Kuvira asked, readying a strip of metal.

The engineer readied her shock glove and began striking, dodging piece after piece of lethal steel.

“I am not your enemy!” the heiress pleaded, kicking the sword that Kuvira had fashioned on her wrist out of her way.

“You’re here to kill her, aren’t you?”

“What? No!” Asami said.

Suddenly... everything was very orange.

Fire. There was fire... everywhere. A few of the Waterbenders tried to make an effort to douse the flames, but most of the people in the Estate continued to fight among each other. There were bodies everywhere.

Asami felt her heart race.

This was just like Mom.

Kuvira took the distraction as an opportunity— peeling metal off of wall decorations and binding Asami’s hands together.

“Alright, you clearly know something the others don’t,” Kuvira said, kneeling down.

Asami watched as chunks of Earth and gusts of Air were sent flying in random directions as Korra tried to break apart the fights, but to no avail.

The Metalbender swiftly grabbed the mask and pulled it off of the engineer’s face.

“No... it can’t be...” Kuvira murmured with wide eye.

Asami leaned up and pressed her forehead against the Metalbender’s.

“Help me,” she whispered.
“You’re one of them…”

“Please.”

Kuvira’s green eyes narrowed, but Asami felt the metal binds on her wrists and ankles dissipate. The Zaofu girl pulled her up just as a creak and groan was heard overhead.

Burning logs were tumbling down— artwork that had caught on fire and furniture aflame. All of it was falling onto the battle below. Many people became trapped under debris and Asami couldn’t see anything but flame. She began hyperventilating.

It was just like Mom.

“Easy, now,” Kuvira muttered.

An Equalist soldier let out a yell and charged the pair of girls, but Asami dodged his glove and struck his chest with her own. Kuvira sent him flying with a chunk of the floor. A Waterbender attacked the two of them, swiftly sending ice shard after ice shard, and Asami felt a piece graze her cheek.

This time, it was Hiroshi who stopped the girl— Chi Blocking her right in the neck and leaving her on the floor. He turned to his daughter and grabbed her hand.

“We have to go—”

BOOM!!

Asami felt her very bones rattle as the ragtag trio was flung apart. She landed on the stairs with a groan.

“Uuuugghhh,” she managed to grunt.

She felt two people grab her by the elbows and drag her up the stairs. Her head was ringing and her eyesight was a little blurry, but she tried to kick randomly.

“Ouch! Quit it!” Jinora’s voice snapped.

The Airbender girls shot up another flight of stairs with a puff of air.

“Asami— what the hell is going on?” Opal tried to ask.

The engineer was still a little bit dizzy, merely staring at the girls with a gaping mouth.

“I think she has a head wound,” Jinora whispered.

“ASAMI!! WHERE ARE YOU?!” Korra’s voice called through the fire and the smoke and the chaos.

As her sight began to regain itself, Asami saw both Benders and Equalists making their way up the Estate, to where the three girls were hiding. The two Airbenders worked together, spiraling around and sending powerful gusts to send opponents flying.

They left her as they tried to keep the enemies at bay.

Asami stood weakly.

And was nose to nose with the one person who knew her secret.
“So this is how it ends?” Hikaru whispered quietly, pointing her grandmother’s katana at Asami’s chest.

“Why are you doing this?!” the engineer pleaded.

“You tried to kill Korra.”

“What?! No! The attack wasn’t one of us!!”

“Really? Because it sure doesn’t look like that to the rest of the world.”

Hikaru began walking forwards and Asami walked backwards, along the hallway. The heat of the Estate burning down was unbearable.

They were alone.

“Please! I’m trying to help you defeat the Equalists!!” Asami cried. “My plan was to feed you information about where to strike! We were going to take them down!”

“You fucking bitch,” Hikaru hissed. “You were too much of a coward to face your dirty criminal terrorist life, so you wanted me to take care of it for you?!”

“No, I—”

“You willingly shot me!”

“I didn’t know it was you!”

“That doesn’t matter! You willingly put Unobtainium into my body— what if it was poisonous!? What if it still is?! Was that your goal? To take away my Bending and then slowly kill me off?”

“Hikaru! It was a mistake!”

“Oh, what, like accidentally spilling red wine on a jacket? Or backing your car into mine? YOU TRIED TO KILL ME!!”

“The arrows weren’t designed to be lethal!”

“You took my life away all the same! I have a sister to support— we were barely getting by as it was!! You took away my tools of the trade and left me and my sister to starve!! Let me ask you this… if I hadn’t been a friend of Korra’s… if I’d just been some Firebender girl on the streets, would you have offered me the job?!”

Asmai sighed, “No.”

“I knew it. All of this, just to get into Korra’s pants?”
“Shut up!!” Asami roared, striking jab after jab— desperately trying to knock out the ex-Firebender.

Hikaru was too quick, though. She swiped her sword just right behind Asami’s ankle and sent a kick to the girl’s stomach. The engineer fell to the ground and watched as Hikaru drew her sword back…

“Say hello to Amon for me, you filthy Equalist,” Hikaru snarled.

Asami closed her eyes.

But nothing happened.

So she opened them.

Hikaru’s sword was swinging around on its own account— and the ex-Firebenders eyes widened as the blade split in two like a peeling banana and the metal wrapped itself around the girl’s wrists, pinning Hikaru to the wall.

“Next time bring a sword made of platinum,” Korra sighed.

The Avatar walked up to Asami, who was still lying on the ground in fear. She looked up at her lover.

“How much of that did you hear?”

“All of it,” Korra answered with a grim expression.

No.

“Korra, I can explain—”

The Water Tribe girl held up a hand, “Spare me. Please.”

Kuvira walked up, or rather limped. Slung around her shoulder was none other than Hiroshi.

“Opal and Jinora are distracting them, managed to send the chandelier down on a bunch of Equalists,” the Metalbender smirked.

Korra didn’t smile, only wiping a bit of soot from her brow. The Avatar let out a sigh.

“Let me guess, there’s a hidden way out of here?” she asked.

Asami gulped, “There’s a tunnel that leads to a hanger in the mountains… there’s an Airship there.”

“Wait!” Hikaru snapped, trying to break free from her own katana, “You’re just going to help them escape?! They’re Equalists!!”

“Yes. Yes, they are. But they’re better off in jail than dead,” Korra said with a defeated sigh. “So here’s what we’re going to do.

“Opal and Jinora are currently trying to lead the fight out of the house, and hopefully the police will arrive soon. You— Hikaru— are going to go get your fucking teenagers and retreat. You’ve done enough damage. Kuvira and I will lead the Sato’s out of here and go far away… I’ll make sure they have their punishment.”

Hikaru’s eyes narrowed but she didn’t say anything.
Once the Airship is off the ground, I’m going to come back here and douse what I can.”

Asami’s heart was falling… tumbling to the ground.

Her life was ruined.

Korra lifted Hikaru off the wall, fixed her sword, and kicked her down the hallway with a gust of air, 
“Make sure those Equalists get out of here.”

The ex-Firebender stumbled and stood, giving Asami a long glare, and then disappeared.

“I hope you know what you’re doing,” Kuvira grunted, shifting the weight of an unconscious Hiroshi on her back.

Korra looked Asami dead in the eyes as she answered;

“So do I.”

Asami shouldn’t have gone outside, because when she turned around all she saw was the Estate burning. She could feel tears running down her ash-covered cheeks.

“My home…” she gasped.

“Come on, we have to go,” Korra said with an emotionless voice.

Asami would have preferred to hear her angry.

There was a loud crashing sound, as though the ground beneath her feat was trembling. Perhaps it was. But then she watched as the manor collapsed and sunk— a burning pile of what used to be a palace.

No going back.

“I’m sorry,” Kuvira whispered, dragging a barely conscious Hiroshi along.

But the worst part was when Asami glanced to her right and realized what was also burning.

“NO!!” she screamed, falling to the ground.

Her mother’s garden was ablaze. Dying. Flowers that she’d spent years coaxing and plants that had given her so much hope. Dying. It was a part of herself. Dying. The lean-to that she’d built with Korra was smoldering. Dying.

A hand pulled her back.

“Get to the workshop!” Korra yelled, heading towards the orchards and shrubbery. “I’ll do what I can!!”
“Korra!”

“Come on, kid!” Kuvria said, tugging her by the elbow.

Asami was forced to run with the Metalbender as Korra went… into the Avatar State… draining water from the nearby spigots and sending up an earthen wall to stop the spread of the flames from the Estate. She also used Sandbending to extinguish what she could.

Kuvira pulled her and Hiroshi, who had blood dripping down his head, into the workshop.

“Okay, what now?”

“Tunnel!” Asami managed to choke out.

Kuvira raised an eyebrow and suddenly stomped her foot, sensing the vibrations through the workshop floor.

“Well whadya know.”

The former Captain of the Guard raised her arms up and the metal was ripped away from the floor— revealing the passageway. Kuvira tucked herself back under Hiroshi, who let out an incoherent sentence as they leapt into the cart.

There was a rush of air and a blinding white glow next to Asami as Korra jumped in and the cart sped away. She exited the Avatar State with a blink of her eyes.

“It’s… I managed to salvage some of it…” Asami’s lover said taciturnly, without looking at the engineer.

“Thank you.”

It was little more than a whisper, but Korra heard it all the same— because she glanced at Asami for half a moment before joining Kuvira up at the front.

There was a turquoise person suddenly standing next to her… the spectral projection of Jinora. Her bald head was covered in cuts and her lower lips was bleeding, but other than that she looked fine.

“Korra… the police have arrived… Naga got out, safe and sound… the Coalition and Equalists have fled…”

“Thanks— the two of you safe?”

“We’re on the roof of a building…”

“I need you to get to your Dad, tell him what happened— but not who was involved. Tell him I’m going to… the city of second chances… he’ll know what I mean.”

“Opal said she wants to join you.”

“We’re leaving the city by Airship, but we can’t wait around for her. If she catches up to us, she can tag along.”

“Good luck… and be careful, Korra.”

The projection of Jinora smiled sadly, shimmering and dissipating. The rest of the cart ride was perfectly illuminated by the little orange lamps on the sides of the tunnels, and yet dark all the same.
They arrived at the underground bunker— limping and staggering their way through.

“These are the Mechasuits that Amon used in the first Equalist War,” Korra muttered as they passed the towering mechanisms.

One of the suits was noticeably toppled, the glass of the cockpit absolutely smashed and the metal shell bent and damaged. Asami shuddered— only her and Hiroshi ever went down here, and she didn’t go on that rampage.

They managed to get through to the other storeroom, the size of the Probending Arena, where a fully-equipped Future Industries Airship was waiting for them. Asami pointed at the control panel on the other side of the room;

“I need to open the hanger bay doors.”

Korra grabbed her by the scruff of her neck and harshly pulled her to the electronics.

“Make it quick. We don’t have a lot of time,” the Avatar huffed.

Asami ignored the impatient tone as she programmed the launch sequence. The Airship lit up and a door slid open, a ramp crawling down for Kuvira and Hiroshi to climb onto.

They could hear yelling.

“The police are here!” Korra shouted, running towards the Metalbenders and creating a wall of ice from some spare pipes.

Asami tried to program as quick as she could, thanking Raava that the rest of the sequence was autonomous. She ran to the Airship and looked back as the vessel began to lift.

“KORRA!! COME ON!!”

“Be with you in one… second!!”

A blast of fire knocked most of the Metalbenders off their feet— and Captain Saikhan pulled the rest of his troops back. Though his officers didn’t see it, he gave Korra a nod as she turned and sped towards the Airship with a sphere of air.

A cable grabbed Korra by the ankle but Asami managed to pull her Avatar onto the ship and Korra ripped the restraint apart with her bare hands.

The Airship flew out of the hanger and into the night sky.

Korra pulled Asami by her elbow and slammed the door. At the cockpit, Kuvira was sitting with a down-for-the-count Hiroshi.

“What do we do with them?”

Asami sighed.
“There’s a holding bay with cells…” she answered, looking at the elegant carpet patterns. “You can put… my father and I… until we get to… wherever you’re taking us…”

“That’ll do,” Korra nodded hollowly as she walked up to the Airship and managed to type in some coordinates. The vessel turned direction, weaving through the mountains.

“I need to go back to the Estate and put out what fires I—”

“No,” Asami answered.

“But—”

“It’s too late. My home is long gone. What’s done is done.”

She didn’t want to put Korra in anymore danger than she already had that evening.

_Knock. Knock. Knock._

“Um… how many feet are we in the air?” Kuvira asked with a raised eyebrow.

The door swung open and Opal burst in, her chest heaving and her staff raised, ready to fight whoever was next in line. Her hoodie was covered in ash and smoldering a little— her jeans were torn and there was a gash in her thigh.

“Alright— I’m here… who do I have to punch?!” she asked with fierce eyes.

“No one… we’re safe…”

“Oh.”

Opal sat down next to Kuvira and began fussing over a wound on the Metalbender’s shoulder.

Korra pulled Hiroshi out of his chair and turned towards Asami, “Show us where the cells are, then.”

Without establishing any eye contact— lest she spill the ocean of tears that were already threatening to burst from her eyes— Asami weaved through the Airship, descending down a hatch. The hallway of holding cells was dark and dingy, and Asami watched as Korra dropped a mumbling Hiroshi off in one cell and then turned to the engineer.

Asami walked into a cell and sat down on the cold metal floor— curling up into a ball and watching as Korra closed the metal door and latched it… tears pouring down the Avatar’s face.

“G-goodnight,” Korra whispered.

“Sweet dreams,” the heiress sighed.

Within a matter of minutes, exhaustion overcame her and Asami fell asleep crying.

_End of Part One_
um... so... yeah...
Korra sighed and shifted around in the bundle of smelly, raggedy, old blankets that she was currently encased in. The walls and floor of the airship were metal… which meant she wasn’t getting very much sleep.

So, she chose to open her eyes.

Asami was awake.

Korra let out a sigh and sat up, pulling the blankets over her shoulders. The Avatar shifted closer to the door of the cell.

“H-hey…”

“What are you taking me?” Asami whispered.

“Zaofu… Kuvira and Opal agreed… agreed to give you a second chance… you’ll be working as an engineer for Suyin… but you’ll be a free woman.”

“W-what about my Dad?”

“Kuvira will want to throw him in the Zaofu Jail.”

“Oh.”

“Oh is right. I can’t believe… can’t believe that you were lying to me. All this time.”

“Korra—”

The Avatar held up an angry hand and the raven-haired girl closed her mouth, dejected. Korra gripped the metal bars to pull herself closer, sticking her fingers through. Asami lifted her hand up, and their fingertips briefly touched before Korra pulled away with… a heartbroken expression.

“You’re an Equalist.”

“I was.”

“You used me.”

“At first. But… over time…”
“At fir— at first?! Asami, I loved you! I gave you a piece of myself that… no one else had been allowed to have. And you went and broke my heart.”

The engineer’s beautiful green eyes were flooded with tears, and she reached a sleeve up to wipe them away with a sniffle. She cast her glance back to the Avatar.

“You think I didn’t want to drop everything?” Asami chuckled. “You think it wasn’t difficult? I was going to fix everything… over time…”

Korra let out a yell and slammed her fist against the cell’s door. The metal pipe groaned and bent inwards a little—but it made Asami jump back in fear. The heiress gulped and pushed a strand of hair out of her face.

“DAMMIT, SATO!! I am asked to choose every single day of my life between what is right and what is easy— and it’s difficult and I never seem to make the right judgments… but I’d die before I fucking lied to you!!”

Something snapped in those emerald eyes and she surged forwards, grabbing the Avatar’s blue jacket and tugging with a ferocity of a lioness. Korra’s face was abruptly pressed against the metal bars of the cell door—and for a half a second, all she could register was how cold the steel felt.

“Get your hands off m—”

Asami cut her off with a kiss. And then shoved Korra away.

“GO AHEAD AND KILL ME NOW, IF IT SO PLEASES YOUR DIGNITY!!! DO IT, AVATAR — I’M AS GOOD AS DEAD IN YOUR HEAVENLY, DEVINE, AND CHOSEN EYES!!” she yelled, her screams echoing throughout the halls of the vessel.

Korra reeled back against the wall, clutching a pipe and blinking in shock—to discern who was really in the prison.

“But know this,” Asami continued, the volume of her voice at the maximum, “I fell in love with you because you chose me! I fell in love with you because you began to turn my dark into light! I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU— NOT FOR THE SAKE OF DISTROYING YOU, BUT THE EXACT OPPOSITE!! I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU, THAT YOU MIGHT BE SAFE FROM THE HARM THAT I COULD DO!!”

Korra scoffed, stood up, and walked to the doorway that led out to the halls of the Air-Ship. She gripped the frame and turned back for one final glance.

“And look at what it accomplished. You have harmed me more by doing me this injustice— you might as well have stabbed me in my sleep. And before I go, know this… I’m not yours to command.”

“Well, then… that makes two of us,” Asami spat, sliding down against the wall opposite and burying her head in her hands.

“Fuck you… I would’ve married you if you asked—in a heartbeat, you know that? That’s how perfect I thought you were for me.”

“We’re s—” Asami blurted, but then the engineer covered her mouth.

“We’re what?”
“Nevermind. It doesn’t matter anymore.”

Korra let out a shaky, unstable sigh. She looked up at the ceiling for a few seconds— desperate to avoid eye contact with the woman who’d hurt her— and choked back a sob. The metal against her hands felt colder than ice, but the empty pit in her stomach was what chilled her to the bone. She felt herself scratching at the doorway with habit-bitten fingernails and, by the miracle of Raava’s willing, found the courage to unclench her teeth, not looking back;

“You were the first person who’d ever truly made me feel happy,” she managed to get out, before her tongue felt tangled in her throat.

And then she left.

_________________________________

The Lieutenant sneered, “Now that the Sato’s are out of the way, it makes our work much, much easier.”

His new second-in-command, Ai, clutched her still-healing ribs and stiffened, “Sir?”

“Plant the bombs tonight, level the place to the ground,” he hissed.

“A-Are you sure?”

“We’re going to cover this city in Unobtainium, Ai.”

“Uh… y-yes sir. By your command.”

He looked out from their new headquarters— the penthouse at Future Industries Tower. War was here, and the Equalists were going to win.

_________________________________

Hikaru was sitting in a cold, metal room. The head wound she’d received at the Estate had finally clotted, but the blood had dried down one side of her face— making her look like the Bloody Baron from Harry Potter.

Her hands were bound to the table and she sat, waiting.

She’d been captured by the Metalbending Police.

Finally, after fifteen minutes of just sitting there in the revelation that she’d ruined her life— Lin Beifong limped into the room on a pair of crutches; evidently still recovering from the explosion a week ago.
“You’ve done it now, kid.”

“I know.”

The Chief walked around the room. Now wasn’t the time for intimidation tactics or scaring or yelling. Now was the time to be calm and ask questions.

“Who’s orders are you really following, then? Coalition or Korra’s.”

“You want to hear?”

“Who’s orders are you really following, then? Coalition or Korra’s.”

“The honest one.”

“Both. I wanted the Equalists to understand that they couldn’t push people around, and then when they took my Bending— it only made me angrier. I knew… I knew that the Sato’s were Equalists… and the Coalition wanted to attack— no… that’s a lie… I convinced them to attack. By coincidence the Equalists decided that they didn’t want Hiroshi and Asami hanging around anymore either…”

“And the Avatar?”

“At the Sato Estate… there was fire everywhere… Kuvira had Hiroshi slung over her shoulder, and Asami was barely dangling off of Korra’s. I knew that Korra and Kuvira would die if the Equalists caught up to them, and that the Coalition would attack them if they saw them aiding the Sato’s. So I charged both parties— and then your cops caught me.”

She didn’t tell Chief Beifong the part where she tried to kill Asami.

“That was stupid of you.”

“Yeah well… at least Korra and Kuvira are safe. And I got rid of two top dog Equalists for you, so there’s that.”

Lin pinched the bridge of her nose, “You know this won’t look good if I don’t make an arrest, right?”

Hikaru looked down at the table, the only face entering her mind was little Suki’s.

“All the same, Councilman Tenzin and my niece vouch for you.”

She closed her eyes.

“I have to keep you in a cell for a little while but—”

Lin leaned forwards and lowered her voice.

“— I think you’ll be alright. Between you and me… you’re one tough kid… though I suppose you get that from your grandmother, don’t you?”

Hikaru gave the Chief a hint of a smile, an expression that was… slightly reciprocated.

“I have a sister… can you take her to Tenzin while I’m in jail?”

“No problem, kid.”
Korra was sitting on the top deck on the Airship, letting the cold air fill her lungs as she meditated. Deep down, she knew that she couldn’t meditate while… while going through such inner turmoil. How could she properly sit still and relax— how could she be asked to clear her mind when the person whom she romantically loved most had… had hurt her in this way?

There’d been signs.

Korra had chosen to ignore them, but there’d been fucking signs. And so many of them. Asami had barely tolerated hanging out with Korra’s friends— couldn’t stand Probending. She’d acquired dark circles under her eyes; claiming that they were from late nights at the office… when really Asami had been sneaking around Republic City doing Raava-knows-what. And when Korra had found that Arrow, just lying there on her workshop desk, Asami had smiled and made up a lie on the spot.

The Water Tribe girl slumped against the railing of the ship and buried her head in her hands.

“You know… I expected you to go on a rampage when you learned,” a voice spoke through the wind whipping around Korra’s ears.

She looked up— Opal was sitting on the edge of the rail, her feet dangling off the edge. If it was anyone else, Korra would’ve been worried… but Opal’s glider was strapped to her back.

“The old me… back before I was poisoned… she would’ve wrecked the Airship in a heartbeat… or maybe the whole Estate— would’ve brought down the foundation in three seconds.”

“Holding it in isn’t healthy.”

“There’s only so many times I can cry before my conscious tells me I should’ve seen this coming.”

“What… what are you going to do?”

“Shes going to work for your mom, you already know that—”

“I’m not asking about Asami. I’m asking about you. What are YOU going to do?”

Korra fiddled with the metal railing as she looked at the silver clouds on the horizon. If she were to squint hard enough, she’d see a pack of wild Sky Bison roaming around in the distance. Though it was perfectly sunny out, the air was cold— and though she might be Southern Water Tribe… Korra involuntarily shivered.

“I don’t know.”

“That’s a perfectly reasonable response.”

She looked at Opal, who was staring back with wide, caring eyes. And that was all it took.

Korra fell into the Airbender’s arms and began sobbing. Uncontrollably. The two girls sank to the wooden flooring of the deck as Opal whispered calming nothings into the Avatar’s ears, cradling her head and her short, chestnut hair. The other hand was rubbing soothing patterns into Korra’s back.
“She lied to me,” Korra cried, burying her face into Opal’s hoodie.

“I know. I know… sssshhhhhhh… let it all out….”

“I loved her, Opal… I loved her so much… and she told me that she loved me too…”

“I think she does.”

“Really?” Korra sniffled, her face red and stained with tears.

“Yeah—I don’t think she lied to you about loving you.”

“How am I going to fix this, Opal? I love her so much… but she hurt me and lied to me…”

“Time. Time and only time,” the Airbender said, kissing the top of her best friend’s head.

They sat there, on the deck of the Airship, soothingly rocking back and forth and whispering to each other in reassurances. Such is the mark of the greatest form of love; friendship.

Kuvira decided to fix the Sato’s something to eat— yesterday had been a long and tiresome and traumatic experience for the two of them, no doubt. She made ham and cheese sandwiches in the Airship’s galley, carefully floating the two plates in front of her as she opened the hatch and descended down the ladder.

Hiroshi wasn’t awake, despite it being mid-afternoon. Though… his back was turned… he may have been just ignoring Kuvira as she slid the plate under the metal door.

Down the hallway… she began hearing a voice;

“See the Pyramids along the Nile,

Watch the sunrise from a tropic isle,

Kuvira silently approached the heiress’s cell. The younger woman’s back, like her father, was facing the door, though Asami was blatantly awake— sitting upright and leaning against the metal as she sang.

Just remember darling all the while,

You belong to me.”
The music was calming, and the Metalbender’s eyes started drooping slightly— though in hindsight, she’d gotten very little sleep in the past two weeks.

“See the marketplace in old Algier,
Send me photographs and souvenirs,
Just remember when a dream appears,
You belong to me.”

The Metalbender recognized this as Suyin and Baatar’s wedding song (they got married later; after Huan had been born and they’d adopted Kuvira). Asami had a beautiful voice, resonating and echoing off the metal walls and creating a perfect harmony with itself.

“I’d be so alone without you,
Maybe you’d be lonesome too… and blue.”

Kuvira silently slid the plate under the metal door, but if Asami noticed the food, she didn’t acknowledge the older woman’s presence. The engineer took a shaky breath.

“Fly the ocean in a silver plane,
See the jungle when it’s wet with rain,
Just remember till you’re home again,
You belong to me.”

Kuvira sat down against the wall with her legs crossed, twirling her braid in wonder at the sheer talent of the engineer’s voice. Asami paused, and slightly turned her head— she must’ve realized that someone was in the room with her… but, unfazed, continued on. This time, though, Kuvira joined her.

“I’d be so alone without you,
Maybe you’d be lonesome too… and blue.”

She could feel Asami smiling, and they finished the final verse together. It sounded beautiful.
“Fly the ocean in a silver plane,
See the jungle when it’s wet with rain,
Just remember till you’re home again,
You belong to me.”

“You have a beautiful singing voice,” Kuvira said, standing up and brushing her pants off.

The engineer didn’t answer, and the Metalbender wondered if perhaps she was overstaying a welcome—so she turned to leave. A faint scraping sound could be heard as Asami picked up the plate of food.

“So do you,” the younger girl responded.

Kuvira smiled and climbed up the ladder to the cockpit, staring out at the blue sky with a...a longing in her heart.

She missed her family, and she was finally going home.

Chapter End Notes

Good songs, heavy hearts. That’s this fanfic in a nutshell.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=murYvyEzpUM
This is Carla Bruni’s cover of the song above

:)
The City of Second Chances- Part 1

Chapter Summary

"The bond that links your true family is not one of blood, but of respect and joy in each other's life."

-Richard Bach

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Opal felt herself fading, her soul leaving her body as she fazed into the Spirit World. The cold night air atop the deck of the Airship (with Korra watching over her as she stargazed) slowly melted away to the warm yellow-green skies of another realm.

She stood up and was instantly tackled by a figure from behind.

"Hey!" Opal laughed.

There was a muffled "Hey" in her shoulder as Jinora’s small but strong arms wrapped around her waist.

“I'm glad you made it home safe,” the older girl whispered, clutching onto her soulmate’s arms as she looked at a flock of bird-like spirits passing overhead.

“I'm glad you made it onto the Airship safe, too.”

Opal turned around and pressed a long, lingering kiss on Jinora’s mouth. The younger girl’s lips were soft and warm, and the Beifong couldn’t get enough of them—pulling Jinora close and cupping the back of her head with her dark hands. She traced the younger girl’s tattoos from memory down her neck, earning both an “mmmm” and a shiver from Jinora.

“I love you,” Opal murmured between kisses.

“I love you too.”

“How much?” the older girl asked teasingly.

“Hmm?” Jinora hummed, moving on to Opal’s neck.

“How much do you love me?”

Jinora pondered this with a smile, looking across fields of rainbow-colored grass. Finally, she opened her mouth and met Opal’s green eyes.

“I love you more than all the grains of sand in the Si Wong Desert, more than all the blades of grass in the fields surrounding Ba Sing Sei, and more than all the drops of water between the Northern Water Tribe and the Southern.”

“That was so cheesy.”
Jinora playfully hit Opal’s shoulder, but the older girl picked her up and met their mouths once again.

“— what I meant to say was that was cheesy and sweet and adorable and I love you just as much.”

They sat down in the grass, holding each other and watching spirits come and go as they pleased. Jinora’s head was resting on top of Opal’s chest and the younger girl listened for the steady *thump thump* of the Beifong’s heartbeat. She almost fell asleep to the older girl’s rhythmic breathing— slow and steady, in and out… like the ocean tides. Opal reached for Jinora’s hand and ever so slowly ran her fingers over each knuckle, tracing the blue ink dyed into her skin.

“I think I’m going to grow my hair back out,” Jinora sighed, peacefully content.

“Oh?”

“Not as long as before. Shorter and wind-tossed.”

“Mmmm… I can picture it. I miss the chocolate color of your hair.”

Jinora reached up and ran her hands through Opal’s bangs, playing with the curls around her ears and the short wisps that didn’t quite reach all the way down the back of her neck. Jinora’s mouth soon followed, kissing and tracing the edges of Opal’s hairstyle.

“Oooh, hey! I’m ticklish there!!”

“I know.”

“Hey! AHHHH!”

Squirming for freedom from the Airbending Master’s mischievous grip— Opal trundled the pair of them over, and suddenly they were tumbling through the grass. They playfully fell, rolling down the gently sloping hill until they came to a level stop (not that they were worried… you can never really take fall damage as an Airbender). The older girl trounced on Jinora, pining her against the ground.

“Ah-hah!” she snickered, grinning at her victory.

Jinora’s arm snaked around Opal’s ribs as she gave a sly smirk and pulled the two girls back together.

Okay, so maybe it was a tie.

They rested together, kissing and murmuring sweet nothings into each other’s mouths. Hands began to roam and fingers snuck into regions where they ought not to sneak. As Jinora began bringing Opal a great deal of pleasure in her lower region— a spirit popped out of the ground.

“NOW NONE OF THAT SHAMEFUL BEHAVIOR HERE!!” the porcupine-like spirit scolded.

The girls sprang apart with faces as pink as chrysanthemums. They looked anywhere but at the spirit— nor at each other as they apologized profusely for their… uh… *activities*.

“I need to get back to the Airship,” Opal said meekly, rubbing the back of her neck in embarrassment.

“Yeah, sure… text me when you get to Zaofu?” Jinora asked.

“Sure thing, love.”
The leaned in to kiss and only managed a peck before the porcupine-spirit piped up again;

“TAKE IT OUTSIDE!!”

“But we are outside?” Opal countered.

“GAAAH!! JUST GET OUT OF HERE ALREADY!!”

The two girls laughed and faced each other holding hands and pressing their foreheads together with wide smiles plastered on their faces. Opal closed her eyes and returned to the Mortal Realm— feeling as though she could fly.

_______________________________________________-

Kuvira had let her hair down, a once-in-a-blue-moon occasion. Her heart was bounding and leaping around in her chest as the Airship descended through the clouds. There was a flash of silver and she gasped in relief.

Suddenly the moisture of the clouds hit her face and she almost recoiled in shock at how soaked she was.

Standing next to her, Korra let out a genuine and lively laugh— raising both of her arms and pulling the water out of Kuvira’s clothes and hair. The two women chuckled as they watched themselves near the silver city.

It was most exciting.

The sight of the domes nearly made Kuvira faint in nostalgia; she reached out towards them, as if by extending her hand the Airship might descend faster. She felt the slightest tingle in the pads of her fingertips… as though… she could ever so slightly feel the platinum shells.

“Thank Raava this thing has autopilot,” Korra mumbled.

Finally, FINALLY!! The Airship docked on the landing platform of the largest building in Zaofu— the Beifong’s Palace looming over the metal clan city. Bustling with the everyday foot traffic and monorail commuters, the people of Zaofu looked like ants from where the Metalbender was standing.

Kuvira was impatient— slinging a metal cable over the rail and rappelling down to the landing strip (Korra and Opal laughed from the deck, merely using Airbending to hop down and join her). All three of them rushed into the arms of the awaiting Matriarch.

“OOF!! You three are fully-grown torpedoes!!” Su exclaimed with a giggle.

Her trio of daughters (one biological and two adopted) hugged tightly onto the older woman, practically lifting her up as they whispered about missing her fondly. Suyin’s gray hair bounced up and down as she shook with laughter, planting kisses on each of their foreheads. The crow’s feet at either sides of her face were growing more and more pronounced each year— and yet they reflected not age but the happiness of Suyin and her family.

Kuvira’s replacement for Captain of the Guard, a Firebender named Fai, strode up to the platform in
an esteemed manner with his hands behind his back, “Ma’am, do we have your permission to escort the prisoners?”

“Yes… take them to the jail— after a few discussions, we’ll see about accommodating them,” Su said with a serious tone.

A squad of Metalbenders gave the group of women a respectful salute and followed Captain Fai up the ramp of the Airship, opening the outer door and climbing inside. A part of Kuvira wondered why Asami had surrendered so easily… perhaps she truly did love Korra? And such a draw of connection… had made her give up?

“Ah, but let’s not worry about that right now,” Su said with a smile.

“Indeed,” Korra agreed, “I, for one, know that Kuvira is absolutely famished and needs food stat!”

“Hey! I ate before we left the hospital!” the Metalbender defended, though at that moment her stomach chose to let out a hefty growl— making Opal and Korra roar with laughter.

Suyin rolled her eyes and motioned for her rascals to follow. They walked through the halls of the Beifong Palace, and Kuvira’s fingers trailed the walls as they walked. She missed it here. Immensely. Opal seemed to be doing the same thing— and except for holidays or the occasional three-day weekend, the Airbender had little time off to visit. It’d been about three years since she’d properly stayed for more than a week. She spent most of her time off in Republic City.

*Thank Raava, of all seasons for shit to go down— we chose summer.*

Their footsteps echoed through the halls until they reached the dining hall, where Suyin sat them down and went to go find her chef.

Korra slumped forwards on the table and let out a sigh. Opal rubbed the Avatar’s back in pity— Korra had gotten maybe five hours of sleep before coming here. And she wasn’t fully recovered from the explosion.

“After dinner, you’re going to bed,” Kuvira chided. “We’ll talk about… business… after you’ve rested.”

“Fine by me,” Korra mumbled into her hoodie.

Opal looked at the Avatar’s collar and began giggling.

“What’s so funny?”

“You’re telling me that you kicked ass throughout an Estate filled with Equalists and Coalition members and fire everywhere, with a hospital gown on underneath?”

Kuvira and Opal roared with laughter as Korra’s face went pink. I mean, yeah she had a pair of jeans on and a hoodie— but they’d been in such a rush to leave that Korra hadn’t bothered to properly change. The Metalbender, still shaking with laughter, put a hand on the Avatar’s shoulder.

“You can look through my old room— I probably have some clothes that fit.”

“I mean, we are the same build and height,” Korra grumbled, still a little embarrassed.

“You’re more… muscely. And I’m a dancer— slender and more elegant.”

“Pretentious, too.”
“I’m sorry— did you want clothes or not?”

“…yes please.”

Suyin walked back into the room—followed by her personal chef, who had four steaming plates of food ready for the women. Kuvira’s eyes widened; she missed his cooking more than anything else in the world (except perhaps Jr.), and as soon as the plate was set down in front of her, she dug in.

“MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM!!!” Korra moaned after the first bite.

“I’ll take that as a compliment,” Chef said with a smirk.

Opal calmly ate her vegetarian dish with a smile, keeping her manners while the other two girls ravaged their meals.

Afterwards— they walked through the halls of the Palace when Kuvira found herself colliding with two boulders, excuse me, brothers. Wing and Wei, whom she’d grown close to through sparring, gave her a tight hug; making her promise to play several rounds of metal disc within the next few days. They hugged Opal, picking her up off the ground and spinning her around like they always had as kids. They ran down the halls, no doubt up to some set of mischievous pranks.

Huan gave both of his sisters a hug and Korra a high five, and then sauntered off to go play with his bananas, excuse me, art.

But the best part was when Baatar Sr. popped out from inside of his study with a bright smile—bringing the three girls close and kissing them on the tops of their heads like Su had. Kuvira had always loved Baatar Sr. as a father, and she couldn’t help but sigh deeply as she rested her head on his chest. He cradled her head and commented on how long her hair was getting (she never let any of the Beifongs except her mother and father touch her hair—fear of Wing and Wei doing something unspeakably horrific to her).

Korra crashed in Opal’s old room (there was more than enough room for the both of them) and Kuvira rolled her eyes at the echoing laughter as the Avatar playfully teased the Airbender for her old decorations (Opal had gone through a Panic! and Fall Out Boy phase as a middle schooler—having left for the Airbender culture as a freshman—and she’d kept her room as it was when she left Zaofu).

Kuvira let out a long sigh as she opened the door to her room. Though it was evident that Wing and Wei had searched through her old stuff for any good video games or Huan looking for “artistic inspiration”, the place was mostly intact.

She fell on the bed and instantly began to snore—dreadfully exhausted from the week’s events.

Chapter End Notes

*throws a bag of fluff at you to make up for wrenching your heart around*

As always, please leave comments; I enjoy reading about how much you guys hate me :)
Chapter Summary

"I think the biggest disease the world suffers from in this day and age is the disease of people feeling unloved."

- Princess Diana

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Korra looked a little funny in Kuvira’s green clothes— and… well… she didn’t really pull off skinny jeans like the Metalbender could. But she did look relieved to be wearing something other than hospital clothes, sitting on the couch and nervously bouncing her knee (you know, doing the thing).

Opal was sitting next to Korra, rubbing calming circles onto the back of the Avatar’s hand as they waited.

Suyin was pacing back and forth, looking out of the window of her study at the sprawling steel city below. Any other time, Kuvira would have been standing at attention next to her— ready to serve. But, now that she’d resigned, she could finally relax and lounge around the Palace. It felt so strange.

Kuvira was unsure how to hold herself, so she had her hands behind her back and was looking at the assortment of knick knacks on Su’s dusty shelf.

Suddenly, the doors opened and Captain Fai and several other guards brought in none other than Hiroshi and Asami Sato. Though they were handcuffed, the Zaofu soldiers weren’t hustling them or acting disrespectful.

The former tycoon looked furious, to say the least— his eyes narrowed and his mustache twitching in anger as he realized that he was captured and surrounded by Benders.

Asami, on the other hand, looked only at the green carpet below her feet— refusing to acknowledge anybody. Her cheeks were stained with tears and her eyes were a faint red. Kuvira could only feel great pity for her. The shackles binding her wrists looked a little tight, digging into the skin and leaving a red mark. The Metalbender resisted the urge to cross the room and loosen them— but of course, being a resigned Captain, it was not in her place to do such a thing.

“Ah yes, the infamous Sato’s of Future Industries. Have a seat, please.”

Asami sat down in the wooden chair opposite Su’s desk— striding across the room in platinum shackles without even so much as indicating that Korra existed. Low blow.

Hiroshi on the other hand, stood still, “No.”

“No?” Su asked with a raised eyebrow.

“I demand to know why we’re being treated as prisoners in a foreign land— we have no quarrel with Zaofu. Release my daughter and I immediately, and we will leave at once without any trouble.”
The Matriarch walked up to him and looked the Equalist right in the eye, “You are responsible for acts of terrorism. You are a wanted man, dead or alive— and it is by the Spirit’s grace that I have not turned you in to the United Republic. It was the Avatar’s decision to bring you to me.”

“What do you plan to do with us?” Asami asked flatly, looking at the desk with hollow eyes.

Su’s gaze darted between father and daughter as she let out a huff of impatience, “Hiroshi here will be placed into our prison system, where he will be allowed to assist with engineering projects, collaborating with my husband, Baatar. Asami will be given limited freedom within the city— not allowed to leave, of course— and is also expected to contribute to Zaofu’s research and development. Hopefully, within time, you both will be able to earn your freedom and leave.”

“This is ridiculous,” Hiroshi muttered.

“We could’ve let you burn, you know,” Opal snapped. “The Equalists were coming after you!”

“Better dead than at the mercy of fucking Benders—”

“Enough!” Su interjected. “Please… I can’t ask you to enjoy your… sentences here. But at least try and… try to cooperate with others. This is a city where Benders and Nonbenders live in harmony. It is my hope that you will begin to appreciate this balance while you live here.”

With that Asami stood, following her father— who flashed Korra a sneer of disgust— back into the escort of the guards and out of the room.

Kuvira looked at Korra, who was sitting on the couch and staring at the little metal model of the city with a hollow expression. Her fingernails were digging into her thighs, and the Metalbender felt sorry for whoever her soulmate was. Kuvira walked behind the Avatar and put a supportive hand on her shoulder, to which Korra covered her hand with one of her own.

“Well… that went alright, all things considered,” Su sighed, rubbing her forehead and adjusting her crownpiece.

Asami let out a sigh as the guards separated her from her father and escorted her to a metal room. She swallowed a gulp and rubbed at the side of her leg; no doubt a certain soulmate was digging their nails into their thigh.

Don’t think of her. Don’t think of her. Don’t think of her. Don’t think of her. Don’t think of her.

“Please have a seat on the bench,” a young lad, not three years younger than her, kindly said.

She hopped up on the seat— the room looked like a doctor’s office.

The guard assisting her had metal pauldrons on, and underneath green robes. His hair was brown and his skin was tanned, though not as dark as…

Don’t think of her. Don’t think of her. Don’t think of her. Don’t think of her. Don’t think of her.
His eyes were a stunning green, with a sympathetic sparkle to them, and Asami couldn’t help but think about how cute he was.

“Take your shoes and socks off, please.”

She did so.

“I’m just going to lift your pantleg, yeah, like that. I’m putting a tracking anklet on you— don’t worry, it’s only uncomfortable for about a day, and then you get used to it.”

He snapped the device on with a tight *click*, pressing a button on the side that instantly locked into place— if Asami tried hard enough she could tamper with the device and break free… but what was the point? Though it was difficult with handcuffs on, she managed to put her socks and shoes back on.

“Does everyone in Zaofu wear these anklets?”

“Former convicts of your caliber, yes. But eventually, if you serve the city and earn Matriarch Suyin’s trust, you’ll become a citizen of the city— free to come and go as you please.”

“How long is eventually?” Asami asked, staring at the anklet piece.

“I’d guess… two years?”

“Great,” the heiress said sarcastically. “Prisoner to a conurbation I’ve never even visited.”

The boy looked at her with pity, “I heard the news… about your… uh… Estate. You have my condolences.”

She smiled, looking at his emerald eyes and nearly drowning herself in the vibrant tone of those irises. Enchanting. And then a guard at the door cleared his throat;

“You ready to go?”

“Yes! Yes, of course! After you,” the younger guard said with a smile, offering his hand to her.

She took it and he pulled her up. His hands were soft and warm, but she had to let go as he turned and showed her to the hallway.

“Alright, we’re going to show you your living quarters— Matriarch Suyin made sure to find you something semi-comfortable,” the boy said, looking at a tablet and swiping through notes. Asami recognized the logo.

“You import from Varrick Global Industries?”

“Actually he lives here— and you get to work with him!”


The boy then fetched a key from one of the bystanding gaurds who’d been on the Airship and unlocked Asami’s platinum cuffs.

“You’re not worried I’ll try something?” the engineer asked with a raised eyebrow.
“You’ve got nothing left to fight for,” one of the female guards standing nearby huffed.

Well… she wasn’t wrong. What would Asami gain by resisting? Misery? She already had plenty of that. The lad escorted her out of the Palace halls and down a side tunnel, instead of the main entrance. As he swiped a card and typed a code in a keypad, Asami looked at his noticeable ranking stripes on his shoulders— he was either a lieutenant or a sergeant. Impressive for such a young age.

“What’s your name?”

“I’m Chul Baek-Seomun, Zaofu born and raised.”

“Two last names?”

“Mom and Dad got a divorce when I was thirteen.”

“Oh, sorry.”

“Eh, they still hang together during holidays and they don’t fight— so it’s not a big problem.”

The sunlight hit her eyes, and having spent the past day in a cell, Asami squinted and held out a hand as they walked outside. The air was crisp as it hit her throat and lungs, but it felt really good to be outside. Raava knows that she’s spent more than half her life in an office or a workshop.

“This way,” Chul motioned.

She followed him down a beautiful pathway, where flowers hung overhead and the sweet smells of fruit trees lingered through the air. Her fingers trailed along the leaves, letting herself get pricked by the occasional thorn. A part of her wished that she could take her shoes off and feel the dirt.

Chul turned a corner and suddenly she was in the streets of Zaofu— watching people come and go as they pleased, bustling around like ants on a hill. The combination of green and silver reminded Asami of Slytherin House from Harry Potter. They walked among metal streets, passing metal buildings, and the engineer began to wonder if the food was made of metal, too.

“Over there’s the public library, and that’s the shopping mall— food, clothes, make-up, you know… that sort of thing.”

“What about workshops and automobile repair?”

“There aren’t any Satomobiles in Zaofu… but I’m sure you can find a job fixing up the Airship engines that pass through on their way to Ba Sing Sei. I know that Su does carry a few jeeps for transport… maybe you can work as her personal engineer… but let’s get you situated in an apartment first.”

“An apartment? I thought you guys considered me a criminal?”

“And Suyin used to rob banks, and my parents were bandits before they came here. Zaofu is the City of Second Chances! Unless you’d rather go to Republic City Jail, of course.”

Chul put his hand on her shoulder and gave her a sympathetic smile. They turned down another street and suddenly Asami was face-to-face with a high-rise condo complex.

“This is too fancy,” she mumbled.

“What? You’re the great Asami Sato! You hail from a mansion the size of three probending arenas!”
“Look… I willingly turned myself in… I deserve to be punished. Suyin’s treating me like a kid that skipped school… when in reality I’m a former terrorist. Hell, my father’s in a jail cell, why did she decide that I get the sweet end of the deal?”

Chul shrugged, “I don’t make the rules, I just follow them.”

“Right.”

The young guard showed her past a security guard and took her to the twelfth floor, where she was suddenly face-to-face with a fantastic view of the mountains and the platinum flower-domes. There was a small waterfall in the corner. Smooth and elegant countertops. Lofty amount of space. Pre-furnished. The walls were decorated with… interesting paintings signed Huan Beifong at the bottom. There were a few plants dangling from hanging flowerpots on the patio, along with a table and chairs overlooking the city.

“Um… you sure this is the right one?”

“Yep! Su had it prepared for you.”

“Okay, I honestly don’t understand. What is the fucking catch? Did you sell my soul to the devil?”

“No catch, I keep trying to tell you this! Su expects you to pay rent every month, which means you ought to get a decent job as soon as you can. Other than that, within a couple of years— you’re a free woman!”

Asami sighed and gave him a grateful smile.

He bowed respectfully and showed himself out. And that was when the engineer finally broke. Flopping down on the couch, she pressed her face into a fancy leather cushion and screamed.

Chapter End Notes

yike(s)
Chapter Summary

"It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity."

– Albert Einstein

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was dastardly cold out— and Ai wished that she’d brought a coat. She looked through the binoculars and smirked at the glorious sight.

Their team was evacuating via tunnel, and when she received the radio call from the squad leader— the “all clear” signal… she pressed the button.

**BOOM!! BOOM!! BOOM!!**

The Republic City Art Museum was reduced to rubble in a fantastic display of red and orange— lighting up the sky. Ai felt the shock wave hit her cheeks and suddenly she wasn’t really all that cold. Chunks of the foundation spilled out onto the streets as what was left of the building collapsed in on itself.

“I guess those college kids are gonna be pissed off,” the Equalist next to her smirked.

“What are they gonna do about it? The Avatar’s off playing hero in Zaofu— they’ve got no ringleader right now!”

The Equalists retreated through the streets, starting their trucks and cackling all the way back to headquarters.

________________________________________________

Baatar Jr. had a frown on his face, but in that playful and silly way, as the train lurched forwards. He’d follow Kuvira to the end of the world and back— but they’d only just moved in and she’d already ran off to Zaofu. He was going to get one of his mother’s tracking anklets and put it on his fiancé… when he finally caught up to her.

“Quite the train ride,” an old man sitting next to him said cheerfully.

“Oh yes,” Baatar mused. “But it’s worth it.”

“Where are you headed?”
“Zaofu, sir.”

“Ah yes, visited it one or two times, when I was younger and more energetic. How’s the Matriarch doing?”

Baatar laughed, “She’s my mother, sir.”

The old man’s eyes widened, “Is that so? Well… be sure to say hello for me!”

“I will… you are?”

“The name’s Yat-Sen, my good boy. My wife and your grandmother were… were good friends back in the day."

Baatar smiled and talked with the elderly gentleman until the stop for the docks to Kyoshi Island had come. He shook the man’s hand and proceeded to lean back in some of the empty seats to take a nap. After all, Zaofu was the final stop.

It was midafternoon when he finally woke up, the lowering sun creeping through the blinds on the train. Baatar gathered his suitcases and stretched as he stood. Peering through the curtains on the train, he saw a figure standing on the end of the platform, with her hands in her pockets and a smug grin on her face.

He stepped off the platform and met his fiancé with that same playful frown. Kuvira ran into his arms and embraced him tightly.

“You left me in Republic City,” he murmured into her neck, picking her up and spinning her around.

“I couldn’t let Korra try and pilot an Airship by herself— I don’t think she even has a driver’s license,” Kuvira retorted with a laugh.

Baatar set her back down on the ground and gave her a lengthy kiss, there on the platform. Kuvira greedily gripped him tightly as they poured quite a few emotions out into that caress. The Metallbender let out a sigh through her nose and Baatar had to chuckle.

“Are you going all romantic comedy on me?”

“Sweetie, Korra blew up and there was fire everywhere and then I was put in a giant blimp— you know about my… um… problem with heights— and then I had to watch Mom put one of my… sorta friends in jail. I’ve had a long week.”

“Fair point. Come on, let’s go home.”

“I was wondering if… um… you had any… you know… work?”

“Well, I’m not sure how long Junior is going to be staying in Zaofu, but he’s going to want to take a few more looks at the Unobtainium. I’m sure you have plenty of information to tell us?” Suyin asked with a raised eyebrow.

“Well… I suppose… we never learned much about it, only that it’s properties could mess with a
“Well… at any rate— you can work with my husband and son at their workshop. I’ll pay you enough to cover rent and food.”

“T-thank you, Matriarch Suyin,” Asami stammered, bowing and walking away from the courtyard.

“Korra… Korra wake up!”

“Hmmm… wassit now?” the Avatar groggily moaned into her pillow.

“The Art Museum… it was blown up… by the Equalists…” Opal trailed off.

“What!?” Korra roared, sitting up in her bed.

The Airbender showed her the news article— it was all over the headlines. All the security guards had died and the building was nothing but smoldering ash. Korra had failed.

“I need… I need to go take a walk,” Korra said— tears running down her face.

“Uh… yeah, sure. I’ll see you at lunch?”

“Yeah,” the Avatar answered hollowly.

Korra walked around Su’s courtyard, looking at all of the crazy sculptures that Huan had crafted over the years… though they weren’t quite the same as what the Art Museum had to offer.

It was her first free day from Airbending— after she’d failed repeatedly to meditate correctly, or make it through that stupid gate setup, Tenzin had decided that she could roam through the city on her own (provided that she didn’t start any fights with thugs or triads). Unfortunately, there weren’t any Probending matches today… so she decided to wander downtown.

It was a cold, but sunny day. She did kind of wish she could Airbend, so that she could see the city from a cat-owl’s point of view… but this was fun nevertheless.

She turned a corner and was suddenly face-to-face with a majestic old building looming over her.

Republic City Art Museum

“It’s worth a shot,” she said with a smile.

As she walked up the marble steps, her pockets jingled with what few yuans that Tenzin had given her as an allowance. She paid for a ticket and pushed her way through the turnstile. There was instantly that musty old smell of archeology— Air Temple Island reeked of it. Korra smirked as she
walked down the aisles of paintings and sculptures, looking at old pictographs and woven headdresses (including a “recovered” mask of the Blue Spirit, found in the depths of Lake Lagolai).

There was a statue, down the hallways a bit, of a young Airbender girl— no… she looked more familiar… and when Korra looked down at the plaque she realized who it was.

“So you’re Avatar Samsara…” Korra murmured in awe. “Pretty short for a Stormtrooper.”

There was a glint in the statue’s eyes, as though Samsara thought the joke was amusing— and for once Korra didn’t feel so alone about being the Avatar.

“I bet it was pretty scary being Avatar Number Two… but you made a big impact on the world—from what Katara’s told me. It’ll be nice to meet you someday… maybe when I learn Airbending we can have a scooter race…”

Korra continued on down the hallways, admiring pieces of art here and there, and patiently taking the time to read the descriptions underneath or to the side. It felt so strange to not want to be in a rush… but the emptiness of the building and the way the sun streamed in through tall, stained-glass windows made Korra feel more relaxed that she’d felt in a long, long while.

She would have to visit more often.

“I hope you’re happy now,” the Avatar said as she walked into the cell.

“What on Earth are you talking about?” Hiroshi asked with a frown.

“The Art Museum’s been blown up. It’s nothing but rubble and smithereens now.”

“Wonderful. Now get out of my cell.”

“D-don’t you realize what this means?” Korra asked with a raised eyebrow. “What has transpired?”

“The Equalists get ahold of Unobtainium? Yes— yes I know altogether what it means. But what good is that news to me, when I’m stuck on the other side of the planet at your whims?”

“You don’t know, do you?”

“What the fuck are you talking about, Avatar?” Hiroshi sneered.

“That Museum was created by your late wife, Yasuko.”

“You’re lying. You’re fucking lying to me. What kind of conspiracy—”

“I wish I was. I honestly do. You should’ve seen As— your daughter’s face when she learned, months ago. All of the art inside had been recovered and donated by Yasuko, all across the four nations… and your pals just blew it up. I hope you’re happy with yourself.”

“I don’t understand,” Hiroshi said, turning to look away from the metal cell door. “She never told me about this…”
Korra handed him several news articles that she’d printed— verifying indeed that the Museum had been built in collaboration between Yasuko Sato and Avatar Aang, a year before he’d passed away. Hiroshi gripped the articles and blots of tears began to blur the ink and ruin the paper. Finally, after ten minutes of reading through the information, the ex-Equalist looked up at her— making eye contact with hollow amber orbs— and gave her a lingering, defeated gaze.

“Leave me in peace,” Hiroshi sighed, sitting down on the gray cot that was his bed.

“As you wish,” Korra nodded.

She left the cell, and it was only nine steps down the hallway that she heard a small sniffle coming from the lockup behind her. As she walked down the metal streets of Zaofu, she looked up and realized that drops of rain were falling down, tangling themselves in her hair. She sighed and continued onto the Beifong Palace with a single consolation;

Perhaps someday Hiroshi might see the error of his ways.

“I’m sorry that we’re working together under… these conditions,” Baatar said apologetically.

“Don’t be,” Asami waved him off, “I deserve this.”

“At least you get to tinker around with whatever the hell you want in here— honestly, I doubt I’m going to discover anything new on this metal.”

Asami smiled. Of all the friends she’d made in Republic City over the last few months… she liked Baatar Jr. the most. Perhaps it’d been Baatar’s status as a Nonbender (not that she wasn’t trying to be more and more open-minded towards Benders), but the fact that he was a brilliant engineer also didn’t hurt. She handed him a drill and began tinkering with the contraption with him.

“What is this going to do, anyways?”

“Um… hopefully be able to fling projectiles quicker than a Bender can stop them.”

“You mean to kill?”

“No— to wound. If Zaofu’s guard patrols had a ranged weapon to use against any bandits in nearby villages, we would never have to worry about invasion again.”

“Interesting… what powers it?”

“So far… I’ve come up with blasting jelly.”

“Incredible.”

“Hey! It’s going to work! I think!”

Just then, Baatar’s finger accidentally brushed the contraption the wrong way.
Asami jumped a foot away as across the workshop a beaker shattered and pieces of glass exploded. Thank God they were the only ones in the room. The weapon was absolutely smoking and… well… in pieces everywhere. The projectile, a tiny piece of metal that Junior had called a “bullet”, had gone not only through the beaker, but was lodged into the metal cabinet on the other side.

“Thank the Spirits that didn’t ricochet,” Asami thought. “I might’ve ended up with a few holes in my face.”

Baatar picked a piece of smoldering metal out of his hair and leaned over his newest invention with an apologetic smirk to Asami;

“Well… that could have gone better.”

The engineers stared at the creation, which Baatar had named a “pistol” and wondered about how it might change more than just Zaofu security. Though they didn’t acknowledge it… they’d just created a device that could finally give Nonbenders an edge. A way to defend themselves.

More importantly… they could turn a few tides with this kind of technology.

“Let’s try that again,” Junior said with wide eyes.

“One condition.”

“What?”

“Why don’t we find something a little more stable than blasting jelly?” Asami said with a smirk.

Baatar’s ears went red and he mumbled something about talking to his mother for ideas. They went back to prototyping and designing… and for the first time in months the former heiress felt comfortable. She was back in her natural habitat.

Chapter End Notes

Please leave comments!
Basho- Part 2

Chapter Summary

“Each night, when I go to sleep, I die. And the next morning, when I wake up, I am reborn.”

— Mahatma Gandhi

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Opal looked over the balcony of the Palace, gazing the horizon that she’d missed fondly. The high-speed rails darted to and fro as commuters made their way to work, and little green ants filled the streets— she hadn’t missed the Zaofu robes all that much, to be perfectly frank. There was a small chill in the morning air… you know, before the sun rises up and warms the Earth. Birds flew in flocks overhead, looking for a place to nest and rest, and somewhere in the mountainous forest, Opal could hear the roar of a platypus-bear.

She took a deep breath and moved through her Airbending sets, carefully keeping her balance in her core as she swayed on the balls of her feet.

“Morning!” a voice next to her chimed.

Opal stepped down from her position and looked over. Aina was sitting on the railing, watching her move through her sets. Their leafy ears were bobbing up and down as the spirit swayed to… inaudible music inside its head.

“Hey there!” she said, walking forwards and giving the little leafy spirit a hug, “I haven’t seen you in ages! How’s the Spirit world?”

“Spirity!”

“Well… alright then!”

“Aina told me to come get you!” Aina said, not missing a beat. Their little smile was adorable.

“Well… I’m not on very good terms with her right now…”

“She says it’s important!”

Opal let out a sigh and looked at the slowly rising sun. She knew, deep down, that it’d been an honest mistake— when Samsara had accidentally kissed her. She was still a little angry, both at the Avatar and at herself for partially enjoying it.

But it is not an Airbender’s way to hold grudges or stay angry.

“You’re right… tell her I’ll be there shortly.”

Aina hopped down from the rail and gave her ankle a little nudge, “See you in the Spirit World!”
Opal took a deep breath and sighed. She sat down on the cold balcony and crossed her legs, straightened her back, and rested her fists together in the meditative Lotus position. A spurt of wind ruffled her short black hair and she closed her emerald eyes.

Clear your mind.

“Opal! It’s good to see you!” an old man’s voice said.

The Airbender stood up from the spirit-grass and chuckled.

“It’s good to see you, too, Iroh!” she said warmly, giving him a hug.

“Been a while since you last visited, how’re things going in the Mortal World?”

“Well, I passed all of my finals— but then Korra was blown up and Asami’s mansion burned down. Oh, and my brothers want to try a round of metal disc, even though I’m an Airbender— I honestly don’t know how that’s going to work. So… stressful, as usual.”

“You know what would do you some good? A nice, calming cup of jasmine tea.”

Opal laughed, “Alright, Iroh… but I do have to find Avatar Samsara soon.”

“Well then, your search is at an end! She’s inside, with that funny green spirit that hangs around you!”

The Airbender let out a nervous chuckle, and followed the old general inside his tea shop. There she was, calmly playing Pai Sho with a frog spirit.

“That’s an illegal move!”

“It’s been around for ten thousand years!” Samsara disputed defensively. “I played that move against the very first King of Ba Sing Sei!”

“Bah! I’m through with you.”

The frog spirit floated out of the door and left Opal, Iroh, and Avatar Samsara alone in the room. The other girl hadn’t noticed the Beifong yet.

Opal silently slithered into the seat across from her and moved a tile, “I’m told you needed to speak with me?”

Samsara didn’t look up, only taking a sigh and moving a tile, “I wanted to speak with you, yes.”

Iroh set down a teapot and some cups, and then walked out to serve some more customers. There was a stillness in the room, much like that cold morning air that Opal had left back in Zaofu.

“Well… let’s hear it then.”

Samsara set down another tile, “I’m sorry.”
“I know. I know… and I’m sorry too.”

“Really?”

Opal looked into the Avatar’s gray eyes, “Yes… you didn’t mean anything by it—”

“The more I think about it… the more I realize that I did mean something by it… just not towards you.”

“What do you mean?”

Samsara took a sip of tea, “Well… to explain I have to show you my past.”

Opal stopped the game, forcing the two girls to make a long, lingering moment of eye contact. Minutes, or however long it was in the Spirit World, passed until Opal realized they were both waiting on each other to speak first.

“Care to explain?”

“Have you ever meditate… while being in the Spirit World?”

“Only to take you into the Mortal World.”

“No, no, no… I mean sitting down and clearing your mind while here… just coming here to meditate.”

“I haven’t tried it, no.”

“It’s a… spiritual experience.”

Opal groaned at the pun and rubbed her forehead in amusement. She’d missed Samsara’s humor immensely.

“Alright… let’s finish our tea first,” she laughed. “I have a lot to catch up with you about!”

“Oh?”

“Well, for one, your reincarnation got herself blown up.”

“Really? Oh, that’s classic Korra!” Samsara snickered. “Let me guess, she walked it off.”

“Actually, yeah… she kinda… well… it turned out that her girlfriend was one of the bad guys… She kinda wrecked a mansion and turned Asami over to my mom.”

Samsara’s face fell, “Oh… I suppose history repeats itself.”

“What do you mean?”

“Come on, I have something to show you,” the second Avatar said, standing up and putting the cup of tea down on the tray.

Opal followed her out of the tea shop, giving a friendly wave to Iroh as they began walking up a grassy hill. Samsara pulled her up a craggy pile of rocks and suddenly they were under a boab tree, its thick trunk was wider than a car, but its little branches wined everywhere in small, crazy twirls.

“Alright,” Samsara said, sitting down in the Lotus position at the base of the trunk, “Clear your mind,
but don’t think of the Mortal World. Just usual meditation."

“Sounds good,” Opal answered, meeting her posture.

“I’m… I’m going to hold your hands… it’ll strengthen our connection, and I think I’ll be able to show you my story easier.”

The Airbenders looked at each other for a lingering moment, and then Opal held out her hands. Samsara’s long and nimble fingers were warm and… familiar.

“Clear your mind and follow my voice.”

“Welcome back, my good friend!” King Basho said, giving Avatar Samsara a hearty embrace.

“It’s been a long time, Basho!”

“Too long!” the man agreed. “But what brings you to our palace?”

“You palace,” the Avatar corrected, sitting down on the cushion next to the throne and accepting a cup of wine from a servant with a small “thank you”.

The King of Ba Sing Sei leaned back, slouching on his throne and kicking up his feet and snatching a goblet up for himself. “I thought we agreed that you were the rightful owner of this palace.”

“You’ve known for almost ten years that you’re the rightful ruler of the Earth People,” Samsara said, humbly blushing. “I am merely a bringer of balance.”

He gave a laugh. “The modest of souls.”

A fog swirled around and suddenly Opal watched as the mist cleared and they were in a bedroom.

King Basho, slightly older— with a dark beard covering his face, was leaning over Samsara, pressing her against the wall, “You are so beautiful, my Avatar.”

The Airbender, older and with a streak of gray in her short brown hair, blushed and looked down at the carpet, “I thank you, your highness.”

“Please Sammy… in this room… I am no king and you are no Avatar… we are two lifelong friends… appreciating and loving each other.”

Samsara looked up into his eyes and pressed forwards with a lingering kiss. Basho wrapped his arms around her and picked her up, enthusiastically kissing her neck. Possessively, the couple moved towards the bed, never taking their gaze off each other.
All in an instance, they were at a field of craggy rocks, and Samsara was looking at an approaching army, led by none other than King Basho.

“Why are you doing this?! she cried out to them. Her hair was all gray and her face was wrinkled.

“The Water Clans have spoken their piece; they will not lay down their weapons until they control the coasts! I can’t allow my villages to suffer!” Basho called out across the wasteland.

The King was scarred and balding, what little hair he had left was wildly waving around in the wind. There was murder in his eyes.

“But why are you tearing through the peaceful homes of my peoples?! We have no quarrel with you!”

“You too are sitting upon our lands. So you are peaceful today, but what of tomorrow? When the walls of your havens constrict and there is need to expand? When air is not enough to fill your idealist lies? What of when you wake up and realize that there are my riches on the ground and nothing but empty clouds in the skies?! We are here to tell you to leave these lands!” Basho yelled.

Samsara looked at her lover with tears in her eyes, but she wiped them away and counter-argued, “War is not our way! We maintain balance within our communities! We would never invade another’s lands! There is more than enough of this world to share!”

“You lie!” Basho screamed, charging forth with his sword.

The Avatar’s eyes widened, and she closed them and took a breath. Suddenly, instead of pupils in irises… everything was replaced with a blinding light. Samsara rose up into the air with a gust of air and slowly surrounded them with a tornado of wind.

The army was clumped together, hundreds of men huddling together as the wind picked up in speed.

“Sammy!” the King cried, “What are you doing!?”

“I’m sorry Basho, you’ve left me no choice,” the Avatar’s voice rang out.

Suddenly, flames shot out of her hands, mixing with the gusts of air and creating a fiery hurricane in the wastelands. The vortex began enclosing on the barbarians. She watched as they all burned.

“Sammy!” Basho cried as flames caught his armor, “Sammy don’t leave me! I love you!”

But the Avatar kept working until the army was no more, a charred pile of corpses in the craggy badlands. She floated down to the earth… tears pouring from her eyes.

“I love you too.”

And then she walked away.

“I don’t understand,” Opal called out to the darkness.

“He threatened the entire world for selfish, tyrannical reasons… I had sparred his life on more
occasions than that… but each time he grew colder and colder,” Samsara’s voice responded.

“How does this fit in with me?”

“Watch.”

_The Avatar walked into a village with wooden walls made of bamboo stalks. Inside, Airbenders were patiently moving in unison as they moved stone bricks together to craft a tall temple._

_An Airbender walked up to her, “Welcome, dearest Samsara. What’s the news of the tyrant’s army?”_

_Samsara’s head bowed in shame, “They are no more. I am sorry.”_

_The elder put a hand on her shoulder, “It was a provoked act of violence… he would’ve destroyed the world in his greed and selfishness… you did what was right.”_

“But I did what broke my heart,” the Avatar said, brushing tears away.

“I ask you to meditate on these actions… but first… you have a daughter to tend.”

_The aging Samsara smiled, wearily running her hands through her gray hair as she entered her hut._

_“Mother? Are you well?” a teenage girl with black hair and gray eyes asked._

_“I will live… though now is the time for rest… will you fetch me some dinner, my dearest?”_

_“Of course, please, have a seat.”_

_The daughter exited the hut, to fetch some fruit and water, and Samsara leaned back on the small cot that she’d grown up sleeping in. She wondered what she was going to do about the situation in Ba Sing Sei… and as her daughter walked back into the room, her heart sank._

Now they were in the Late King Basho’s ancient palace, back when the walls were still made of old, cracked clay.

_“Are you sure, mother? What if I have his temper? Make his mistakes? I don’t know if this is wise.”_

_“The best leaders are always a little hesitant,” an elderly Samsara said, giving her fully-grown, middle-aged daughter a clap on the back. “And… you are his descendant… you have his lineage. The others agreed that you have the right to rule.”_

_They walked hand-in-hand into the throne room, where sprawling city's nobles were watching carefully with interest and a slight glint of concern in their eyes._

_The daughter sat down on the throne with hesitancy, and a noble walked up, placing a crown on her head. No one did anything for a moment, and then Samsara respectfully kneeled._

_“Mother, you don’t need to… it’s not good for your back…” the new queen muttered._
“Oh hush,” the Avatar said, cracking a smile.

The rest of the Earth People followed, bowing humbly at their new leader. The rightful Queen of Ba Sing Sei.

They were surrounded by darkness, and then Opal heard a voice pulling her back into the Spirit World. She opened her eyes to the sight of a sorrowful Samsara sitting across from her, but then the Avatar wiped away a tear and gave the Beifong girl a wide smile.

“My daughter went on to have children, of course. She lived as a peaceful and wise ruler, allowing the Earth Kingdom to flourish and prosper.”

“But… what of you and I? This is all well and… informative… but…”

“Did you ever wonder if others reincarnated… not only the Avatar spirit… but normal people?”

“You mean…”

“Over time, his spirit met the Avatar’s and others— we were lovers, but not soulmates; not destined to be together. In future lifetimes with his proper soulmates… he became her, and then she became him, and they became them… over and over again… destined to be together. Eventually, a lover of his… from another lifetime… was reincarnated into a young girl, a granddaughter of my reincarnation. The youngest Airbending master in history—”

“Jinora?”

“Yes.”

“And I’m Jinora’s soulmate… which means…” Opal trailed off.

“Yes. You are Basho’s reincarnation. I am… I am sorry for what pain I have caused you.”

Chapter End Notes

To help speed along the story (and relieve you guys of all the Korrasami angst), we’re going to move into the Opal story arc

Woooooo! Leave comments!! Let me bask in your hatred!!
Inamorata

Chapter Summary

“Cut the ending. Revise the script. The man of her dreams is a girl.”

— Julie Anne Peters, "Keeping You a Secret"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jinora let her soul flow through the air as she appeared in Opal’s room in Zaofu. Her lover looked up from the book she was reading.

“Hey there!” the older girl murmured, surprised.

The spiritual projection met her grin, “I was wondering if I could come up to the city and join you?”

“You could just send a text— you don’t have to go all divine god on me,” Opal laughed.

“Maybe I just like seeing your face.”

The older girl looked down at the carpet with a blush, “Yeah, sure… come on up! I miss you a lot!”

Jinora stretched her fingers out, but when flesh met spirit their hands passed through each other. Opal sighed and gave her soulmate a pitying smile.

“I can’t wait to see you again.”

“I’ll fly out immediately.”

“Don’t just take your glider… use Juicy or Oogi. I don’t want you to tire yourself out.”

The spiritual projection smiled and gave her lover a wave, fading back into Jinora’s proper body—all the way back in Republic City.

She looked up, Mula the ex-Earthbender was whistling as he watered the garden. He was wearing Air Acolyte robes and had shaved his head, having joined the group to have a place to stay and food to eat. The former Probender gave her a smile and she reciprocated the gesture as she stood, brushing her robes off and running her hands over the short stubble of hair that she was beginning to grow back.

She headed down to the Sky Bison stables with a grin on her face, putting a saddle on Juicy’s back. And with a “yip yip!”, they were off.
Hikaru paced around in her jail cell, she always was a restless soul. She decided to sit down on her cot— thinking fondly of the time Fire Lord Zuko and Councilman Sokka had busted her grandmother out of prison; though by Nana Suki’s account, she could’ve gotten out of there all on her own.

The ex-Firebender had promised that she would be patient, having earned her short sentence. Lin Beifong had assured her that, since her arrest was purely to put pressure off the Metalbender’s back, she would be released in a week.

A guard opened the jail cell, “It’s yard time, come on out and stretch your legs.”

Hikaru hopped off the bench and followed him out the ramp-way and down to the tiny grounds, where thugs and criminals mingled. She stuck to herself during this hour, doing stretches and making sure she kept in shape—

“Hey! It’s one of them Coalition Dogs!” a voice sneered.

Two women and a man slithered on up to her, cracking knuckles and giving her sneers. They all had burns and scars on their faces, as though they’d decided to tango with blenders.

“Let me guess,” she said, playfully rolling her eyes, “You’re a trio of big bad Equalists.”

“You bet your ass,” one of the women said, standing over her with an ugly snigger. She pinned Hikaru against the wall— out of sight of the guards.

“What do you want?”

The man smirked, “Equality.”

And then they began kicking her, and socking her in the stomach with rock-hard fists. The ex-Firebender tried to scream but a hand clamped over her mouth as boots collided with her thighs and abdomen. She could feel herself coughing up blood and could only think of how she deserved this for thinking it was a smart idea to join up with the Coalition. Another kick— and she felt a rib snap inside her.

Her vision began to grow dark just as a few other sensible prisoners let out yells of fury and pulled the Equalist convicts away.

“Oh! Oh jeez!”

“Bolin, what’s wrong?” Mako asked, racing out of the kitchen to find his brother doubling over in the hallway, retching in pain.

“Something hurts, OOOOOOOOOOWWWWWW!!! Dude, it feels like I’m being hit in the stomach with a barrage of bricks!”
“A-Alright, just sit down. Yeah, easy does it. Let me… uh… get you some ice.”

Mako ran over to the kitchen, grabbing a large plastic bowl from a cubboard under the sink and filling it with ice from the freezer. Bolin kept groaning from the couch and Mako leapt over the coffee table with a towel in his hands.

“Just… just calm down… there we go… must be some Soulmate shit, man.”

He wrapped the towels around the chunks of ice, laying the make-shift packs down onto his brother’s torso.

“AHHHHH!! That’s… ohhhh!! Jeez, soulmate— whoever he or she is really likes to take a punch.”

Mako smiled, he knew that his soulmate, if he had one, was a total softie. Probably lived in a palace or something. After a few minutes he removed the melting ice and brought another towel out. Laying it down on his brother’s abs, Mako used Firebending to warm up Bolin.

“AHHHH!! Dude!! How did you know how to do that? Oh man, it feels perfect.”

“Just a little trick the Firebenders in the Academy taught us.”

Mako helped his brother up and guided the limping Earthbender to the bedroom.

“Night, bro.”

“Thanks man, see you in the morning.”

Jinora had been flying all night, and she finally spotted the closed metal domes of Zaofu—the platinum shell mirroring the starry night with a glistening reflection. She let out a sigh and landed Juicy down at the front gates.

“You! By what right do you gain entry?!?”

“I’m Opal Beifong’s girlfriend and I’ve had a long night, so let me in!” the cranky Airbending master yelled.

The young guard’s eyes widened and he gave her a clumsy bow, “Yes, uh, r-right this way Sifu Jinora!”

That’s more like it, she thought— rubbing her eyes and stifling a yawn.

The large, platinum doors slowly swung open, revealing a spectrum of lights and wonderful, magnificent skyscrapers. Though it was early, as in really fucking early, in the morning— there was still a fair amount of traffic as late-night guard shifts patrolled the streets and four AM traffic made its way to work at coffee shops and breakfast diners.

Jinora flew up to the Beifong Palace, where a few guards stopped her again and questioned her identity. After confirming that no, she did not have a poison dagger strapped to her thigh— and no,
she was not here to murder the Matriarch and her family, they begrudgingly let her in.

The citadel halls echoed her every step— impressive, seeing as Airbenders are usually light on their feet. Her fingers absentmindedly glided along the green wallpaper, as she walked down the moonlit hallways, nearing her lover’s room with every step.

Without knocking, she pushed her way through the door.

The resting beauty was asleep in her bed, her chest rising and falling in time with Jinora’s heartbeat. The Airbender silently climbed down in the bed and planted a kiss on her lover’s lips—

Wait. Since when did Opal have peach fuzz?

Hold the phone!

Jinora turned on the nightlight and sprang away from the bed.

Wei was looking back at her with a groggy expression on his face. He faintly reached out to her, and she had to lean back a little so he wouldn’t accidentally brush her cheek.

“… wait… Chanchai… come back to bed… I wasn’t done feeling your abs, bro…”

Before Jinora could say anything, though—he’d fallen asleep against the pillow, already loudly snoring. She brusquely wiped her mouth on her sleeve and leaned in, though putting a hand between the two of them so not to repeat such an… embarrassment? Horrific mistake—to say the least.

“Um… where’s Opal’s room?” she asked shyly, turning off the lamp as she spoke.

Wei twisted his face into the pillow and bellyached about being awake at such an hour.

“Down the hall… to the right…” he mumbled, a little drool falling from his mouth.

The Airbending Master tip-toed out of his room with a meek “thanks” and nearly slammed the door in chagrin, her face profusely red (fortune’s grace that there was not a scrap of moonlight, thanks to the platinum domes). She raced down the hall and took the correct turn, knocking on the door this time—before barging in and kissing another of Opal’s brothers. Yuck.

A groggy girl opened the door, and though the girl had short hair and, in the darkness, had the same height and skin tone as Opal—Jinora thought twice before inciting another case of mistaken identity.

“Korra? What are you doing in my girlfriend’s bedroom?”

“I was… crashing here… I’ll go crash… Kuvira’s room…”

“She’s sleeping with Baatar,” a quiet, familiar voice retorted.

“I’ll go kick Huan… I mean… I’ll go… crash… in his room…”

Korra groggily left and kicked open a door down the hallway. Jinora heard some screaming about the Avatar disrupting “Huan’s individuality”, but at that moment—she could hardly care any less. She closed the door and turned the lock… preventing anymore disruptions.

Jinora walked up to the bed, where Opal was waiting—propped up on her elbows. The younger girl straddled the Beifong’s hips and leaned down; their lips crashing together in a spectacular display. Opal’s hips bucked up against Jinora’s… and she felt something stirring around, a fluttering in her lower region. She wished exceedingly to act upon such feelings—so she brought her teeth to Opal’s
“Jinora!” the older girl hissed. “Ooooooohhh, right there, right there!!”

The Airbending Master bit down and sucked on the spot just under the Beifong’s chin— soothing the bite with her tongue afterwards. Her fingers trailed down to the hem of Opal’s nightshirt, where she swiftly pulled the fabric up and over Opal’s shoulders… and then attacked her collarbone with ferocity (very much unlike the passive Airbending lifestyle).

Mmmmmmm…

Jinora stealthily unhooked the clasp on Opal’s bra while nipping at the base of her neck. With Opal’s arms wrapped around her waist— nails clawing into her hips— Jinora delicately put a nipple into her mouth, squeezing and teasing at it with the lightest amount of teeth. Her tongue worked wonders around the soft flesh, leaving faint marks as she began to lower herself down Opal’s abdomen.

“Oooohhh… sweetie… Jinora, I love you soooooo much,” the older girl moaned in bliss, running her fingers dexterously over her inamorata’s tattoo.

Stopping to play with her bellybutton a little (she was an outie), Jinora took a deep breath, pressing her nose against Opal’s muscular torso. Her lips memorized every little dip and curve as she traveled further south.

Finally, she lowered herself against Opal’s musky sex, teasing a little with her tongue before she gave a few tentative licks on the older girl’s sensitive nub. She tasted so tangy and hot… and Jinora could feel a wetness intensifying in the nether regions of her Glider Suit.

Opal’s hips bucked up in excitement, and her pelvis knocked against Jinora’s nose a little.

“Ow!” she sighed quietly, leaning her head against the older girl’s thigh for half a moment before continuing her conquest.

Jinora continued to lick and even suck a little on Opal’s clit, sending a jolt of ecstasy through the older girl, who could only moan and grip Jinora’s bald head as she continued. She fully enclosed her mouth on the warm bud and sucked softly, feeling nails dig in slightly to her scalp as she soothed the flesh with her tongue.

And now for the chorus.

The Airbending Master tentatively stuck a lone finger deep within Opal, reveling in the feeling of the older girl’s warm flesh as she began pumping in and out.

“Jiiiiinnnooorrraa!!” Opal hissed.

“Shhh… sweetie, don’t wake up your brothers,” Jinora murmured against her clit.

Jinora, while continuing to lick and lap on Opal’s sweet nub, slid in another finger, curling upwards a little as she pumped in and out. Her lover’s breathing was ragged as her hand slid in and out, rubbing against rippling and spongy flesh— so hot and warm and… sexy.

“Mmmmmm, right there!”

Jackpot.

The younger girl smiled against her soulmate’s sex, abandoning her nub momentarily to rub again,
again, and again. Each time she pressed up against Opal’s g-spot, the older girl moaned and shivered, reduced to a grinding mess.

Their dance grew and grew in intensity and then—

“JINORA!!” Opal screamed, tightly gripping the younger girl’s head between her thighs.

A wave of hot, sweet liquid flooded Jinora’s chin, and she lowered her mouth to lap it all up. Opal’s thighs loosened up as she leaned back onto the pillow, looking at the ceiling and panting as she tried desperately to regain her sense. Jinora, once she’d finished… mopping up the mess… slowly kissed her way back from whence she came.

“Mmmm… you—”

Kiss on the hip.

“— taste—”

Kiss on the abs.

“— so—”

A nip at the breasts.

“— fucking—”

Another hickey on her collarbone, though a little subtler than the first ones she’d doled out. A lone tear slid down Opal’s cheek as she recovered from the hyperactive bliss she’d just endured.

“— good.”

Jinora moved to press a kiss to Opal’s lips, but the older girl beat her (having finally regained some senses). Their tongues danced around as the Glider Suit was torn off, falling to the floor. The Beifong girl had a fire in her eyes; a need to reciprocate her love to Jinora… and the younger Airbender knew that she would be sleeping in rather late the next day.

Chapter End Notes

aaaaawwwwww

That was my first attempt at smut... sorry if it sucked :/

Leave comments, as usual!

Tune in next chapter for... a Korrasami date?
Fire Nation Princess Fairy Tales

Chapter Summary

"Sometimes our light goes out but is blown into flame by another human being. Each of us owes deepest thanks to those who have rekindled this light."

-Albert Schweitzer

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

One Month Later:

She’d been working on the prototype when it happened;

“Hey there.”

Startled at the sudden… ghostly appearance of Korra’s voice within her head, Asami dropped the wrench on her foot. Baatar Jr. raised an eyebrow, but shrugged and continued drawing up a design. The former heiress picked up the wrench and leaned against the workbench with a sigh.

“Um… hey… how’s it going?” she answered hesitantly.

“Well— I’ve been in and out of sorts… but I was wondering if you wanted to do that dinner?”

Oh Korra, if only you knew, Asami thought— though only to herself. She sighed and sent a message to her soulmate.

“I’m… um… well, the thing is… I no longer live in Republic City— so I’m going to have to shelve the Kwongs plans until—”

“Where are you living now?” Korra’s voice asked insistently.

“Z-Zaofu,” Asami answered.

“That’s… that’s terrific!! That’s divine coincidence, right there!! I’m in Zaofu right now, too! I… decided to spend my summer break here, so let’s just meet up and have lunch sometime this week!!”

Asami gripped the wrench with tears falling down her face. How could she say no to the woman she loved most in this world?! Baatar noticed her state of emotion and carefully removed the tools from her hand, rubbing her back soothingly as though she were going through a panic attack. She may as well have been.

“Alright… where and when?” she asked, her shoulders slumping in defeat.
The former heiress could feel Baatar lifting her slightly and placing her onto a stool as she trembled at the very thought of seeing Korra. Excitement… or fear?

“There’s this little hole-in-the-wall Water Tribe restaurant on Whitefeather Boulevard. Care to knock back a few drinks and get to know each other?”

Asami closed her eyes. What was she thinking?! This would ruin— no… everything had already been ruined… might as well give Korra the whole truth. What good would it do to hold in such a… hopeless tidbit of information?

“Alright… tomorrow at six.”

“Sounds perfect!”

She instantly turned, and though she did not know him well, she didn’t hesitate to sob into Baatar’s open arms. Asami clung to his shoulders, crying into his neck that “she’d fucked up, she’d fucked up so much”.

He only wrapped his arms around her, promising that he’d help fix whatever problem she’d gotten into. Asami broke down the walls that she’d spent the past month carefully crafting around herself, leaning into his embrace and sobbing everything— Korra, the Equalists, her father… all of it, as she buried her face into his t-shirt.

Kuvira walked into the workshop to deliver the duo some lunch, where she found her fiancé sharing a drink with an ex-Equalist. At 11:00 AM. They were slumped against some cabinets on the floor, their eyes a little glazed over from the bottle of rum.

“Uh… how’s it going, champs?”

There were a few dried tear streaks running down Asami’s cheeks, indicating that perhaps a few feels had spilled out onto the floor. Kuvira decided to tread carefully.

“We’re… planning a date,” Baatar said, shrugging his shoulders and taking a sip from the Bacardi bottle.

“What? With who?!” the Metalbender asked, raising an eyebrow skeptically.

“Asami’s… soulmate.”

“They live in Zaofu?”

“They’re… staying in Zaofu,” Baatar nodded. “You’re getting warmer.”

“I don’t follow.”

“It’s Korra,” Asami stated blatantly.

“Oh.”
Oh shit, son! That makes so much sense!! Duuuuuuuddeeee!!

Kuvira bent down and snatched up the bottle of Bacardi— taking a long swig. It burned her throat and tears stung at her eyes. It was too early in the morning to drink, and yet too late in her life to deal with this level of drama sober.

She sat down next to the pair, forming a little triangle on the floor. Passing the bottle back to Asami (who took a rather large swig), she let out a sigh.

“You’re in deep shit, aren’t you?”

“Yes. I agreed last year to go on a date with my soulmate— and then when the man blew up Korra on TV two months ago… I learned the truth,” Asami sniffled.

Kuvira realized that this was the first time that the heiress had ever opened up to her… unless you count them singing together on the Airship. She leaned forwards and put a hand on Asami’s knee.

“Does she know?” she asked.

“No,” Baatar said, shaking his head.

Kuvira let out a sigh and snatched the bottle again. She could feel the contents of the drink churning in her stomach as her mind equally churned in thought. She sat up;

“Well, we’re going to go through with this, god dammit!”

“We will?” Asami asked with wide eyes.

“We will?” Baatar questioned with skepticism.

“Damn straight! Er… sort of… well… not really straight— oh, you know what I mean!! The Asami Sato I know never half-asses a date!”

“Yeah, I full-ass my dates,” the ex-heiress grumbled, taking a swig. Coughing at the strength of the rum, she muttered something along the lines of;

“On a scale of bad to catastrophic, this is as stupid as invading the Northern Water Tribe in the winter during a full moon.”

“We’re going to blow this one out of proportions!” Kuvira said with enthusiasm.

“As in this is going to blow up in our face— why are you even helping me? I was one of the bad guys!” Asami griped.

Kuvira rolled her eyes, “No you aren’t. You’re just one of the guys that had something bad happen to them. Now— onto business.”

Hikaru rolled out of her bed with a groan— her prison injuries had still not fully recovered. After the assault though, she was not touched again; inmates vowed to protect her— recognizing her from her Probending days. She instantly became a fan favorite among her cellmates.
Apparently sometime after she’d been released, three Equalists had received quite the beating, supposedly during a riot. But you didn’t hear it from me.

“Huka! Can we go see a movie?!”

Hikaru picked up her little sister with a smile and nudged Suki’s forehead with her nose, “Hmm… how about I rent a movie instead— we’re a little… tight on money, Kiki.”

“Oh, okey dokey!”

The ex-Firebender was then tugged by her wrist as little Suki pulled her down the apartment complex. Racing down the stairs, the girl pulled her through the entry-hallway excitedly— and though the former Probender was strong enough to resist, she played along.

“Woah there! You’re getting strong!”

“I’m going to be a strong Keeee-oh-shee princess!”

“Atta girl,” the former Probender said with a smile.

Hikaru lifted Suki onto her hip so that they could cross the street. Over at the drugstore, while Suki was picking a move from the DVD vending machine (technology’s wild, man), Hikaru dialed her favorite number on her cellphone.

“Hello?” a groggy voice answered on the other side.

“Hey there… I was wondering if you wanted to watch… you sure? Okay… wanna come over and watch… ‘Fire Nation Princess Fairy Tales’, with Suki and I?”

On the other line, Bolin chuckled hysterically and Hikaru heard a thump! as he fell off the couch from laughing too hard;

“Yeah sure, let me grab my coat— I’ll pick up some pizza on the way?”

“Alright… I’ll see you at my place!”

Hikaru and Suki entertained themselves with the special features on the DVD until the doorbell rang and the ex-Firebender rose from the couch with a stretch. Her sister beat her to the entrance, reaching up on her toes to unlock the latch and throw the door open.

“Heeeeeeeyyyyyy—” Bolin paused and looked down. “Oh, hey there, champ!”

“Boleeen!” Suki said, squealing in delight as he picked her up and gave her a hug.

He’s pretty good with kids, isn’t he? Hikaru thought in amusement.

He set her down and she ran off with a squeal to start the DVD. The young adults moved closer, murmuring “I missed you” to each other as they shared a lingering, tantalizing kiss. Hikaru snuck her hand around to give his ass a firm squeeze. He moaned a little in her mouth and pushed his hips forward. Oh Spirits—

“Hey! Cut it out! That’s gross!!”

The young adults broke apart with an embarrassed giggle. Bolin popped the pizza into the oven and grabbed some sodas from the fridge with a smile— plopping himself down on the couch next to his girlfriend and throwing an arm around her. Suki crawled in between them, nestling her head in
Hikaru’s lap.

Overall, the movie was cheesy, with bad lyrics and terrible animation; Disney had their work cut out for them. By the time the pizza was ready, Suki was fast asleep—sprawled out on the laps of the two adults. Her mouth was slack open and she was snoring into Hikaru’s thigh.

Hikaru carefully put her to bed and shut the door. Bolin was waiting behind her in the hallway, and she instantly found herself pressing their mouths together in a deep kiss. Lifting her up by the hips, the Earthbender excitedly carried her to her own room—the zealous couple tearing clothes off in a flurry. Hikaru’s heartbeat pounded against her chest like a drum on a warship, and the excitement of *making love* to Bolin had her locked in a state of frenzy and passion.

Thank Raava that Suki slept like a rock.

________________________________________

Asami let out a shaky sigh as she pushed her way into the restaurant. There she was—sitting there in a blue flannel, drinking a beer and looking up at the Probending match on TV. Asami nervously tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear and swallowed all of her *what ifs?*

“Come on,” Kuvira whispered behind her, “Just like we rehearsed.”

“This is cheesy— it’s not going to fucking work,” Asami grumbled.

The Metalbender let out a sigh and pushed the engineer forwards. The ex-heiress stumbled a little, giving Kuvira a glare and then turned—slowly walking through the restaurant. She silently slithered to the barstool next to Korra and waited for the Avatar to notice her.

Eventually, after what could have either been seconds, or minutes, or hours, or even days—Korra slowly turned and looked at Asami with…seething eyes.

“What do you want?” the Avatar muttered.

“I… um… heard you were in the market for a soulmate?” Asami stammered out. She mentally slapped herself on the forehead for listening to advice from Kuvira and Baatar Jr.

“What? How did you fucking know?” Korra asked, and if it were anymore possible, her cerulean eyes narrowed in anger.

Asami had three choices…she could explain herself logically—asking Korra to hear herself out in a reasonable manner and calmly solve many of her problems with a long conversation over a couple of beers. Then they would perhaps...reconcile over the next few dates and eventually become lovers once more.

Or she could run out of the restaurant, screaming and crying into Kuvira’s arms. She could give up hope that Korra would ever talk to her again—the Avatar’s spiteful expression certainly pointing in that direction—and try and live her miserable life from here on out without a soulmate.

Unfortunately, Asami Sato chose Door Number 3.

She let out a sigh, picking up the nearest fork and stabbing herself in the palm. So much that she
began to bleed a little, her hand twitching in agony. A foot away, mocha-skinned fingers clutching a beer squirmed in pain.

Korra’s eyes widened in anger, astonishment, and the slow dawning of a great realization.

“You’re shitting me.”

“Surprise!” Asami muttered meekly.

The Avatar closed her eyes and let out a sigh. Suddenly, she downed her beer in one big chug and smashed the glass on the floor— slamming a $20.00 onto the counter. Korra spun off the barstool, clutching her blue jacket, and strode out the door.

“Kor— wait!” the engineer cried after her.

Kuvira, who’d been watching from behind a booth, hopped up and put a hand on Korra’s shoulder, “Now, hold on, pal. Here out what she has to say—”

Korra gave the Metalbender a scoff and defiantly pushed her out of the way. She pushed the door open and walked out into the summer evening… with Asami in tow, calling after her;

“Bandit, please—”

“Oh, no you don’t! You don’t get to call me that, you lost that privilege!” Korra spat, turning to face her with a growl.

“Korra, I love you! I love you with every fiber of my being!” Asami cried with pleading tone.

“You wasted your chance! YOU LIED TO ME!! Some soul-pain-bullshit doesn’t make up for the hurt that you caused me!” the Avatar turned away, though the engineer could not mistake the glistening on Korra’s cheeks for anything other than tears.

“I’M SORRY!” Asami screamed all of a sudden, desperately gripping Korra’s stomach and pulling her close. Asami buried her face into the Water Tribe girl’s back and cried. “PLEASE, I’M SO SORRY FOR WHAT I DID!! I’LL DO ANYTHING TO WIN YOU BACK!!”

There were whispers from passersby pedestrians, and Asami didn’t need to look to know that people were staring as the former couple stood in the streets. Though it was summer, the air was cooling down, and Asami pressed further and further into Korra’s back for warmth and support.

“I know,” Korra whispered into the night.

Perhaps it was a trick of the… trauma… but for a moment, yes, half a moment… it felt as though the tips of Korra’s fingers had brushed against Asami’s arms in longing. A small amount of the Water Tribe girl’s weight leaned back into the heiress’s arms— and it felt like a small, momentary victory for Asami.

“She could feel a deep sigh resonate through Korra’s body. The engineer’s grip loosened and she looked up at deep, thoughtful sapphire eyes. Korra hesitated, and then lowered her gaze to Asami’s punctured palm, running a tanned thumb over the marks that the fork had left behind. Each press into the wound could be felt in both their hands, of that much the former heiress was sure.
And then Korra looked at her with stern, unyielding eyes.

“If you want to attempt to win me back,” she whispered with a shaky, yet commanding tone, “you have to first prove to me that you’ve changed.”

And with that, the Avatar walked away.

________________________________________________________

Korra felt a burning in her throat from yelling, and an aching in her legs from walking all the way from one end of Zaofu to another, climbing up the steps to the Beifong Palace— the excursion amplified by the heavy weight in her heart.

She’d known, deep down, that Asami was her soulmate— from the moment they kissed all those months ago. The Avatar had felt that spark, that bolt of electricity that signified to her that… Asami was the one.

So why did this hurt so much?

Korra sat down on a metal (go figure, eh?) bench in the courtyard, overlooking Wing and Wei’s metaldisc arena. The old her loved the game, loved the thrill of beating someone up. But… after Zaheer… she had to go through so much just to walk again, that the act of unnecessary violence seemed so… pointless and pitiful.

Through all that suffering… she’d learned compassion.

Right?

Spirits… this hurts so much…

“Hey there!” a familiar voice called.

Jinora hopped over the back of the bench and sat down with a small puff of wind, settling into the bench with a smile. Clearly she couldn’t see the expression on Korra’s face, dictating that she wanted to be left alone.

“You remember when you were first into Mako, and then he ran around cheating on you with other women in the city?”

“Y-Yeah…” Korra said, refusing to make any eye-contact.

“I remember when Ikki and I were teasing you about liking him, he walked up to you, and you shot us into the sky with a column of earth.”

Korra smiled— it was a fond memory.

“— just think… you were willing to murder half the known Airbenders in the world over a boy!”

The Avatar lost it, cracking a smile and giggling a little at the thought. Jinora ruffled her chestnut hair with a chuckle, slinging her arm over the back of the bench and looking at the scenic mountain view.

“You can never truly knock an Airbender off her feet,” Korra laughed.
“Well… you’re kinda the same way, right?”

“What do you mean?”

“You’re one of us, an Airbender, I mean,” Jinora attempted to explain.

“I don’t really count—”

“Race aside… you’ve done so much for us… you’re like a triple honorary member.”

Korra looked at the ground, mumbling a “thanks”.

“— so what I’m saying is… you can’t really get knocked off your feet either. Even Zaheer, the greatest test you ever came up against… you still fought back— regained the Avatar State and the ability to walk again.”

“So… I can walk again? What does that have to do with As—”

“What transpired, Equalist and all, isn’t going to knock the two of you off your feet. You’ll rebound. It’ll be okay,” Jinora assured.

Korra looked at the slowly falling sun, reaching the end of its journey as it kissed the mountain peaks. She let out a sniffle and leaned her head against Jinora’s shoulder, who turned her head a little and kissed Korra’s chestnut hair with a sense of friendliness that Korra never seemed to have enough of.

“Thanks… I needed to hear that.”

“That’s why they pay me the big money.”

“You aren’t supposed to have that kind of earthly attachment.”

“Okay fine… that’s why they pay me the blue arrows!”

“Better.”

“Oh good, I’m permanently dependent on the Great and Wise Avatar’s approval!”

They sat there, laughing and watching the crimson sunset slowly fade to black.

Chapter End Notes

:O

Leave comments!!!
The Gilacorn

Chapter Summary

"Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light."

-Helen Keller

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hiroshi was laying in his cot— wondering where it’d gone wrong.

He’d carefully constructed plans and created weapons for the Equalists, showing unwavering loyalty from the start. The CEO had plotted great heists to put Nonbenders in control of the city— he’d devoted years to the cause. So why had the Lieutenant betrayed him?

Power.

Perhaps Hiroshi had been weak. A petty soul that needed to depart this world in order for the machine to be set in motion.

Or perhaps the opposite; perhaps Hiroshi had been an unmovable force— blocking the Lieutenant’s path to destruction. A force that needed to be eliminated.

Hiroshi sighed, staring at the ceiling.

This was not what he wanted— to see himself in a jail cell, he could’ve imagined. But to know that his daughter was also captive… no matter the treatment she was getting… he would not get to see his baby at all. To know on top of that… that the Avatar was, or at least had once been, her lover. It broke his heart.

Then there was the Museum.

Yes, the documents could’ve been false— though Hiroshi doubted it. Yasuko had been an art collector, a treasure hunter of sorts, in her younger years. He wondered for a moment why she would not have whispered a word about the building to him, but he knew that it was her desire in all ways of life to be discreet— Yasuko had not been one for banners and parades and show business. She did not want her name plastered throughout the city. It’d been her generosity that’d sponsored the Museum, not her desire for fame of any sort. He missed her greatly.

And then the Lieutenant had gone and blown the place up.

Hiroshi picked at the withering fabric of his cot, staring up at the dusty-ridden ceiling of his cell and wondering if it might just be the only thing he saw for the rest of his life—

Footsteps. Someone was approaching.

The former CEO sat up as a man knocked on the solid metal of the cell door.
“Hello there!” a friendly voice called through the bars, “May I come in?”

Hiroshi raised an eyebrow, “It’s not like I have any say.”

“Well sure you do! I wouldn’t want to intrude!”

The CEO swung his legs over the side of the cot and beckoned for the man to enter. The door creaked open for half a moment— allowing a man roughly the same age as Hiroshi to enter, shuffling around a pile of papers in his arms. His hair was graying considerably more than Mr. Sato’s (though given enough time in jail, Hiroshi’s hair would certainly match the color soon).

“I must say,” the man said, “I was ecstatic when my wife told me that I could come down and talk to you about my engineering!”

“Who are you?”

“Oh, my apologies! I’m Baatar Beifong Sr.!”

“Let me guess… Metalbender?” Hiroshi asked with a slight sneer.

Baatar Sr. held up his hands and chuckled, “Nope, always got around just fine without Bending.”

“Oh… my apologies… I assumed—”

“You’re still a little… sore after working with the Equalists for so long. It’s understandable. Unpleasant… but yes, understandable.

“Oh, but enough of that awkwardness! I can’t tell you how excited I am to sit back and chew the fat with an engineer my own age— bless my son but there’s only so many projects you can work on with your kids until you need to talk to someone with your experience!”

For the first time in months, Hiroshi smiled a little and chuckled, “Yes— the amount of times I’ve had Asami wander away from the factory line to pursue her own inventions is frustrating, though I know she’s only curious. She got that from her mother, she did.”

The men laughed and talked all afternoon… swapping business and engineering stories as though they’d been friends for years;

“How— how is my daughter doing?”

“Oh… well from what I understand she’s actually working with my eldest in our workshop— my wife gave her a decent place to stay and a job that pays enough.”

“She’s the kind of girl who could fall into a pile of manure and still come out smelling like roses.”

Baatar laughed, “Well… if you keep up good behavior, within a few years you’ll be joining her.”

Hiroshi paused and raised an eyebrow, “Why is Zaofu so… lenient… to criminals?”

“Do you honestly think I’m an innocent sugarplum, too? Hah! I’ve done more than my fair share of crime, Mr. Sato!”

“Really? You don’t seem like the type.”

Baatar leaned back in the wooden chair that the guards had brought in for him, “I was born in one of the smaller Earth Kingdom cities, Omashu— I grew up in the slums. Of course, the only way to
make any money with that kind of background is to find an investor... or turn to crime.”

“What did you do?” Hiroshi asked, drawing circles in the mattress with his index finger as he listened.

“I was the best Cat Burglar in the Earth Kingdom— they called me the Gilacorn, after the little lizards that steal eggs in the Si Wong, and all throughout the city they feared me. I’ve broken into ten dozen different homes of nobles— public buildings, libraries, you name it! By the time I was twenty, I was painstaking rich!”

“What changed?”

“I got arrogant— sifting through architectural plans in ruined subbasements... I would take the most extravagant routes through buildings to reach my targets. I would show off how good I was at thievery— even going so far as to confront guards and tease them. Eventually people began hiring Metalbenders and Lighting Benders to protect their stuff— I got caught in the crossfire during a heist.”

Baatar Sr. lifted the hem of his robes to reveal a large burn on his torso. Hiroshi flinched at the memory of the smell of burnt flesh.

“Wounded, I was thrown into jail... ready to rot to death among bandits and brutes. But then the famous riots of Omashu, back in 151 AG—”

“When they were protesting the presence of Triads in the city?”

“You know your history— yes, the riots reached the prisons, and by the sheer grace of luck’s caress, I weaseled my way out. I fled the city with little more than a backpack of supplies before nightfall and haven’t stepped foot in those walls since. From riches to rags...”

“Where’d you go from there?”

“Well, see, that’s the interesting bit— I wandered the Earth Kingdom for a while. I didn’t trust myself enough to return to cat burglary, so instead I turned to architecture. I’d kept the plans of the buildings I’d robbed, and after years of studying the way they were designed, sculpted, and admired... I grew a fondness for the craft.

“Eventually, I came across a woman who’d just purchased a plot of land. Like me, she too had a criminal background and wanted to create a... a ‘City of Second Chances’. She hired me to help design a metropolis— though I might’ve done it for free... I’d discovered so much passion for engineering and architecture by then. It was only after we began building, when I fell off a construction project and dislocated my shoulder— that we realized that we were soulmates.”


“I miss the adrenaline a little sometimes.” Baatar Sr. waved his hand, “But I’ve succeeded in keeping my criminal past behind me... I have a family to think of now.”

“... I started my criminal path because I had a family to think of,” Hiroshi sighed.

Baatar stood, wiping the wrinkles out of his green robes and passing over a pile of papers to Hiroshi, “I have to go, Suyin has started insisting that I have meals with the family more often— these are for you to look over. I figure sharing designs will be a nice way to keep you entertained for the next few years.”
Hiroshi looked up at the man with a smile, “T-thank you. It means a lot to me.”

Sr. left with a humble bow— the guards closing the cell door and leaving the old CEO to sift through marvelous and ingenious works of engineering.

Baatar Sr. returned a few days later with… a bottle.

“I figured that, even though my wife stuck you in here first thing, we could share a bottle of Amazake?”

Hiroshi gazed in wonder at the decanter Baatar had handed him, “This is an extraordinary gift.”

“Mind you, I did say share.”

A guard returned with two metal cups, floating them through the bars and setting them on the table (Hiroshi stifled his obvious discomfort for Baatar Sr.’s sake). The Beifong hummed a little as he merrily poured Hiroshi a glass— and the former CEO couldn’t help but be a little surprised at the growing friendship between the two of them.

“Your son is also an engineer?”

“Yes, although my second oldest has a great… respect… for the craft— but he mostly occupies himself with art.”

Hiroshi felt a pang of guilt at the thought of the destruction of the Museum.

“Has he been working on anything good?”

“Junior and Asami have been developing some sort of ballistic projectile tool. They’ve been having rotten luck with it though— damn near tore my workshop to shreds the other day just trying to clean the fucking thing!”

Hiroshi laughed, “No doubt they’re having a problem with fuel or ignition?”

“How did you know?”

“My daughter’s engineering tactics are amazing, if a little predictable.”

Baatar took a sip of sake and flashed a smile, “I’m going to try to import some of that powder that the Sandbenders use in the Si Wong. We’ll see if that helps speed them along their design. In the meantime, they mostly just tinker.”

“Well, tinkering is what invented the Satomobile— there isn’t anything wrong with letting the imagination run wild.”

“You seem… awfully calm for someone who just lost his home.”

Hiroshi sighed and took a long sip from his cup. The liquor felt good, if a little hazy.
“My biggest worry two months ago was that my daughter and the Avatar are soulmates… now I just want to be able to even get to see her. I was going to send her away; you know that?”

Baatar shook his head, and Hiroshi continued on.

“I made a big mistake. After Amon was discovered to be a Bender… I felt as though I’d been abused… betrayed. The only person to turn to was that bastard that calls himself the Lieutenant. I worked with him, giving him plans and revealing all of my secrets to him. But when he came for my daughter and I… when he decided that we were expendable… I realized that I’d rather be stuck here than watch a loved one burn all over again.”

“Well… here’s to finding… peace.”

Hiroshi raised his cup and clinked it against Baatar’s. The atmosphere in the cell was… heavy? Sorrowful? A little unpleasant and yet it felt good to get some of that out. He knocked back another glass, beginning to feel the blurry, calming effects of the alcohol.

Did the CEO still hate Benders? Yes. But he was at their mercy now—a fact he could not deny. And… thanks to the horrific betrayal of the Lieutenant… he was beginning to realize just how evil a Nonbender could be, too.

And I’m the worst of all of them, aren’t I?

Hiroshi Sato leaned back against the stiff mattress and fiddled with the simple gray prison outfit that he’d been assigned, staring back at the ceiling. At least he’d solved one problem; the ceiling wouldn’t be the only thing he had to look at.

How many years had it been… since he’d had a friend? Not a business partner—someone trying to get into his bank account… but just a person who wanted to visit him in his cell and make him feel a little less lonely as time went on?

It’d been far too long, of that much he could be sure.

Chapter End Notes

I think it was lexitania who complained that I never sleep. I mean… I did kinda grow up near Forks… and I do sparkle (though not because I’m a vampire)…

I think that, this being an alternate universe, Hiroshi and Baatar Sr. would’ve become good friends. I’m excited to do some more scenes with them.

Comments?
Chapter Summary

"Children are likely to live up to what you believe of them."
— Lady Bird Johnson, Former First Lady of the United States

Chapter Notes

The first thing that came to Hikaru’s mind was the urge to hurl. She scrambled to the bathroom and emptied her stomach with a retch— tasting something awful as bile drained from her throat.

“Ohh… uggghhh,” she said queasily.

There was a supportive hand on her back, and her loose hair was suddenly gathered away from her face and gripped into a makeshift ponytail as Bolin rubbed her shoulders reassuringly.

“Um… hang in there, sweetie… just get it all out,” he said sheepishly.

She threw up again, gripping the edge of the toilet seat, her nails scratching into the porcelain. Another wave of nausea hit her and she slumped against the floor.

“Oh pineapples… hang in there… uh… want some water?”

“Yeah,” Hikaru said, spitting into the toilet a little.

She didn’t know what’d come over her, but when Bolin came back he gave her a glass of water and pressed a cold washcloth against her forehead. It did something to relieve her headache a little— and the water washed down the terrible taste.

A horrible thought occurred to her.

Oh no.

“Bolin… I need to go to the… store…”

“Um… are you sure? You should probably wait here— I can grab whatever you need.”

Hikaru stared at the bile-filled toilet for a moment and then shook her head, “No… I need to go now.”

“Yeah, sure, let me get you a coat.”

She managed to feebly walk out of the bathroom, and she felt immensely grateful when Bolin slipped a coat around her shoulders. He handed her a knit hat and she looked at him with a raised eyebrow.

“Uh… cause… uh,” he stammered, gesturing to her head.
She looked in the mirror, her black hair was absolutely scraggy, she’d rolled out of bed to vomit. She took the hat and slapped it on with a taught pull— wiping her nose and trying not to think of how much her throat burned. Bolin held out his arm and she linked hers through it with a weary smile as they walked out of the apartment— fortunately Suki had spent the night at Gyeong’s.

They made their way to the drug store, and Hikaru pushed Bolin over to the soda section while she half-walked and half-ran to the… prenatal section.

As stealthily as a fox, she snatched the little rectangular box from the shelf and paid for it up at the counter.

“Do you want a bag, dearie—”

“YES.”

She gave a curt nod to the cashier and waved to Bolin, who quickly paid for two root beers and cheerfully walked up to her on the sidewalk.

“Alright, uh… home?”

“Yes!” she blurted. Her hands were shaking, and she tried to walk faster to hide her nervousness from Bolin.

She unlocked the front door and stumbled to the bathroom, pushing past her boyfriend in the process. There was a flush in her cheeks and a shortness of breath in her lungs. She managed to make it to the hallway within a second, crashing into the walls a little as she raced to the washroom.

“Hey, sweetie… are you okay?”

“Yeah!” she said, closing the door and locking it with a definitive click, “Yeah… I’m fine.”

Minutes later, when she was wailing loudly and lying sideways on the floor with shaking hands grasping a piece of plastic— a green plus sign reflecting back at her— Bolin popped the door open with a paper clip and cradled her into his arms. He looked at the piece of plastic and let out a long shaky sigh, only bringing her sobbing face into his neck as a few tears slipped freely from his eyes as well.

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“Ai… look out this window… tell me what you see,” the Lieutenant said calmly.

The girl slowly peered out of the penthouse glass of Future Industries Tower, gazing at the sprawling city below. The nighttime sky was illuminated with the orange pollution that the clouds reflected from street lights. Cars crashed and smashed together in the usual lock-grid traffic, and far away the Probending Arena could be seen… a hideous beacon of gold— showing off how privileged Benders were.

“I see… uh… Republic City, sir?”
“Yes indeed. It is a corrupted place— and no man can fix that… but what are we doing?”

“Empowering Nonbenders… taking the fight to Benders?”

“Yes… yes… taking the fight to Benders,” the Lieutenant said, stroking his mustache in malicious thought. “You know what the greatest weapon to use in a war is?”

“No, sir.”

“Fear, Ai. Fear can make or break a man. Combine that with, as you so graciously put it, taking the fight to the Benders— I plan to win Republic City.”

“You mean we, sir?”

“Yes… yes of course. In due time we will deal with the whole world, but first… do you know the fate of the Sato’s?”

“No, sir.”

“As it turns out, thanks to our informants on the inside, the Metal Clan has practically welcomed the Satos with open arms… high rise apartments and jobs. Despicable,” the Lieutenant scoffed.

“Yes, sir,” Ai nodded.

“Well… we’ll have to change that, won’t we?”

“Sir?”

“I think… given the growing numbers— and now full access to all Future Industries tech, after all those lovely members on the board would rather keep their lives than their stock… we have enough of an army to take out a small city, don’t we?”

“Yes… yes, S-Sir,” Ai said with wide eyes.

“Well then… I’ve heard that the mountains surrounding Zaofu are… rather charming this time of the year, don’t you think?”

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They stood among the green grass and still ponds of the park— watching elders feed turtleducks bread crumbs and groups of college students do yoga sessions. Kids ran back and forth with Frisbees and the dog park was chock full of happy canines, their owners tossing tennis balls every which way.

Hikaru leaned against her boyfriend and let out a small sigh through her nose.

“I hate my life.”

Bolin looked at her and rubbed her back, “Aw, don’t say that. It’s a… difficult situation… but I promise we’re going to get through this.”
“Really?”

“I swear on Mako’s precious red scarf!” he paused as Hikaru stifled a laugh and then looked into her amber eyes with sincerity, “I love you.”

She pressed a long kiss to his mouth, stroking his cheek fondly. When they broke apart there was a twinkle in his green eyes.

“Bolin… I love you, too. I love you so much… I’m just so worried— I haven’t been a responsible person lately,” the ex-Firebender admitted.

“Why don’t you… give up on Coalition activities for a while. I’m sure Bao will understand.”

“She didn’t like me to begin with,” Hikaru reasoned.

“Well that’s only because she couldn’t handle your spunk!”

“Oh! Spunk! That’s what you call it?”

Bolin held up his hands in defense, “Hey, your spunk is attractive!”

Hikaru giggled, and then rested her head on the Earthbender’s shoulder with another sigh, though this one was a little more… relieved. At least, as long as she was with Bolin, she wouldn’t feel so lonely. He put his arm around her and they silently watched the turtleducks and the yoga students and the Frisbee kids and the free-spirited dogs as the sun began to shine just a little brighter.

One Week Later:

Hong Li was pacing along the edge of the railway, overlooking the city as he continued his guard shift. He’d been a guard for five years now— though his first year, when Suyin accused him of betraying the city for the Red Lotus, had him always doubting a career in military. He’d swallowed those doubts, though, for a stable amount of money and covered living expenses.

There was a clunk on the platinum shell that made up the metal dome he was currently patrolling.

He turned and listened, tapping his foot a little the way Matriarch Suyin had taught them— listening for the vibrations through the metal. Nothing seemed out of place.

A hand clamped over his mouth!

A jab to his shoulder and he instantly felt a sharp pain— and then numbness!

“Mmmmmmpphh!!” Hong Li mumbled, muffled by a glove.

He tried, he really did try to get good look at his adversary, but a few more strikes to his back and he began to sag in the person’s arms— slowly falling to the ground as his vision went black.
“Alright… I’m going to prescribe some vitamins for you to take, this will help insure that the baby can have access to enough nutrients in the womb,” the pediatrician said, scrawling some notes on a clipboard.

Bolin rubbed a calming circle on the back of her hand with his thumb, then tracing over her knuckles — slowly and one by one. She felt a little bit of a headache beginning to sprout, but shrug it off.

“… we’re going to schedule an ultrasound for the 26th of August, does that work with your schedule?”

Hikaru took a deep breath and put on a smile, “Yeah, sounds great.”

The doctor gave her a pat on the knee, “Good luck.”

She walked out of the clinic with a weight in her heart, a drag in her step. Drops of hot, summer rain fell onto her sweater and she let out a groan of aggravation at this whole fucked-up situation.

Bolin gave her a smile, “Don’t worry— I have enough stored up from my Nuktuk movers, I’ll pay for the bills.”

“It’s not that I’m worried about,” Hikaru said with a shake of her head.

“Oh… what is it?”

“I have no degree, no career… I’m already taking care of one child, Bo. What the fuck are we doing with our lives—”

“Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey,” he whispered, turning to face her properly and cupping her cheeks with both his hands, “Suki is going to be okay, too. I’m going to help you with this— we’re each other’s responsibility now, okay?”

She felt him wipe away the tears that’d spilled onto her cheeks and leaned into his palms, closing her eyes and sighing.

“Okay.”

Bolin chivalrously opened the Satomobile door for her, closing it behind her and bounding to the other side with a spring in his step like an excited puppy. Though there were dark circles under her eyes from stress— they couldn’t help but twinkle at his enthusiasm.

“Come on, let’s get you home— a nice hot bath with some candles and music and scents? How does that sound?”

She smiled as he started the car, “That sounds wonderful.”

They got home and she walked forwards to unlock the latch (even though she’d given him a spare key a month ago), pushing the wooden door open. A small, pink projectile collided with her.

“Huka! Boleeeen!” her little sister said, giving her a platypus-bear-sized hug.
“Hey there, champ!”

Mako, who’d offered to babysit her that afternoon, came up and gave both of them a hug as well. “She has too much energy,” he whispered into their ears.

“It means she’s happy and healthy,” Hikaru muttered back, with sarcasm. “You know — normal people human emotions? Don’t you feel those sometimes?”

“Shush it,” Mako said with a roll of his eyes. “How was your date?”

Bolin and Hikaru stiffened a little — they’d elected not to tell anybody about their… situation… just yet.

“It was good, it was good!” the Earthbender said with a wide smile. He clapped his brother on the back, “I hope you’re free on the 26th of August — Suki’s going to need a babysitter again.”

Mako sighed and rolled his eyes, “I’ll put a note on my calender, but you owe me a case of Samuel Adams.”

“Thanks, bro.”

The Firebender showed himself out of the apartment with a hug to them both. Bolin set Suki up with a movie and some legos — and then prepped a bath for his girlfriend while she sat on the couch.

“What are you making, Kiki?”

“A spaceship! I’m going to be an assy-naut!”

“Uh, you mean astronaut, right!??”

“Yeah!” Suki said, watching her movie and singing along to the words. Little tyke was in her own world.

Hikaru chuckled and rubbed her brow. She felt strong arms pompously life her up as Bolin carried her to the bathroom and locked the door. There was soft candlelight in the background and guitar music in the foreground. Bolin carefully, sensually undressed her — pressing kisses to her shoulders and neck as he stripped her and guided her into the tub.

“I didn’t know you’d become my personal servant,” she teased with a whisper.

“Shhhh, darling, this is for you.”

He leaned her back and turned on the hot water, making sure that the waterfall wasn’t too loud — lest the music go unappreciated. Bolin began rubbing her shoulders with some sort of — OOOOOOOOHMMMM… WHATEVER HE WAS USING WAS… OOOOOOOOHHHHHH… RIGHT THERE!!!

She leaned back into his hands as the water sloshed over her legs. He massaged her neck and she couldn’t help but let out a groan, opening a lone eye and cracking a wide smile. He was looking back at her lovingly, kissing her on the shoulder while he continued.

“What is this stuff, anyways?”

“Some sort of lotion or oil that Korra recommended from the Water Tribes — supposed to be good for relaxing the muscles and relieving… tension. You know those guys, obsessed with healing
“Hey, hippies know what they’re doing,” Hikaru said, closing her eyes again and sighing in bliss. “Oh… right there, love.”

Bolin kissed her before slowly moving down her back, giving her the massage of her life.

Chapter End Notes

WOO-HOO!! I HATE MYSELF SOMETIMES FOR LOVING TO WRITE ANGSTY ISSUES!! WOO-HOO!!

Leave comments!!
Chapter Summary

“All the most powerful emotions come from chaos -fear, anger, love... especially love. Love is chaos itself. Think about it! Love makes no sense. It shakes you up and spins you around. And then, eventually, it falls apart.”

— Kirsten Miller, The Eternal Ones

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Su had been reading a wonderful book on Avatar Kuruk’s adventures when a handful of the morning patrol burst into the study with their hands hovering over their cables. They looked frantically worried, as though assassin’s were about to rain down from the sky.

“What is it?” she asked, standing up with a frown and closing her book.

“Matriarch!! We’ve found the body one of our guards!” Captain Fai said, rushing into the room without knocking— though something this serious was an emergency.

“Who?!”

“Hong Li, Ma’am. His body had been dumped into a stream, and a farmer from one of the local surrounding villages found him this morning, recognized the armor as ours! The autopsy is telling us that his throat was slit last night— likely during guard patrol!”

“Spirits…” Suyin said, slowly sitting down on the couch in her study and running her fingers through her hair.

Hong Li had only been twenty-one or twenty-two— what kind of bastard would kill an innocent boy?

“M-Matriarch,” another guard stammered, “That’s n-not all…”

“Spit it out, then!” she snapped.

“There was… large traces of an unknown metal in his body… we think it may be Unobtainium…” Captain Fai said solemnly.

Suyin Beifong’s eyes widened, and suddenly she knew exactly which kind of bastards they were. The Lieutenant had sent his message, and now he was awaiting an R.S.V.P. She turned to Captain Fai and gave him a scowl— shifting from Matriarch to warrior in a heartbeat.

“Lock down the city, domes and all— immediately. I want four guards on each member of my family— get Korra and Kuvira some armor as well.”

Four guards, including Fai, stayed with her— the rest rushing off to warn the Zaofu military of the infiltration. Suyin pressed a latch underneath her desk and a closet door opened to her right. She bent
her metal armor off the stand and latched it on securely, bracers and shin guards flying to her wrists and knees. Though she only saved it for emergencies—and this certainly was one—she also fetched a helmet, embedded with a bronze logo of the Metal Clan emblem, and distinctive from the normal guard’s helmets. She put it on and let out a sigh.

“Let’s go.”

“Matriarch,” Fai blurted, trying to put a hand up for her safety, “You need to stay somewhere safe—”

“My city is being threatened, Captain. Do you honestly expect me to stay hidden in a chamber while those fuckers run around terrorizing my civilians?!?”

None of the guards said anything, only nodding and stepping to the side so that she could pass.

“Mom!” a voice said to the right, “What’s going on?”

“Opal! Opal, get Jinora and her Sky Bison and get the hell out of the city— right this instant!”

“But we can stay and help—”

“You can’t commit an unprovoked attack— just take your soulmate and go!” the Matriarch commanded with a definitive wave of her hand.

Her daughter bit her lip for half a second in contemplation, and then rushed forwards, colliding against Su’s armored torso. Opal buried her head into her mother’s neck, and Suyin could feel tears against her collarbone— wrapping her arms around her baby Airbender and letting out a deep sigh. She looked over her daughter’s messy, short black hair to the guards nervously standing, waiting.

“Captain Fai, give them clearance to leave the city— only them!”

“Yes, Matriarch,” the Firebender nodded, reaching down into his side bag to make a radio call. While he got clearance from the gate guards, Suyin kissed her daughter’s forehead.

“I love you,” she whispered.

“I love you, too,” Opal said, her voice muffled by Suyin’s shoulder.

Asami was resting on the couch, half-napping and half listening to Judge Joo Dee (a popular show in Ba Sing Sei) in her apartment when she heard a knock on the door. Strange—besides Baatar Jr. and Kuvira, it wasn’t as though she’d made any new friends in Zaofu. She turned the TV off and stood with a stretch.


“I’m coming, I’m coming!” Asami snapped.

She groggily walked across the carpet, shuffling her feet a little, and looked into the glass peephole
on the metal door.

No one was there.

The engineer’s hand hovered over the doorknob for half a moment, and then she decided that it was probably just the toddlers from down the hall playing Ding, Dong, Ditch. She returned to the couch and continued to nap— her face turned inwards towards the couch cushions.


She cracked open an eye and glared at the door. After a few seconds of pondering, she hopped up off the couch and strode up to the door.

“What?!” she snarled, wrenching the door open.

The guard who’d shown her around the first day, Chul, was standing there with… a bouquet of flowers. He had a surprised look on his face, and something in his expression made Asami wonder if he was a little nervous. There was a wide, goofy smile on his face— reminding the ex-heiress slightly of Bolin.

“How… how can I help?” she asked with a sigh.

“I brought you these!” he said, pushing the flowers into her hands. She looked at them for half a moment and then welcomed him into her house.

“Thank you,” she mumbled.

She set them in a metal vase, filling it up with a little water. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw him pacing around the apartment, looking at all of the furniture and knick knacks that Matriarch Beifong had the place furnished with. Tensely, she set the vase down on the kitchen counter.

“How have you been?” he asked, looking out over the horizon of Zaofu. She followed his gaze… strange… the domes were closing.

“In and out, of sorts,” she admitted, not making eye contact. “At least I have a job now.”

In the reflection of the glass, she saw him smirk slightly, the corners of his mouth a little stiff, “Well at least you’re somewhat settled in, right? All caught up with your Equalist snafu back in Republic City?”

“Snafu is putting it likely, don’t you think?” Asami asked.

Chul smiled at her and, for a moment, looked a little sympathetic, “Did you smell the roses? They’re imported from the Fire Nation.”

He guided her over to the flowers, and giving him a flirtatious smirk, she inhaled the… roses… wait…

Roses do not smell… bitter….

She could instantly feel her head becoming woozy. A hand pressed her closer to the petals, forcing her to breath in the chemicals even more, and she looked at Chul out of the corner of her eyes— who had a sinister smile on his face as he pushed her down onto the couch.

“What’re you… I don’t…” she mumbled, blinking to keep conscious.
“Surprised? It got a lot easier to infiltrate Zaofu after the Avatar got rid of Suyin’s bloodhound… what was his name? Aiwei?” Chul asked, standing over her with his arms crossed.

“No…” she tried to lift her arms, but they felt like lead.

The “guard” walked around the kitchen, “Nice digs for a criminal… filthy fucking Benders throwing all of their wealth around like usual.”

“You’re… Equalist…”

Asami could feel herself slipping away. Whatever noxious gas that was in the roses—it was strong, and she kept scraping at her thigh to keep herself awake. The pain was slowly becoming number and number.

Wait.

Pain.

She closed her eyes and took a breath, while Chul looked out over the city—waiting for the toxic substance to kick in.

“Korra…. Please… help!” she tried to think.

There was silence, agonizing silence for a few seconds. Asami could feel her body shaking at it reacted to whatever fumes she’d inhaled. Gripping onto the pillow for something—anything to keep her cognizant, she heard a voice.

“I’ll be there in ten seconds!! Stay conscious!!”

Chul watched her with a grin as she convulsed, letting out incoherent noises as she fell to the floor, trembling in distress.

Suyin watched the Sky Bison fly away with her daughter and niece, wiping away a tear and turning to the rest of her family. They were in the courtyard. She grasped her husband’s wrist.

“Get to the bunker, we’re going to do a city-wide search—”

“Mom!” Kuvira shouted, running up to her, “Hiroshi’s cell is emptied!”

“What?!”

“That’s not all, Korra just flew away in the Avatar State—yelling that Asami was in danger!”

_Shit, they’re after the Satos!_ Su thought.

Baatar Sr. grabbed some guards and a decorative sword off the wall (though Suyin knew that, from his cat burglar days that he was perfectly skilled to use it), “I’ll go find Hiroshi—you catch whoever’s responsible.”
“Baatar, no!”

“Baatar, yes!” Jr. whispered to Huan, who hit him on the shoulder with a scowl.

Her husband pressed a kiss to her mouth, “I love you, I’ll be back in a little bit— hopefully with Hiroshi.”

She watched as he ran down the pathway towards the jail cells, and then turned to the rest of her family— Kuvira was instantly at her side, conforming to her familiar position as former Captain of the Guard.

“What do we do?” her adopted daughter whispered.

“Get the boys to the bunker, you know which one— I’m going to lead a squad down to the section where Hong Li had been patrolling, see if I can find the Equalists…”

“No need!” a voice shouted from the rooftop of Beifong Palace. “We’re already fucking here!”

Her sons, even Huan— who wasn’t much of a fighter, grabbed the cables at their sides and lowered into Metalbending stances. The guards began charging the Equalists, racing up the sides of the buildings with the metal cables.

Whizz!

Suyin’s eyes widened as she realized just what had passed her ear.

“Find cover! They have fucking Arrows!” she cried, pulling Baatar Jr. behind a meteorite statue.

“Don’t worry about me, Mom,” he hissed, “I can take a few arrows— it’s not like the Unobtainium affects me.”

She gave her son a squeeze on the shoulder for being brave, and then sent shard after shard of metal towards the Equalist assassin’s on the roof. Even though there were lights shining down from the platinum domes, the darkness provided a challenge for aiming accurately.

Su smiled.

If only she’d learned Earthbending the blind way… oh wait.

Rock after rock pelted the villains off the roof as she surged forwards, angry that someone would even dare to try and attack her family. In seconds a familiar shape was besides her, assisting her bending by holding rocks and pieces of metal for her to kick.

“Kuvira, get our family out of here!”

“Not without you, Mom!”

Something struck her shoulder, just under the lip of metal— and Suyin felt a sharp pain beneath the metal pauldrons of her armor. A long stick fell to the ground as the arrow snapped off at the point.

Fuck.

Suyin slumped against the roof, and Kuvira drew up a piece of the metal ridge to give them cover.

“Mom!”
Absentmindedly running her fingers over the cold metal— for the first time in her life Suyin Beifong felt fear, and suddenly she felt truly connected to her sister’s recounting of Amon taking away someone’s Bending.

She couldn’t feel it, not a single thing in the city. Her pride and joy which she’d built with her bare hands, now running their fingertips back and forth against something… cold and lifeless… no longer holding… meaning…

“’Vira… ‘Vira, I can’t Bend,” she whimpered.

Her daughter’s eyes widened in terror and, wrapping a cable around her mother’s waist, they slung down to the ground as Metalbenders continued to fight off the Equalist rats.

“Let’s get to the bunker!” Kuvira roared to her brothers, “Now!”

Wing and Wei opened a thick slab of metal and threw it to the side, revealing the staircase reserved for emergency evacuations. Throwing on of Suyin’s arms over his shoulders, Huan guided his mother down the steps. Wing closed the metal behind them, protecting their escape.

They moved into a cart and Wei slammed the button down, instantly transporting them to safety.

Su’s eyes darted between the three boys.

“Wait—” she said, her face dawning with realization.

“Mom, it’s too late— they told us to!” Huan mumbled.

They’d left Kuvira and Baatar Jr. up in the courtyard.

Korra smashed through the glass and looked up.

A family was huddling in the corner— obvious in fear of the city wide shutdown (and the fact that the Avatar had crashed into their living room).

“Whoops! Sorry, wrong apartment!”

With a sphere of air, she flew up to the condo above, where a young man clad in the Zaofu armor, standing over a body.

With a yell, blinding white eyes and all, Korra burst through— shards flying everywhere— and tackled the boy. His head slammed against the wall and he let out a groan, mumbling something about the Equalists winning.

She gave him a punch, straight to the nose, and smirked when she heard a crack. She turned and saw a body shaking on the ground, like when a phone vibrates as it receives a text message.

“A-Asami!!” she screamed, rushing to her soulmate’s side.
Korra wasn’t sure what was wrong with her, but she bent the sink pipes so that water flooded the kitchen, bending it over as quick as lightning, and began to heal everything.

Asami was still shaking, and the Avatar quickly flung the water away.

She took a deep breath and remembered the trick that Zaheer had almost killed her with all those years ago. Korra raised her arms in an Airbending pose, slowly swirling them around Asami’s head as oxygen left the heiress’s lungs. She could sense something in the breath, some sort of toxic vapor and she pushed it out of the broken living room window. She didn’t know quite what to do, so she kept moving air in and out, trying to cleanse whatever poison it was.

There was… color… returning to Asami’s cheeks, and Korra’s eyes widened. Whatever it was, it was surely working. But the engineer was not breathing on her own.

Korra bent down, over her soulmate—pinching Asami’s nose and covering the heiress’s mouth with her own. Every three seconds, the Avatar blew a breath into the older woman’s lungs.

She heard a gasp beneath her.

Drawing back, she felt frantic fingers clasped onto her own as Asami sputtered, heaving in and out. Wild green eyes searched around the room and locked onto cerulean. They remained there, staring at each other as Asami’s chest rose and fell in pain and shock.

“Hey,” the engineer whispered.

Korra looked up at the ceiling with a cocky grin, her eyes flooding with tears, “Fucking “hey” is all I get?”

“Thanks for the… complimentary… CPR,” Asami muttered between heaving breaths.

Korra gently picked Asami up and murmured something along the lines of “you’re welcome”. A groan and a stirring could be heard from the other side of the room. The fuckboy, Chul, was stirring away, blood dripping down from his cracked nose.

“You dink it eds wib me?” he sputtered, holding his hands to his face, “The Equibists will fid you and ed you.”

Korra kicked a whip of the water that cover the kitchen floor towards him. It wrapped around him and froze into place. He was stuck against the wall—and Korra reminded herself to come and find him later, give him a few more broken bones to match.

“You may want to put some ice on your nose,” the Avatar smirked, her eyes closing for a moment and then blinking open into a brilliant white.

Like Superman, she carried Asami bridal style to the edge of the room, stepping over the broken glass and taking a breath.

“Hold on,” Korra muttered to her soulmate.

And then she jumped.

Chapter End Notes
Ummm.... stay tuned....

Leave comments....

Yeah....

P.S. Is there anyone really good at art who'd be willing to make a logo for this fic for me? I don't have any money to commission... and I'm a shitty artist. I have a terrific idea though, so please message me at ziraseal.tumblr.com if you want to help!! :D
Roses - Part 2

Chapter Summary

“...and when one of them meets the other half, the actual half of himself, whether he be a lover of youth or a lover of another sort, the pair are lost in an amazement of love and friendship and intimacy and one will not be out of the other's sight, as I may say, even for a moment...”

— Plato, The Symposium

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Baatar Sr. ran down the steps of the jail, fleeing past empty cells— Zaofu’s primary punishment was banishment, of course. He finally reached Hiroshi Sato’s cell, and as Kuvira had confirmed before… not a soul to be found.

“Fuck!” he growled, motioning his escort of Metalbenders to follow.

No one knew the layout of the city better than him, and he had a funny feeling that… using the side passage to the left… down the stairs… up the elevator… THROUGH THE DRAIN PIPE!! Yes, that was a route out of the city— the Equalists were sure to have used it.

“Come on!” he called to the guards.

He kicked at the wall and a Metalbender pushed the steel aside, revealing a passage— for escapes, as always. They ran down at sprinting speed, and Baatar wheezed a little. His burglar days were long ago, and sitting around designing buildings wasn’t exactly cardio.

They raced down stairs and Baatar Sr. nearly fell down the elevator shaft, but one of the guards caught him with her cable.

“We need to get up there!” he pointed.

Like slingshots, they flew through the chute, hands waved to pry open the elevator doors and get everyone to safety. Baatar looked at the cables dangling from the ceiling— sliced… they’d been here.

“Let’s move.”

They pulled away another wall of metal that revealed a tunnel through the mountains (don’t you dare start singing it), and Baatar motioned for them to follow. Though it was supposed to be a drain pipe for water, the conduit was filled with mud, and as one of the Firebending guards lit the path, they saw a multitude of footprints.

“They took him through here!” a guard exclaimed.

*No shit, Sherlock.*
The adrenaline, the excitement of a chase, tunnels and crawlspace and jumping and running. It was like good old times. Though, instead of snatching an urn or a precious diadem, he was on the hunt for Hiroshi Sato… or his body… or what might be left of it.

The tunnel atmosphere was damp, heavy with filth and mold. Baatar felt himself gasping for air by the time they reached a fork in the road (so to speak).

“Shit!” one of the higher ranking officers cursed.

“It’s alright… we just need to use logic,” Baatar Sr. mumbled.

If they went down the path to the left, it would lead to the ocean. Did the Equalist’s have a navy? That didn’t seem like them— they were stealth and backstabbing, not show business. Unless they went that way to dump a body…

To the right… it would lead to a village. If they knew about it, they wouldn’t head that way— and with a heist of this magnitude they were sure to know of all their possible escape routes. Ruthless bastards. There were guards posted in the local areas to protect Zaofu at all costs.

“Left,” Baatar Sr. concluded.

The guards followed the engineer down the tunnel, stomping through muck and sludge that began to reek something awful. Lights from the Firebender shining down revealed that the engineer was correct in his assumptions. Hasty, awkwardly spread footprints were heading out this way— oh no… it looked as though they’d begun dragging Hiroshi. If he wasn’t dead yet, he was unconscious and possibly injured.

“We have to hurry!”

They all collectively broke into a sprint, splashing through the shit as they made their way towards an ever nearing light. The Metalbenders kicked through a grate that’d been cleverly welded back into place.

“They wanted to slow us down? Fat chance,” one of the guards muttered.

It was nine steps away from the pipe that their search came to an end.

_________________________________________

“We have to do something!”

“Love, we can’t go back!” Jinora argued. “We may well be targets ourselves!”

“And so you’d rather run? I have a family to protect!” Opal countered, looking back at the mountains in anger.

“AND I HAVE YOU TO PROTECT!!” Jinora retorted with rage.
The older girl opened her mouth, but then closed it in defeat, climbing forwards on Juicy’s back and joining her lover, who continued navigating at the reins without any indication of Opal’s newfound presence. She reached her fingers out tentatively... and then her hand fell back to her lap.

Thirty minutes of silence passed, and Jinora leaned against the Beifong girl, who sharply took in a breath of air.

“I love you,” the Airbending Master whispered.

“I know,” Opal sighed.

Jinora looked at her with a raised eye brow. The older girl continued, putting a hand up in protest.

“I know, and I feel divided. I’m supposed to be peaceful and calm, but rocks run through my blood — okay, you know, not literally — violence isn’t a second nature to me, but standing my ground is. And family... family is my mom’s most important principle to uphold. I have to abandon those moralities that I grew up with for a decade and a half for a culture that barely existed twenty years ago?”

“Opal... I’m sorry... you shouldn’t have to choose like that... but your family is so strong... they’ll be okay.”

“I hope you’re right,” the Beifong girl said, leaning her head against Jinora’s. “Mmm... your hair’s getting longer.”

Jinora ran a hand through the inch-long mess that stuck out in every direction. Opal pressed a kiss to the younger girl’s temple, and the Airbending Master leaned into the gesture a little— fiddling with Opal’s dark fingers, intertwining them with her blue and ivory ones.

“Where are we headed?” Opal murmured, her lips pressed against her lover’s ear.

Jinora hesitated, “I don’t know.”

“We’re just going?”

“Yeah... we’re just going.”

Korra and Asami landed at the courtyard, and the engineer was feeling well enough to at least stand on her own. The place looked like a battlefield— chunks of earth were sticking out of the ceiling, glass was broken and a few bodies stung the ground. Korra leaned over them, checking their wrists — not a pulse to be found.

“Rest in peace,” she murmured.

“K-Korra? Asami?” a voice whispered, over from the metaldisc arena, “Is that you?”

The Avatar turned— Kuvira was standing over Baatar, who had four or five arrows sticking through his shoulders and arms, though he smiled as they approached.

“Stop doting, love,” he chuckled at the Metalbender, “I’ll be alright— tis but a scratch!”
“You have arrows punctured into you, and now’s the time to quote movies?” Kuvira frowned, hovering her hand over the wounds. “Fuckin’ nerd.”

Korra knelt, “I can heal him, do you have water?”

Baatar feebly pointed to a fountain, slightly ruined from all the chaos. While the Avatar walked over to bend some up for his shoulders and arms, Asami slid down the walls and slumped in exhaustion. Kuvira turned to her.

“You look like you’ve been to hell.”

“Yeah,” Asami answered blankly.

Kuvira sat down next to her while Korra healed her fiancé, slowly pulling out arrows one by one.

“How’re things… you know… otherwise?”

“Peachy?”

“Yeah— stupid question,” Kuvira chucked.

Absentmindedly, and perhaps more for her own comfort than Asami’s, Kuvira reached down and clasped their hands together. The Metalbender’s hands were rough and calloused… and shaky. Poor girl was probably devastated about her family.

CRASH!!

Startled, all four adults jumped up— Korra quickly pulling Baatar up and slinging his arm over shoulder. Asami was leaning a little onto Kuvira and raising a hand to her head… she still felt woozy from the toxic fumes Chul had forced upon her.

“See anything else to take?”

“Loads!”

The cackling voices, hyena-like in horridness, echoed from the Beifong Palace as a whole group of Equalists stumbled out into the courtyard with laughter.

“We need to go!” Korra whispered, “We can’t protect these two and fight all of them off at the same time.”

Kuvira let out a small sigh through her nose, one that only Asami detected. They moved through the courtyard, slithering between bushes and banana statues— excuse me, art. They’d almost made it to the same passage that the rest of the Beifongs had escaped through when—

“Hey! Over there! It’s Sato and the Avatar!”

“Jackpot!”

Korra sent chunks of earth flying at the impending group of Equalists and yelled at the group to leave!! Kuvira grabbed Asami by the scruff of her neck and dodged behind a corner. Baatar Jr. raced forwards, pulling Korra to cover on the other side of the building. Amidst the fire of arrows and the approaching shock gloves, Korra managed to make eye contact with the Metalbender;

“Take her and go!” the Avatar’s voice called, “I’ve got Baatar! Run!”
They were coming too fast, and Kuvira made a horrible decision. She pulled Asami down with her as she used the metal cables to descend the wall bordering the Palace courtyard.

“Where are you going?!” Asami hissed, “We need to stay with Korra!”

“She’ll keep my fiancé safe, and I’ll be damned if I let you get hurt! You’re my priority now!”

“Just fucking leave me, and go protect the goddamn Avatar! Go and protect my soulmate!” Asami yelped, trying to push away Kuvira’s strong arms.

They reached a street below the Beifong Palace, and Kuvira pulled the weak engineer over her shoulder. Exhausted, Asami felt herself slipping out of consciousness—clearly the poison still had a presence, despite Korra’s best efforts. She gripped the green fabric of Kuvira’s armored-covered hoodie, whimpering as the Metalbender continued to put distance between Asami and Korra.

Kuvira swung them up a building and surveyed the scene. The streets were deserted, save for guard patrols running amok, desperately trying to find and capture Equalists. She dearly hoped that her mom and brothers had gotten out alive and well, and a column of air and a blast of fire from the Palace told her that the Avatar had sprung free of the Equalist’s grasp, her fiancé slung over Korra’s shoulder.

But they were going the wrong way—towards the other end of the city.

The Metalbender had to get Asami out of her, who kept mumbling as poison threatened to overtake her.

“I need to get you to a healer,” Kuvira mumbled.

Using the cables, she swung them from building to building like Tarzan, until she finally reached one of the city gates. Ten guards were posted at the ready, hands hovering over cables.

“I need you to let me through,” the former Captain of the Guard shouted, racing up to them with Asami on her back.

“We have strict orders from the Matriarch—”

“Equalists have overrun the Palace!” Kuvira retorted, “The Matriarch was forced to escape, and if I don’t get Miss Sato out of here and to safety, they’re going to kill us.”

The guards, respecting Kuvira greatly, looked among each other and opened the gate with a few swift Metalbending moves. The walls cracked open just enough for the girls to slip through, leading towards the guard barracks.

“Radio whoever you need to that Avatar Korra is also allowed to leave the city,” Kuvira commanded.

“What of the Matriarch?”

“Bunker #20 would be my guess, check in with Captain Fai as soon as you’ve secured the city.”

A Firebender put a hand on Kuvira’s shoulder, “Well send word to Republic City when we’ve gotten things under control.”

“Just find my mother and my brothers, I have to go!!”

Kuvira ran through the halls of the barracks, familiar with the layout like the back of her hand. She’d
wandered these halls on lonely nights when all she wanted to do was find Suyin, crying over thunder and lightning. She’d finally confronted the Matriarch when she was sixteen— tears spilling down her face— that she wanted to have a loving family, not be treated as some outcast prodigy all her life. Suyin had begun bawling and bawling, “of course you’re my daughter”, rocking Kuvira back and forth in her arms and apologizing profusely, treating her like a loved one and a part of the family afterwards. It’d changed everything for the girl. After that, she never slept in the barracks again.

The Metalbender gritted her teeth and heaved a slipping Asami over her shoulders, adjusting the engineer’s weight on her back.

She turned a corner and kicked through a metal door. Rows of jeeps were parked in a garage— a pair of Metalbending guards protecting the entrance.

“You have clearance to take one of these Jeeps!” a female guard called to them, “Get on out of here, Captain Kuvira!”

“Thanks!” she called, starting the engine of the car nearest, and putting the engineer in the passenger seat.

The doors opened long enough for her to speed down the dusty road, a mumbling Asami to her left, and the City of Second Chances growing smaller by the second behind her. It was a mile out that the tears began to fall.

*I’m such a fucking coward*, Kuvira thought to herself; twisting and turning the Jeep down the mountain path.

The Lieutenant was standing in front of the group, flanked by a shock-glove-equipped Chi Blocker on either side. In front of him, Hiroshi was kneeling, a knife at his throat. Though blood was dribbling from the CEO’s mouth, his amber eyes were wide open and alert.

Baatar Sr. put a hand up, “Surrender, and let harm come to no one… Zaofu has no quarrel with the Equalists.”

“We have quarrel with all Benders, especially those who harbor our targets,” the Lieutenant sneered. “Don’t take any further steps.”

“That’s fine, we won’t have to.”

The Lieutenant snarled, and underneath the mask, Baatar pictured him raising an eyebrow, “And how do you propose to get away with—”

A guard next to Baatar Sr. pulled his hand back suddenly and the knife went flying away from the Lieutenant’s hand. In an instant, it was all out war as the guards went up against the Equalists and Baatar Sr. moved to pull Hiroshi away from the fight.

The CEO kicked the distracted Lieutenant away from him and limped over to the Beifong engineer, “Quick, we have to find Asami!”
“Korra went to get her, right now I’m worried about you—”

**CRACKLE!! SIZZ!! SMACK!! WHACK!!**

Baatar Sr. fell to his knees in agony, feeling two deep strikes in his back— and then again as the Lieutenant brought blow after blow from his electric batons. Hiroshi roared and dodged strike after strike as he tried to… fight… Lieutenant…

The Equalists fleeing…

The dirt felt… cold…

Lightning conducted against the metal on his robes, repeatedly coursing through his body… the engineer could…

Impossible… he could hear his pulse *slowing down*…

… pain…

Baatar Sr. always did have a weak heart.

And as he exhaled a final breath and darkness slowly surrounded him, all he could think about was how good of a life he’d had.

“Baatar!” Hiroshi’s voice screamed through the darkness. “Baatar, stay with us!!”

His fingers… crept forwards… digging into the dirt… Suyin… Opal… Wei and Wing and Huan… Junior… Kuvira…

*Goodbye…*

“BAATAR!!”

___________________________________________________

Captain Fai managed to get his team to the bunker first, having cleared the city of Equalist scum. When his elite Metalbenders opened the solid door and ran into the fortified room to declare the all clear, they were held back by the Beifong twins, as the artistic one, Huan cradled a sobbing mother — tears rushing down all of their eyes.

The Firebender would never forget the screams the Matriarch sobbed out as she felt, in her heart, the permanent loss of her Soulmate.

They say it rips through your whole body, and all you’re left with is the feeling of absolute emptiness.
I am so sorry.

And before you ask, no I'm not okay... writing this has left me in a state of emotional distress...
Chapter Summary

"If a man's philosophy does not let him protect his people, his home, and his family... what good can it do for the world?"

-Vali, "Assassin's Creed Revelations"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“Kuvira…”

“What?”

“Kuvira…”

“What?!”

“Pull over…” Asami muttered.

The Metalbender slowed the car along the side of the road— paranoid as she checked around for Equalists assassins.

The engineer stumbled out of the car and threw up, repeatedly. Kuvira rushed to her side and tried to collect the ex-heiress’s jet-black locks into a bunch behind her back as Asami emptied the contents of her stomach.

“It’s okay… it’s alright… your body’s expelling the poison,” the former Captain murmured, rubbing Asami’s shoulder.

The ex-heiress vomited again, letting out a “oh Spirits” somewhere in-between heaves. She clutched the fabric of Kuvira’s shirt for support as she spat out the taste of bile. She looked up at Kuvira with a pout on her face, like a scared toddler— there were dark circles under her muted green eyes, and the Metalbender wondered when the last time was… that she felt safe.

Kuvira gulped, “We should probably stop at the next village for the night, make sure you have a place to rest. We’re low on gas, anyways.”

Asami didn’t answer, only nodding and letting Kuvira assist her back into the car.

*We need to get you to a healer*, the Metalbender thought.

They drove down the dirty, bumpy road until they finally reached a settlement— they were still in Earth Kingdom territory, but it looked as though many of the people living here were also Water Tribe and Fire Nation. Perhaps, if there was a United Republic military present, Kuvira and Asami could lie low here for a bit.

Asami, wearing the Metalbender’s green hoodie, pulled the hood up over her raven hair.
“You’re too noticeable,” Kuvira whispered.

Many people recognize a wanted ex-Equalist, ex-heiress of the wealthiest company in the world, you see.

“I… I know… let’s just get to a hotel… I feel sick again…”

Kuvira placed a hand on her back and guided her to a local hostel, where an elderly woman was sitting on the counter— reading all about the recent Equalist attacks in Republic City.

“We want to rent a room please?”

The elderly woman raised an eyebrow, “We don’t rent to… your type.”

Kuvira gave a scoff, “Our type?”

“Homosexuals.”

The women looked at each other, and then at the elderly lady. “Well, for one, we’re not together— another is that I’m engaged to a man, and third how the fuck do you make any money being a egotistic bigot?”

“Get out!”

They quickly scurried out, Kuvira slamming the metal door shut with a flick of her wrist and letting out a huff.

“We can try and find another hotel… are you hungry?”

“Somewhat,” Asami shrugged.

“Let’s go and find a restaurant, I have a credit card from my mom.”

They walked into a bar, where soft jazz music was playing and a man was on the stage with a band — singing about making love on Ember Island. He had a good voice, and Kuvira thought about giving him a tip.

The sign read, “Please Seat Yourself.”

“What can I get you ladies?” a Water Tribe waitress asked, walking up to their booth with a toothpick hanging out of her lips.

“Something to drink and something to eat— we’re not picky,” Kuvira answered curtly.

“I’ll fetch you the house soup and some shrimp rolls, and how about some of our finest whiskey? You two look like you’ve had a rough night.”

“Tell me about it,” Asami grumbled, picking at the napkin.

“Does this bar have any rooms to rent for the night?” Kuvira asked.

The waitress thought about it for a moment and then nodded, “We have a spare room, if you don’t mind sharing. It has a bathroom, too. I’ll give it to you for thirty yuans.”

“Thanks.”
She left to go grab them some food, and Kuvira tuned out the hustle and bustle of the bar for the sweet jazz music flowing from the stage. Her feet swayed, underneath the table, to the harmony and rhythm of the song. She missed dancing so much.

Asami slumped forwards in the booth, nestling her head into her elbows as she let out a tired sigh. The Metalbender gave her a sympathetic pat on the shoulder and almost followed suit, but the music was just so… encaptivating...

The waitress set bowls of steaming pho in front of them and poured their glasses with a shot of whiskey, leaving the small bottle on the table for them to enjoy.

Asami played around with her soup, stirring her spoon but not actually touching any of it. Kuvira sighed, adding some lime and bean sprouts to her dish and eating up. She’d barely eaten anything in the past twenty-four hours, and now was their break.

“Come on, it’s really good,” the Metalbender encouraged.

The ex-heiress looked at her with a smile, “Alright… if you insist…”

They finished their meals and paid for food and board (the waitress kindly allowing them to take the bottle of whiskey up to the room), and as Asami walked into the bathroom to wash up— more on Kuvira’s request than her own action— the Metalbender sat down on the bed.

She had four missed calls from Baatar Jr.

Jinora was giving Juicy a nice long brush when she heard Opal walked up to her slowly. The Airbending Master didn’t make eye contact, only continuing to brush the Sky Bison— who let out a satisfied groan at the shedding of his hot, thick fur.

“Hey there! I was looking at the map, and I was thinking we out to go see the—”

“My brother called me… Dad was killed by fucking Equalists.”

Jinora instantly dropped the brush (much to Juicy’s dismay) and looked at her lover, who had tears freely flowing down, ruining her jacket. Her eyes were bloodshot and her nose was red.

The Airbending Master ran to Opal, engulfing her in a big, sympathetic hug.

“I’m so… Opal… I’m so sorry.”

The older girl faintly reciprocated the gesture, looking at the grass with empty green eyes. She was softly breathing in and out of her nose, but raggedly… as though she was angry.

“Jinora… if we’d stayed…”

The younger woman looked into the Beifong’s eyes. Opal looked less grieving and more furious— she began trembling as she moved away from Jinora and gripped her hands into fists in anger.
“We could’ve been killed!” Jinora argued. “There was nothing we could do—”

“FUCK IF I CARE!! WE FUCKING RAN!!”

“We were in danger!”

“I’d rather’ve lost my bending than… MY DAD IS FUCKING DEAD, JINORA!!”

“Opal!!”

The older Airbender didn’t listen, whipping up a small whirlwind and sending it towards the cliffs, shattering rocks everywhere with a gust of air alone.

“Stop this! Don’t project your anger through your bending!”

“THAT’S ALL YOU FUCKING CARE ABOUT, ISN’T IT?! FUCKING AIRBENDING AND THE STUPID RULES!! AND LOOK WHAT’S HAPPENED!!”

“Opal!! Stop, please!!”

Another whirlwind, slowly forming itself into a small tornado. Opal moved her arms with fury in skill as she aimed towards the cliff again. Jinora tried to intervene— pulling on Opal’s arms to get her to stop. But the older girl ignored her.

“Opal Beifong! This is not our way!”

“Your way got my father killed!!” Opal shouted, spinning into an advanced form. Another shot, and the craggy cliff groaned as chunks of Earth fell to the ground.

Jinora tried to get into her line of sight to stop this madness.

Opal’s eyes were closed, spinning around as she moved to strike in anger again— but she didn’t see her soulmate in front of her. Jinora tried to block with a blast of air, redirect the wind to the skies. Opal moved her arms a certain way with a snarl on her face and the younger girl’s eyes widened in fear.

The Soulmates both felt the powerful blow as a slice of air rippled through and cut Jinora in the side, just under her ribs.

Both girls fell to the ground with cries and groans, writhing in pain.

“Shit!” Opal cursed, more tears falling from her face as she grasped at her torso.

Jinora was lying on the ground with her chest rising and falling in pain.

“JINORA!! NO!!”

The older girl tried to run towards her lover to get a look at the wound she’d caused, but was kicked back with a gust— knocking her against a tree.

“I’m sorry…” Jinora whispered, tears freely falling as she half-ran and half-limped towards the edge of the cliff. She jumped and a mumbling, barely conscious Opal saw a glimpse of a red triangle flying into the sky, quickly becoming a speck in the horizon.
Asami walked out of the bathroom finally feeling rid of all the grime that’d accumulated on her face in the past twenty-four hours. She let out a deep sigh as she turned the corner and—

Kuvira was on the bed, a cellphone clasped in her hand, shaking. Her mouth was open and her eyes were staring at the wall opposite.

“You okay?” Asami asked.

The Metalbender slowly turned to face the ex-Equalist, “No… my dad… he was killed… the Lieutenant…”

The engineer straightened up, “Shit— we have to go back!! You need to see your family!”

“No.”

“What?! Kuvira, are you listening to yourself—”

“You’re my priority. Zaofu could still be compromised,” Kuvira answered in a flat, hollow voice.

“Fuck, dude, I’m not worth it— you need to get back home!”

“Asami!”

The engineer looked at the Metalbender, who was trembling in grief. Asami sat down on the bed, taking Kuvira’s hands in her own and gripping them tightly.

“We need to keep you safe. My dad… there’s nothing I can do for him… but I can make sure he didn’t die for nothing…”

Asami threw her arms around Kuvira and the two of them broke down within each other. The taller girl brought the Metalbender to her chest as the former Captain screamed and cried into Asami’s shoulder, letting out all of her sorrows and pains and stresses that’d been accumulating— and until this moment had probably seemed easy to compact into a drawer in her heart. Asami undid Kuvira’s braid and stroked her soft, stringy hair while whispering how… how absolutely sorry she was.

_I caused this. I caused a train wreck from the moment I met Korra._

Eventually, Kuvira was reduced to whimpers and Asami let out a sigh as she rubbed circles in the Earthbender’s back. Kuvira grew silent, merely resting against Asami and fiddling with the soft blue duvet as rain began to _pitter patter_ on the windows— the darkness casting over the skies outside.

“Kuvira.”

“Y-Yeah?” the older girl sniffled.

“Are we… friends?”

“Best friends, Asami.”
The heiress sighed. They stayed like that for another hour, leaned up against each other and silently swimming in revelations and misfortunes, until Asami spoke again;

“Cut my hair?”

“What?”

“I don’t want the Equalists to spot me, and if I’m misleading…”

“Okay,” the older girl exhaled, offering Asami a weak smile.

Asami exited the room, speaking to the waitress they’d rented from for a few seconds and then asking the Water Tribe woman for a pair of scissors. Triumphant in her search, she sat on the edge of the bed under a few towels while Kuvira kneeled behind her, her hands shaking a little as she began snipping pieces of Asami’s most prized possession away.

*This is all you have left of Mom,* a voice said. *Are you sure?*

*Yes,* Asami answered in thought, as strands fell around her. *I just… indirectly… took something away from Kuvira… she should get to take something away of mine.*

“How short?”

“Unrecognizable.”

Kuvira chuckled a little and snipped a great deal of the beautiful mane, letting it fall to the floor. Asami could feel the cold freely tickling the back of her neck and smiled.

“There.”

The ex-heiress looked in the mirror that was beside the microwave and smirked, playfully running her hands through her short hair.

“You look like Ellen DeGeneres. Or Halle Berry.”

Asami chuckled and turned to her new best friend. “Thanks… it brings out my eyes.”

Kuvira walked up and gave her a big hug, “You’re welcome. Come on, we have a bottle of whisky to share, and I really need to get drunk.”

The Metalbender poured a glass for the both of them and held it up, “To my Dad.”

“To Baatar Sr.,” Asami said with a smile.

Chapter End Notes

*woohoo have some free emotions*

*leave comments pls*
Monopoly

Chapter Summary

“The people you love are just weapons that will be used against you.”
— Sarah J. Maas, Heir of Fire

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

One Week Later:

Hikaru’s eyes scanned the morning paper and she let out a sigh. The Equalists had gone after Zaofu. Apparently an inside source had revealed a tip that Matriarch Suyin had lost her bending and Baatar Beifong Sr. had been killed in the action.

“Pathetic bastards,” she mumbled.

“They’ll get what’s coming to them,” Bolin said, making sandwiches for Suki and Gyeong.

“I’m so worried about our friends… do you think they’re okay?”

“I can text Korra if it’d make you feel better,” the Earthbender said with a smile.

Hikaru walked up to him and gave him a big hug, “I love you.”

“I love you, too.”

There was a knock on the door and the ex-Firebender answered it, startled when a nine-year-old ran through the doorway to hug Suki.

“I’ll drop her off at 6:00!” Hikaru laughed, Gyeong’s father cracking a smile and giving her a hug.

The ex-Firebender looked through the classifieds and sipped on her latte while Bolin entertained the girls with a game of Monopoly. Cashier, cashier, waitress, yardwork & landscaping (if only she’d been born an Earthbender), reception, secretary. None of it looked exciting.

Hikaru missed the rush of adrenaline in a pro-Bending match. She missed having friendly (and antagonistic) rivalries with the other teams. She missed nursing bruises and laughing about trick shots, scowling at Tahno for his illegal moves—

“By the way, the Fire Ferrets need a coach, since Toza’s retiring.”

The ex-Firebender jumped a foot in the air. She looked around; Bolin was cheerfully haggling a property from Suki—who was being absolutely relentless. Gyeong passed Go and Bolin somehow ended up in jail.

“Can you… can you read my mind?”
“No, sweetie, you were just thinking really loudly.”

Bolin looked up and gave her a wink.

“You’re shitting me. We’re soulmates?” Hikaru asked, her gaze lingering on his emerald eyes.

“Oh, real romantic, Huka.”

Hikaru strolled over to the game and sat down on Bolin’s lap (wiggling her butt a little to make the girl’s laugh).

“Hey! I can’t see!” Bolin said, laughing and wrapping his arms around her waist.

She leaned back against him and closed her eyes (Bolin eventually gave up and began moving his pieces with his toes). His hand rested on her stomach, and she covered it with her own. Hikaru felt happy.

Happy.

It’d been a long time.

Korra walked into the workshop and blinked. Half the room was decimated, all of their inventions smashed into pieces and one of the walls was torn down from the fight with the Equalists—a hole overlooking the city. Despite all the evidence of chaos, Baatar Jr. was calmly fiddling and tinkering at the table.

“How are you holding up?” she asked, her voice low enough to be a whisper and yet the words echoed and bounced off of every surface.

Jr. shrugged, “I don’t know. It was so sudden. They… the Equalists stole all of my designs, so now I have nothing to work with… but I’m worried about Mom.”

Lin had arrived as soon as she’d heard the news— taking the train and engulfing Su into a very unlike-Chief-Beifong-hug. The two of them had spent the past few days in the study together, not even coming up for meals. There was even a rumor going around that Toph was coming to visit, but a part of Korra wasn’t sure.

Korra slowly walked up to him and pushed the gizmo out of his hands, wrapping her arms around him into an embrace. He sighed through his nose and put his chin on her shoulder.

“I feel so lost without him.”

“I know,” Korra whispered, closing her eyes and bumping the side of her head against his.

“And I miss Kuvira.”

Korra’s heart fell. They hadn’t heard from the other two since Baatar had called about… what’d happened. But she had a lot of faith in the Metalbender. Wherever they were, they were laying low
“I miss Asami,” Korra admitted.

Baatar tightened his arms around Korra and sighed, “I guess we’ll have to be each other’s BFF until they come back.”

“One problem… I don’t really know the difference between a screwdriver and a wrench…”

The man she was hugging let out a laugh, “That I can help with.”

He sat her down at the workbench, laying out an array of tools out in front of her, and Korra couldn’t help but wonder… they were very old looking…

“Were these your father’s?”

Junior didn’t answer for a moment, searching through drawers for the right size drill bits to start the lesson with. He returned with a dixie cup full of tiny steel bolts.

Suddenly, he slapped a pair of hard, plastic safety glasses on her face.

“Yeah… I figured he’d want them to stay in use.”

Korra adjusted the glasses with a curious expression and picked up the metal tool nearest—

“No… you want the drill first.”

“Oh.”

She set it back down and picked up—

“That’s a screwdriver.”

“Well how should I know?!”

Baatar sighed and walked over to a desk, fetching a roll of masking tape and a sharpie. He neatly arranged the tools in front of her and labeled them— making it easier for her to know which was which.

“Alright… pick up the drill.”

She searched around, and then lifted up the biggest tool.

“Woah! Look at that!! You’re getting the hang of it!!”

“Baatar, I swear to god if you keep patronizing me, I will keep you and Kuvira separated for the rest of your life.”

________________________________________________________________________

“Why don’t you go to Air Temple Island? I have my staff— I’ll be alright.”
Juicy let out a bellowing roar and nudged her with his nose. She blew the slobber off with a gust of air and patted his nose lovingly.

“I’ll see you around, Juice.”

The Sky Bison rose into the air with another roar— soaring away through the clouds. The Airbender let out a sigh and kicked a rock with her shoe, watching it bounce down the edges of the cliff. The sky was a dingy gray— it was going to rain again.

“Alright, Opal… let’s just go… find a village or something… rest for the night…”

She wandered through the forest, passing the occasional tourist or two— many of whom offered her a ride. Opal waved them off, saying that she was just out on a walk. She didn’t want any company right now.

*You fucking hurt her. You hurt the one person… How could you?* a seething voice whispered inside her head.

*If you’d have stayed in Zaofu, maybe Dad would still be alive,* another, more venomous voice cooed.

Opal ignored the voices as she walked down the path, hopping over a fallen log with a gust of air. She passed through clearings and leapt over streams until there was a sign signifying that the nearest town was three miles away.

She inhaled very slowly and exhaled as much stress as she could (but it didn’t do any good). Twirling her glider staff around, she set it over her shoulders and took those few running steps, leaping off of a rock into the air. She could already tell, from the way several branches managed to clip her face and leave small scratches, that her Airbending was off— that she was too distracted to go flying.

Usually the air feels calming, the way the wind playfully runs its fingers through your hair. But all Opal could feel was nausea.

*Take a deep breath… focus on your breathing… let the Air flow through your lungs and around your body— it is within you and without you,* she thought— remembering her first Airbending lesson with Korra.

Rain droplets were beginning to fall, and the wind was growing violent. Opal’s fingers clenched tighter on the staff, and she closed her mind to collect her thoughts.

She could see the lights of the village in the distance.

A gust of wind caught her by surprise— though she should’ve felt it coming. It knocked the glider away from her hands, her fingers grazing the fabric in surprise.

“No!!”

Suddenly, she was tumbling.

Though she hadn’t flown very high up, a part of her heart raced in fear. She fell down towards the edge of the forest, spinning around and blindly waving around gusts of air to get some sort of balance— anything!

She felt branches tear through her clothes and *WHACK!!*
A limb of a tree smacked into her ribs, cracking two or three bones. She faintly slid down the branches, slowly falling down again.

Opal managed to push a blast of air out of her hands as she fell to the forest floor, and though the landing wasn’t smooth, she didn’t crash full speed. Instead, she slowed her landing and smacked against the ground— her ribs taking another blow.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!!!!” she yelled as pain coursed through her torso. Her fingers clenched onto the mossy ground as she sucked in a breath and stumbled up, clutching the trunk of the nearest tree.

*Healer... need... a... healer...*

She stumbled forwards, inching her way towards the village lights— unsure of where she was going but knowing, deep down, that there was no turning back.

“AHHH!!” Jinora screamed, dropping a few feet in the air as she flew.

She managed to dive down to a tree, clutching the bark in support. Though she’d been cut by an air slice, this felt like a different blow. Another surge of pain flowed through her and her nails dug into the papery skin of the cedar tree.

“Opal!!” she thought, “Are you okay!!”

There was no response. Again and again she called out to her soulmate, but there was nothing but silence... until...

“Just leave me alone... please...”

Jinora had felt loss— the destruction of the Northern Air Temple and the pain of seeing Korra confined to a wheel chair. Being stuck in the Fog of Lost Souls for two weeks, or even watching her Aunt Lin being captured by Equalists.

But this.

This felt awful.

Opal didn’t want her.

Jinora’s hand absentmindedly rose to her cheeks, where she felt tears dripping down her face. She took a deep breath and ran her fingers through her short brown hair.

Fine.

If that’s the way it’s going to be...
She ran down the limbs of the tree and took off through the forest, riskily weaving through the trees as she headed back to Republic City.

Hikaru dropped Gyeong off at her proper house and walked back through the streets. Though it was dark out, she didn’t feel so nervous as long as she stayed under the street lights.

That is, until she came across an elderly man, slumped up against a wall.

“Oh my god!” she yelled, racing up to him.

The old man had a bit of blood dribbling down his forehead, and the beginnings of a nasty bruise just above his right eye. He feebly muttered something incoherent.

“Sorry?” she asked, pulling out her phone to call 911, “What are you trying to say? I can’t understand.”

“Equalists… attacked…”

Hikaru took in a sharp gasp, holding the old man’s hand and telling the operator his location. She began to notice how ragged his breathing was.

There was an awful lot of blood pooling on the ground.

She slowly lifted his coat off of his shoulder, and realized that there was a hole in the man, where his collarbone was supposed to be. It was so tiny, she could’ve fit her thumb in it—and yet it bled profusely.

As she heard sirens, she realized that the man was no longer breathing. He was trembling, going into shock, but she didn’t know what to do.

So… she held his hand while he died. While they lifted him onto the stretcher. She held his hand until the paramedics asked her to exit the ambulance and closed the doors. Sealing him away. Hikaru let out a shaky sigh, looking at the still-fresh blood on her hands.

The Equalists had a new toy.

Chapter End Notes

sorry I didn't post last night, I wasn't feeling well... so you're going to get three chapters today (including this one)
Leave comments!!!
The Arrowhead

Chapter Summary

“Numbing the pain for a while will make it worse when you finally feel it.”

— J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The engineer and the Metalbender walked out of the shop with new clothes on. Asami was wearing a brown leather jacket and gray skinny jeans. Kuvira had on black slacks and a blue flannel—a stormy gray beanie covered most of her hair.

“Well… at least we’re not too obvious now. And I got us a suitcase to carry other clothes in. Let’s get back to the Jeep.”

“Thanks for the clothes,” Asami mumbled, fiddling with a tag that the cashier had missed.

“No problem, besides… there’s nothing more distracting than a good shopping spree.”

The ex-heiress smirked and followed the Metalbender to the car, loading up their bags and driving away from the town.

“Where are we headed?” Asami asked, adjusting the bags while the car bumped around on the dusty highway road.

“The safest place I can think of.”

“Oh?”

“You’ll see,” Kuvira said, keeping her eyes on the road.

They made their way through the town. Asami closed her eyes and relished in the feeling of the cold air whipping around her jet black hair, how strange it felt not to have to worry about strands smacking her in the face. She opened one eye and looked at Kuvira, who kept driving in bliss. Asami blinked, once… twice… a third time…

There was… something in the Metalbender’s neck…

“Kuvira…”

“What?”

“What’s up with your throat?”

The Metalbender raised her hand to feel a little black bump on the side of her neck next to a cut, tracing it over and then shaking her head— returning to driving.

“It’s nothing.”
Asami narrowed her eyes, “No, it’s not.”

“Dude, leave it.”

“Stop the fucking car and tell me what the fuck that is,” the ex-heiress said in a shaky voice.

Kuvira’s fingers gripped the steering wheel— her knuckles turning white from the pressure. The Metalbender let out a deep sigh and pulled over, just outside of town. She reached around and fetched… some sort of stick… from her backpack. Asami’s eyes widened when she recognized it as the shaft of one of the Equalist’s Unobtainium arrows.

“What the fuck…”

The Captain shrugged, “I was hit when we were fleeing the city, in the courtyard. I snapped it off and continued fighting.”

“You… you still have your bending…”

Kuvira felt the bump in her neck and looked at Asami with a confused gaze, “It’s probably just an… unrefined piece… a faulty arrowhead.”

The engineer’s fingers faintly reached out and she scooted closer, tracing the tip, “No… it’s not… somehow, you can resist the Unobtainium… it should’ve dissolved and spread through your bloodstream by now.”

The Metalbender’s hands tightened on the wheel even more than Asami thought possible. The engineer reached her fingers out tentatively and pulled Kuvira into a hug.

“We’re going to figure this out… but… if you can resist it… if you can still bend… do you think?”

“Do I think what?”

“That maybe your body is unconsciously bending the Unobtainium? Keeping it in place?”

Kuvira scoffed, “That’s impossible. It’s just a faulty arrow.”

The former Captain turned the engine of the Jeep back on, winding up the mountain road. They didn’t acknowledge the elephant in the room (or rather, Kuvira’s collarbone) for the rest of the trip.

A few hours later, Asami’s eyes widened— realizing the impending sight as the car made a turn through the pass. A beautiful white and golden collection of temples met their eyes as they watched Sky Bison fly overhead. Airbenders could be seen flying to and fro with glider staves, and a flying lemur soared next to the Jeep.

“But that’s…”

“The Eastern Air Temple,” Kuvira confirmed, “Hopefully they’ll let us in.”
“We have plenty of space available— please, stay as long as you like,” the acolyte said with a smile.

“Thank you so much,” Kuvira said with a big smile, bowing to the group of acolytes that had shown them in.

“Oh course, even if you weren’t Opal’s sister— the Beifong family and Zaofu guard have thrown their lives on the line again and again for the sake of Airbenders all over the world. We are in your debt for the kindness you’ve shown us.”

The acolytes bowed and left the room to cook the girls a meal.

“How long are we staying here?”

“I don’t know. It’s safe… safer than any city… the Equalists have no presence out here.”

Asami sat down on the bed, “Why are you doing this?”

“Because… Korra… and my Mother… they see something in you… I see it too…”

Kuvira sat down next to Asami and pulled her into a hug.

“Korra asked me to change… what am I supposed to do?”

The Metalbender began laughing, “Honestly, that girl is as blind as a Badgermole— you changed a long time ago.”

“Really?”

“I knew it the moment you began going out with Korra. Maybe you know this… but some Earthbenders can detect heartbeats— when someone’s lying their heart begins speeding up. Mom trained me when she was younger… when you started dating Korra… your heart was constantly fluttering— I always thought you were nervous… and then when she walked into the room, you would calm down. I knew that you were in love with her… you wanted to redeem yourself long before we got to Zaofu, didn’t you? You were already changing.”

“I tried to slip the Coalition tidbits of information about the Equalists… I wanted to try to make a difference… Hikaru was right though… I was just being a coward— too scared to confront the Equalists on my own.”

Kuvira shook her head, “When they… when they blew up my first apartment… I truly realized how dangerous they were. They were willing to rip through an entire complex just to send a message. You would’ve been foolish to go up against them on your own.”

Asami didn’t say anything, only fiddling with the scratchy Air Nomad sheets.

The Metalbender continued, “Asami… I know what Korra said… she was very angry… but she still loves you— she knocked Huan and I over in the hallway, flying to save you when she heard your voice!!”

The engineer smiled and wiped a tear away.

“I know she loves me… I just…”

Kuvira put a hand on her shoulder and brought the two of them together in a hug, “We all need a
“Yeah,” Asami said, closing her eyes and burying her face in the Metalbender’s shoulder. “Okay.”

The acolyte slid open the door with a tray full of food;

“Oh! Excuse me, I hope I wasn’t interrupting anything! Of course, the Air Nomads don’t frown on that sort of love! We try to be as progressive as possible.”

Kuvira gave the elderly woman a sarcastic, confused look, “Why does everybody think we’re dating?”

The acolyte merrily laughed and put the bowls of soup on the wooden table, “Well, for one, there’s that hickey on your neck.”

Asami let out a sigh, “It’s not a hickey, it’s a… an arrowhead.”

“Oh! Oh, well that… that’s interesting…”

Kuvira felt the black shape inside her neck, pressing down on it slightly, “Do you have any healers?”

The acolyte nodded, “Avatar Aang’s daughter is staying here on vacation.”

“Aunt Kya’s here!?”

“You know her?” Asami asked.

“She and my Mom grew up together— Kya always used to visit Zaofu before her mother, Katara, moved back down to the Southern Water Tribe. She’s a lot of fun… can we go see her?” Kuvira asked with wide eyes.

The acolyte let out a hearty laugh, “Finish your soup first, you two look like you’ve had a long day.”

“Kid, you sure do know how to get into shit, don’t you?” Kya murmured with a smile, hovering some water over Kuvira’s neck.

The Metalbender leaned back in the chair, “I can’t help it— wherever Korra and this one go… trouble follows.” She pointed a finger at Asami with a smirk.

There was a cooling sensation in Kuvira’s neck, but nothing felt different.

“I don’t think this is something I can fix,” Kya said with a frown. She sat up straight on the bench and patted Kuvira’s shoulder, “We can get you a surgeon to cut it… or perhaps you can try bending it out.”

“It’s Unobtainium,” Asami countered.

“Una-what-now?”
“Unobtainium, it’s the metal that prevents people from bending. Remember the Probenders, Hikaru and Mula, when we were on Air Temple Island and we tried bending it out?” Kuvira asked.

“The arrowheads dissolved in them, didn’t they?” Kya recalled. “So why isn’t—”

“We don’t know.”

Kya bit her lip, “I think your body is reacting differently than a normal Bender’s. Holding the metal together.”

“That’s why I said!” Asami blurted.

Kuvira rubbed her face in annoyance, “So you’re saying I need to try to bend it out?”

“I don’t want anybody touching your throat with a knife—and you probably don’t want to keep that arrowhead there,” Kya said, offering the Metalbender a sympathetic smile.

The former Captain levitated a soup spoon around, “I can bend perfectly normal still—it’s not really an issue.”

“But… what if you could remove the Unobtainium… from you…and from other people?” Asami asked thoughtfully.

Kuvira’s eyes grew wide—instantly thinking of her mother’s face when she lost her bending. How…helpless Suyin looked. Of course! Of course she would try to find a way to fix it! If there was one!

“Alright, let’s do it,” the Metalbender said instantly, giving the engineer a stern look and a small smile.

She stood, walking to the middle of the room and moving into a Metalbending stance. Kuvira closed her eyes.

Try to find the Earth within the meteorite. It’s in there—and when you find it, you can manipulate it around. It becomes an extension of what you already know, her mother’s voice called, in the back of her head.

Kuvira smiled, taking a deep breath and focusing on the Earth inside her neck. She raised her arms, slowly extending her fingers and—

A flash of an angry, armored woman seared into her mind.

“I was cast aside by my own parents like I meant nothing to them! How could I just stand by and watch the same thing happen to my nation when it needed someone to guide it?!”

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“I WAS CAST ASIDE BY MY OWN PARENTS LIKE I MEANT NOTHING TO THEM! HOW COULD I JUST STAND BY AND WATCH THE SAME THING HAPPEN TO MY NATION WHEN IT NEEDED SOMEONE TO GUIDE IT?!”
“What the fuck!?” she cried out, stumbling to the floor.

A sharp pain burned in her neck, where the Unobtainium was buried. Kya was instantly at her side, shaking her shoulders— asking if she was alright. Kuvira looked up in confusion, not at Kya, but at the other woman in the room.

Asami Sato was also on the floor, clutching at the wood and staring at it, her face contorted in pain;

“You don’t have to apologize for anything! I’m just so happy you’re here now… I don’t think I could’ve handled loosing you and my father in the same day!”

“You don’t have to apologize for anything! I’m just so happy you’re here now… I don’t think I could’ve handled loosing you and my father in the same day!”

“YOU DON’T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE FOR ANYTHING!! I’M JUST SO HAPPY YOU’RE HERE NOW… I DON’T THINK I COUL’VE HANDLED LOOSING YOU AND MY FATHER IN THE SAME DAY!!”

Asami’s head hurt worse than her 18\textsuperscript{th} birthday hangover. She gripped the leg of Kuvira’s chair and closed her eyes.

What the fuck is that supposed to mean? she thought to herself.

“Girls… what’s going on?” Kya asked, helping them both up onto the bench, “Your auras… they feel… injured…”

Kuvira’s breath was frantic, as though she were going through an anxiety attack, “I don’t know. One second I was trying to bend a small piece of metal… and then the next… I heard this voice— getting louder and louder.”

Asami leaned against her best friend while Kya fetched some water, gripping at the Metalbender’s flannel to get a sense of reality.

What the fuck?!

Kya returned, giving them water and shaking her head, “I think something’s wrong…”

The girl’s looked up at her with “really?” expressions on their faces.

The Waterbender pressed on, “I think you both have been damaged somehow… spiritually.”

“What are we supposed to do about it, then?”

Kya raised a hand and tugged at her gray ponytail in thought, “You could try meditating. This is the most spiritual of all the Air Temples… perhaps your problem is connected to this place?”

Asami sighed, “I thought we were going to have a relaxing night.”

The older woman ruffled the engineer’s short, black hair, “Well… we don’t have to try anything yet. Why don’t you get some sleep, and we’ll practice in the morning?”
#kyaisthemostbadasscharacterintheshow

I'm so excited!! My favorite chapter (not the next one but soon) is coming up!! Prepare for angst and feels!!

Comments!! Comments!!
“In heaven, all the interesting people are missing.”

— Friedrich Nietzsche

“‘This is the meditation circle where Korra first entered the Spirit World with Jinora… it’s exceedingly spiritual,’” Kya said, guiding the girls up the steps.

“This is beautiful artwork,” Kuvira said in awe.

Asami put a hand on the ancient stones, feeling… a sort of humming… as though the rocks surrounding them were alive in their own way. Crazy spirit shit, no doubt.

“Let’s sit down, cross your legs in the Lotus position— yes, like that. Alright… just try to relax… clear your mind.”

Asami straightened her back a little bit and closed her eyes. The wind picked up, whipping around her head— she tried not to pay it any attention. But eventually a leaf blew down and slapped into her face, and she popped an eye open.

Kya was sitting there, sounding a little silly as she hummed while meditating (Asami was pretty sure she got high before hiking down her). Kuvira’s face was a little red as she tried to concentrate on meditation. The engineer sighed and returned to clearing her mind.

Another leaf hit her face and she looked up at the trees above.

Someone was up there, with a big smirk on her face as she waved to Asami… and then faded away…

“Did you see that person? Up there?”

Kuvira followed her gaze and looked through the branches with her eyebrow raised, “There’s nobody there…”

“Yes there… there was… she was an Airbender— with wild, short brown hair. She was waving at me,” Asami argued.

Kya let out a huff, “You girls are supposed to be relaxed.”

Asami scooted next to Kuvira, “What was that story about Opal and Jinora? That one chick… what was her name? Samsung?”

“I hate you,” the Metalbender said, closing her eyes.

“Samantha?”
Kuvira sighed and opened an eye, “Avatar Samsara, now shut up and focus on meditating.”

Asami scooted away, relaxing back into a Lotus Position.

“How are you supposed to fucking meditate? They don’t teach this in public school,” she thought, picking at her shoe.

“Honestly, it took me a few months to get it down.”

Asami nearly jumped off the ground in surprise. She’d forgotten about the whole “soulmate telepath thingamabob” that she shared with Korra. She looked up at the sky wistfully.

“I… I miss you.”

There was silence for a few moments—that utter stillness that will occasionally take over a forest, before the birds have woken up and the deer-cougar stalk through the bushes. And yet, with all that stillness, there was nothing but a buzzing in Asami’s head… she was in anticipation for a response—

“I miss you, too.”

She could’ve died, then and there. Her breathing slowed and she felt a tear slip from her cheek as she smiled at the sound of her lover’s voice.

“When this is… when all of this is done… the Equalists… everything… can we start over? Please?”

Another few moments of silence, and Asami wondered if Korra was as churned in thought as she was.

“I’d like that. On one condition, though.”

“What?”

“You’re buying the drinks.”

“Deal.”

It felt as though something was locked into place, like another puzzle piece finding its proper home. She leaned back and emptied her thoughts, allowing her mind to become a blank state. She thought of the girl… the girl she’d seen in the trees…

Avatar Samsara…

Asami felt someone pulling her… pulling onto her very soul…

She kept her mind clear, thinking only of the girl…

And then she realized that, no longer was there stone beneath her feet— but soft grass. She opened her eyes and gasped.
More colors than she’d ever seen, in every sort of combination possible, surrounding her and swirling as spirits darted to and fro, and the sky changed from green and yellow to purple and blue. Strange shaped creatures, that she could’ve have possible imagined with her own eyes, bounded through fields of pink and gold and red.

A hand appeared in front of her. She grabbed it without thinking and allowed herself to be pulled up.

“Now that you’re here… I’m going to reenter the Mortal World and watch over your two bodies. Whatever it is you need to do… you’ll find out… good luck, you two,” Kya said with a smile.

The Waterbender gave them a bow and faded into the Mortal World. Asami looked into Kuvira’s warm green eyes as she tugged the engineer down the hill.

“Wait! We don’t even know where we’re going!”

“Who cares! Asami, this place is beautiful!!”

“We can’t be distracted— you’re the worst companion into the Spirit World,” the engineer huffed playfully.

Kuvira rolled her eyes and pulled her along, marveling at the spirits and the world they lived in. They staggered through a tall, grassy field until…

“Why is there a building there?” the engineer asked.

“Who knows… wanna go check it out?”

“Sure. I don’t know what else we’re supposed to be doing.”

They walked up to the… was it some sort of shop? Yes, yes, it seemed to be. There was a table in the front— spirits were sitting, eating and drinking (although Asami wondered if it was really edible — a blob-like spirit merely grabbed the food and phased it into its stomach without a moment’s hesitation).

An elderly man was casually pouring tea for the spirits, but he looked as human as could be. He looked up and smiled broadly.

“You must be Kuvira! I’ve heard much about you!”

“R-really? From whom?”

“Yes I was! And your mother and aunt, they were quite the jokesters… well… maybe not Lin… she was always awfully stern for her age— but Suyin was a lot of fun to play with as a child! A little rascal, just like her daughters, no?”

Kuvira’s eyes widened, “Oh! You’re Iroh! You were good friends with my grandma!”

“Yes I was! And your mother and aunt, they were quite the jokesters… well… maybe not Lin… she was always awfully stern for her age— but Suyin was a lot of fun to play with as a child! A little rascal, just like her daughters, no?”

The Metalbender blushed and scuffed the ground with her shoe (Asami could’ve sworn she heard a little voice go “you stop that, Hoo-man!”, but ignored it).

“So, what brings you to my tea shop?”
“W-we’re not sure,” Asami admitted. “I think we’re looking for someone, but we don’t know where to start.”

“Well, I’ve always found it wonderfully calming to clear one’s head with a cup of tea.”

They respectfully sat at the table, and Asami giggled when a leafy-looking spirit climbed into her lap.

“Hello there!” she said with a smile.

“Hi! My name is Aina! You’re Korra’s girl, aren’t you?”

“What? Who told you that?”

“Korra did! She came by last week and talked to me about you— she wuvs you a lot!”

Asami’s breath caught in her throat. She stroked the top of the leafy-spirit’s head in thought (some of the other spirits looked a little jealous) and let out a shaky, happy sigh.

“If you see her around… tell her I wuv her too,” Asami said with a smile.

She looked over at Kuvira, who sipped her tea and gave the engineer a wink.

“Now then… who are you looking for?” Iroh asked, pouring her some more tea.

“I think… well… I think we’re looking for Avatar Samsara?”

The old general laughed, “That girl really does get around— seems like every one of Korra’s friends wants to talk to her for some reason or another.”

“Where can we find her?”

“Anywhere, if you think about it.”

“What?”

“He’s a spirit,” Kuvira reasoned, “I think he has a contract to be ambiguous. It’s like a video game quest.”

“You really are the worst companion to have in the Spirit World,” a disinterested voice called down. Asami looked up—a girl was sunbathing on the rooftop, casually lounging about as though she’d flown up there. Maybe she had.

“Are you Avatar Samsara?”

“Depends… who’s asking?”

“Asami Sato and Kuvira Beifong.”

The girl sat up for a few seconds, peering at them curiously, and then hopped off the roof of Iroh’s Tea Shop.

“Interesting,” she said with… a familiar smirk.

*I can see where Korra gets it from.*

“You were in the forest, when we were trying to meditate?”
“Maybe, maybe not.”

*I can really see where she gets it from.*

But then, Samsara laughed, her wild hair shaking and revealing an ancient Airbending tattoo on her forehead, “Come on, I’ll cut the abstruse crap and show you where you’re supposed to go.”

Asami wasn’t a really picky person these days, but Kuvira had been humming the “Secret Tunnel” song one too many times, and she was about ready to meditate back when Samsara led them to the edge of some sort of gorge filled with a mist.

“What is that?” Kuvira asked, peering over the edge and into the haze.

Samsara’s cheerful demeanor had vanished and she took a deep breath (can dead spirits even breathe? Oh, whatever). She stepped over to Kuvira and pulled something out of the Metalbender’s coat pocket—

A pair of platinum handcuffs.

“The Fog of Lost Souls,” Samsara answered, handing the shackles to Asami, “You’re going to want to use these.”

Chapter End Notes

It's a short chapter because tomorrow's is super-duper long :)

(I'm so excited)

Leave comments!!
Chapter Summary

“There is a saying in Tibetan, 'Tragedy should be utilized as a source of strength.' No matter what sort of difficulties, how painful experience is, if we lose our hope, that's our real disaster.”

— Dalai Lama XIV

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Click!

The platinum handcuffs were in place—there was no way that they could be separated now.

“Are… are you ready?” Kuvira asked.

“No— but let’s just get this over with,” Asami frowned.

They stumbled, bound together, as they made their way down into the bog. Korra had once mentioned to Kuvira that the fog was actually a spirit itself… and the Metalbender couldn’t help but feel afraid of what it might do. Still… Avatar Samsara had advised them to go down here.

The first few minutes of wandering yielded little fruits— they were just stumbling around with no goal in particular (but such is life). Kuvira could feel the tension in the handcuffs of Asami shaking slightly.

“It’s okay to be afraid.”

“I’m stronger than that,” the ex-Equalist countered.

“I think you can be scared and still be strong, Asami.”

They stumbled forwards for a while, until they saw a figure up ahead— sitting on a boulder and pondering to himself.

“Aiwei?”

He didn’t answer—lost in thought.

“… but why did I do it? Why did I betray Suyin?”

“Aiwei, are you in there?” Kuvira asked, shaking him a little on the shoulder.

“Why did I do it? Why did I betray Suyin?” he repeated to himself, his glance cast down at the dirt below.

“He’s not going to stop muttering that, let’s keep going,” Asami said, tugging the metal cuffs to get Kuvira’s attention.
They walked a little further, passing individuals lost in thought—or otherwise repeating nonsense to themselves. It wasn’t until fifteen minutes later that Kuvira realized that the two girls had been holding hands. Not… not in the **romantic** way, of course. She would never do that to Korra. But… sometimes you need assurance that you’re not the only living person in a field of dead souls…

A figure clad in an unfamiliar green uniform—complete with metal pauldrons—was standing in the direction they were facing. She didn’t look as though she was lost… no… she seemed to be waiting for the girls.

“H-hello?” Asami called out.

The figure nodded at the Nonbender and turned to Kuvira, “I’ve been waiting for you for quite some time.”

The Metalbender ran her eyes up and down the figure. From the metal that covered the woman to the green uniform… to the white gloves… to the military-style bun… to the green eyes… to the mole on her right cheek…

“Who are you?” Kuvira asked with a quivering voice.

The woman laughed, “You can call me… The Great Uniter.”

“What?”

“I am… **what could have been.**”

“I don’t understand.”

Suddenly, “The Great Uniter” waved her hand and they were no longer in the fog. Asami was no longer next to her, but Kuvira didn’t notice—for she was standing in a town, surrounded by starving, filthy, malnourished people. A little kid tugged at her uniform, but Kuvira couldn’t stop to look down.

The townspeople were facing a large green train that had just rolled in, and “The Great Uniter” was standing at the podium, looming over an old man who looked like he’d rather eat Sky Bison manure than talk to her. But then his shoulders slumped and he signed a piece of paper. The crowd cheered as Mechatanks began unloading crates of food and medicine.

“I don’t understand…”

She saw Baatar Jr. clad in a uniform. He was more muscular, and his hair was far cleaner, shaven on the sides. He looked… rigid. Angry.

Bolin was helping to unload boxes and distribute food. He looked… older in the uniform… but still happy and innocent. Until he looked up and his usually cheery expression faltered.

Kuvira followed his gaze to the person standing next to her… none other than her sister, Opal. The Airbender turned and wiped a tear away.

“What? What’s so horrible about this? I’m helping people in this lifetime?” Kuvira asked aloud.

The scene shifted.
“The Great Uniter” was on the top of the train, fighting off bandits by herself. Kuvira watched as they fell… one by one to the metal strips that the Zaofu Guard had been trained to value.

And then her breath hitched in her throat when “The Great Uniter” threatened to leave the captured, defeated bandits on the train tracks unless they joined her.

*I would never do that. Even if they weren’t innocent… Zaofu is about second chances… but not like this…* she thought.

The scene shifted again— multiple little bits flashing before her;

The armored woman crushing a golden medal and declaring herself ruler of “The Earth Empire”. The armored woman berating Suyin for not taking up arms with her. Baatar Jr. denouncing himself from the metal clan. The armored woman threatening to kill Varrick if he didn’t weaponize Spirit Vines….

*I could have been this lady?*

Then, “The Great Uniter” was standing in front of… the metal city, Zaofu itself… waiting at its gates with an army. And she was standing in an Earthbending stance… against… against…

“Korra?” she asked aloud.

The Avatar, wearing some sort of green outfit, couldn’t hear her. Kuvira watched as “The Great Uniter” jeered at her with a tone of bravado that Kuvira couldn’t believe she was hearing— telling Korra that she could fight with all her elements and the Avatar State and still be beaten…

Kuvira watched them fight… looking over and nearly crying at the sight of Suyin and the twins bound in platinum shells… she felt her heart pounding in all directions and tears rushing down her face.

Korra slammed “The Great Uniter” to the ground and was ready to finish her off when she saw… some sort of vision. Her opponent used this against her and turned the battle, until she managed to trap Korra in an earthen case. Sharpened metal strips hovered nearby… prepared to kill…

*“I knew it. You’re weak.”*

*Oh gods… no… Korra… my best friend…*

Opal and Jinora mediated, rescuing Korra— but leaving Suyin and the twin’s fate to the armored woman. The Great Uniter declared victory over Zaofu and citizens bowed… in front of… in front of… Suyin and Wing and Wei in platinum prisons…

It was too much— the Metalbender fell to the ground and threw up, retching and screaming— her eyes bloodshot as that morning’s breakfast emptied out of her stomach and onto the ground at her feet.
My home… my family…

The scene changed yet again.

Lin, Opal, Bolin and even Toph Beifong herself leading Kuvira’s family through a warehouse, having rescued all of the people Kuvira considered closest to her. The managed to sneak outside, but The Great Uniter caught them.

This time… Kuvira fell to her knees and sobbed as she watched Suyin go head to toe with the shadow of the Metalbender. Metal strips were flying back and forth, and The Great Uniter was wielding a blade— meaning to kill…

The blade nearly sliced through Suyin’s throat, a cable wrapped around Su’s wrist sent her slamming into the platform by the shadow’s hands, cleverly using a railing to sling around and kick her adoptive mother in the sides…

“NO!! OH GODS NO!! MY OWN MOTHER!! HOW COULD I?!” she screamed aloud. “PLEASE STOP THIS!! PLEASE, NO MORE!!”

Kuvira made a choking sound and tried to wipe her eyes clear of the tears, the bile from moments ago threatening to rise again… she’d rather die than see whatever else the Fog of Lost Souls was trying to show her.

Another blur of the world around Kuvira, and they were standing in the cockpit of some sort of… tower? A moving tower? No… it was a robot of some sorts…

“Can you trace the location of the call?” the armored woman asked a pilot.

“Future Industries Tower.”

“Kuvira! Stop this advance! Avatar Korra promises to keep us apart if for the rest of our lives if you don’t surrender! I refuse to let that happen! The City’s not worth sacrificing our love! I can’t live without you!” Baatar’s voice echoed, crackling as the radio waves transferred over.

No. Oh… no…

The Great Uniter pondered the decision for a moment, “You’re right. This city isn’t worth sacrificing our love. Goodbye, Baatar.”

And then she flicked her wrist and aimed the weapon.

NONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONO OH FUCK OH SHIT PLEASE NO!!!

A purple beam hit the building and the world around her shifted one last time. The tears were dripping down her cheeks into her mouth and flowing off her chin as she gaped at the darkness in agony. Her nails were bloody from scratching something awful down her arm as she clutched herself in disgust and fear and anguish.
How... how could I have done these things? Is some part of me this monster... waiting to be unleashed? Baatar... my love... my soulmate... Mom... my brothers... Opal... Korra.... How?

Kuvira felt herself slowly gliding down until her feet touched the grass of the Spirit World. She was by one of the portals... except this wasn’t one of the portals to the North or South Pole. The Metalbender looked down... Korra was holding an unconscious Great Uniter. The phantom woke up and yelled, scrambling to get away. It was clear, by the way she was holding her ribs, that she was in pain and had been defeated.

“You brought this upon yourself— messing with the Spirit Vines, acting like a dictator over your people— you had to know what you were doing wasn’t right!” Korra accused.

“I was trying to help my people!”

No you weren’t, Kuvira thought, devastated. You were trying to... justify ... the wicked within...

The two women kept talking... about Korra’s poisoning... and about the armored woman’s childhood... The Great Uniter’s shoulders finally slumping in defeat as she wiped the tears away and allowed Korra to take her back. Kuvira was ashamed that her parents had left her... but to conquer a whole nation over it?!

The former Captain of the Guard had never felt more disgust and self-loathing in her whole life.

The Metalbender watched as Korra put one of The Great Uniter’s arms over her shoulders and led her through the portal... no doubt to properly surrender and give up... and live out the rest of her life in prison...

“Don’t you see?” the phantom’s voice rang out in her head. “That all could have been you.”

“No. No! NO!” she screamed back.

“Give in to the temptation—”

“FUCK YOU! I refuse to let that happen in this universe!! I love Baatar! I love Suyin! I love Opal, and Huan, Wing and Wei! I love Korra! I love Zaofu! I LOVE MYSELF!!” she shouted at the sky.

Suddenly, she was no longer in the field of flowers. She was sitting on the ground, with a patiently waiting Asami still chained up next to her, a sympathetic and worried expression on the engineer’s face.

But... at least the phantom was gone.

What could have been... gods...

“You did it,” the ex-Equalist whispered softly, gripping her hand to assure Kuvira that what she saw wasn’t real.

“I did... I did it,” Kuvira repeated, wiping the steady stream of tears off her face. She desperately wanted to be rid of the Spirit World— to see her family again and tell them how much she loved them.
Asami shivered, “I don’t want to know what this damn place has in store for me.”

They continued wandering around, stumbling together and holding hands (though more for Kuvira’s sake than Asami’s). The engineer looked over at the Metalbender, who was merely whimpering and wiping away tears.

*spirits… what did this place do to her?*

Another woman was looming near… though not the same… uh… phantom? She was clad in green armor and robes, yes, but not metal pauldrons. Some sort of black armor. She had a sword at her hilt and was holding a pair of fans… standing in a fighting stance. The girl had… the traditional white Kyoshi Warrior make-up…

“H-Hikaru?”

“Not quite,” the shadow answered.

*She sounds familiar…*

“You look just like her.”

“And… who does she look just like?”

Asami began to realize… this phantom had green eyes and long black wavy hair.

“You’re… me?”

“Yes… I’m you— you who walks a different path.”

Kyoshi-Asami held out a hand.

Asami looked at Kuvira, who was sitting on the rock next to the engineer. The Metalbender was staring at the ground and wiping lone tears away. Asami looked back up at the shadow.

“Are you going to do to me what this place did to her?”

“Yes… and no…”

“Explain.”

“I… I need you to trust me…”

“Why? I don’t trust anybody.”

“Which is how you got here in the first place.”

The ex-Equalist pinched the bridge of her nose in annoyance, whispered to Kuvira that she’d be back for her, and then took the hand of the Kyoshi-Asami.
There was a blinding light, and suddenly they were in some sort of airship. The world around them was burning, but a girl with short brown hair had put on a brave face and was piloting the craft singlehandedly.

Fire… there was fire everywhere. But the brown haired girl kept steering the ship and muttering to herself to *calm down*.

And then they were standing in a room full of teenagers, who were laughing at a boy’s failed attempt to draw his friends. The brown haired girl was playing Pai Sho with a girl with long, shiny black hair (and a frown on her face).

“Well, I think you all look perfect!” a younger girl said, throwing her hands up and walking away. The rest of them laughed.

Now… Asami was standing in a small house, watching as a Fire Nation man held the brown haired woman’s hand… as she gave birth to her second daughter (the first was peering around the corner of the paper thin wall).

“Suki, my love… What should we name her?” the man asked, holding a newborn baby and looking at his wife with admiration.

“Yasuko,” the brown-haired woman said, reaching out to the baby with a smile. “Yat-Sen and Suki combined together sounds rather pretty, don’t you think? … She’s going to look just like her father.”

“Nonsense, look at that smile.”

The scene shifted and Asami watched the two girls play together on the island.

“Shun! That wasn’t a fair throw!”

“Fine, Yasuko!” the older sister laughed, “You can have a free toss!”

The girls were playing a game in the backyard of their home, and on the porch Suki and Yat-Sen were sitting together and smiling.

Asami watched as the world around her blurred yet again;

“So,” the twenty-three-year-old Yasuko said, flopping on the hotel bed, “What’s on the agenda for
today?”

Shun, five years older than her, jumped on top of her with a laugh and gave her a nuggie, while her mom only smiled and continued wiping her make-up off by the sink.

“We’re going to the Temple of Jiao-Long, along the Eastern River,” Suki casually commented, glancing down at the map. She was getting a little old for this.

“What’s there?”

“Should be some ancient Air Nomad artifacts,” Suki replied. “Avatar Aang and his son will be happy to see these!”

Yasuko, who was trying to escape her older sister’s grip, let out a grunt as she rolled off the side of the bed. Screaming something along the lines of “uncle!”, Shun finally relented with a laugh.

They took an ostrich-horse carriage to the site of the temple, where a guide was anxiously waiting for him, bobbing up and down on the soles of his feet.

“Hello there!” he said, excitedly shaking Suki’s hand. “My name’s Qiang! I’m your guide through the temple!”

“Ah yes… are you Fire Nation?”

“Descended from the Colonists, yes.”

Shun nudged her in the ribs, “He’s kinda cute.”

Yasuko playfully rolled her eyes. “He’s all yours,” she whispered back. “I’m a married woman.”

“No need to remind me, I can’t stand Hiroshi.”

Qiang and Suki didn’t seem to hear them, because they’d moved to a table outside of the excavation site that the Republic City Council had commissioned. Apparently, Suki had a friend on the Council that she was doing a favor for.

They wrapped up what plans they were studying and motioned for the girls to follow. Ducking under an archway (and Suki using her old sword to slash through some vines), the pair of sisters let out a gasp as they saw what was inside the temple.

Part of the mausoleum was built into some sort of glade, where a stream ran through. There were old, large fruit trees that hung over ancient stone benches, and an old marble arched-bridge stood guard over the stream. Statues of Airbender poses were seen in a courtyard, and the natural skylights of the cave and the main room provided the perfect amount of sunlight to make the place shine and glimmer just so.

“This is beautiful,” Suki said in awe.

Yasuko agreed—in all their years of searching for art, this was by far the best discovery that they’d come across.

“Come on, let me show you our coolest find,” Qiang said cheerfully, beckoning for them to follow.

There was, like most of the Air Temples, a room filled with the statues of the Avatars—though it had, of course, stopped at Roku. The younger girl looked up and smirked at the serious expression on Kyoshi’s face, and then continued walking through the room.
There was a sculpture, near the end of the line, of a girl—roughly Yasuko’s age, it seemed. She had wild short hair and a scar on her cheek. Yasuko admired the intricate patterns on her forehead—she was, of course, and Airbender. Of all the statues in the room, this appeared to be the most thought out and delicately carved.

“Hey Mom!” Yasuko called out, her voiced echoing and bouncing off the statues.

“Coming!”

Suki walked up to her and put an arm around her shoulders, kissing her long, black hair.

“What do you think?”

“I can see where Aang gets his funny side,” Suki smiled. “This girl looked like she had a lot of fun in her lifetime.”

“Can you imagine, being the second Avatar though? She must’ve been all alone. At least the Wan guy had that big blue spirit to guide him,” Shun said, walking up to the pair and peering curiously at the sculpture.

“We ought to bring this one back—I think Avatar Aang would like it,” Yasuko said, looking up at her mom with bright green eyes.

“Alright, but according to the literature that survived the burnings during the War, there are some rituals we have to do before we remove art as crucial as this.”

The older sister scoffed, “Like, a Dragon Dance?”

“This is serious, Shun.”

“Kidding! I was kidding! You know how much I love culture!” Shun said, playfully punching her mom in the arm.

Yasuko shook her head and looked back at the statue of the Airbending Avatar—if she looked at the sculpture just right...it seemed like the Avatar was smirking at them in amusement. Suki and Shun walked out of the room to go back and join Qiang, but she remained in the room—sitting cross legged and looking up at the statue, as though she was expecting the smirking bust to start talking to her.

“Why are you showing me this?” Asami called out to the Kyoshi-Phantom.

“I’m not finished yet...”

The fog around her swirled, and she was standing in a room. The early life of Republic City—a few years before she’d been born, for there was no Future Industries Tower—hustled and bustled outside the window.
“You’re just going to pack up and leave?” Yasuko asked with a frown.

“How someone has to take care of Mom and Dad! Besides... I don’t want to raise my baby girl in the city, and Qiang is hesitant enough to stick around as it is! We’re going back to Kyoshi Island. Come with us... please...” Shun pleaded.

“I can’t... Hiroshi is starting a company here... I want to raise Asami in the city."

“That man is unhealthy; why can’t you see that?”

“I’ve been nothing but happy with him!” Yasuko countered.

“Whatever... just take my advice and get out of the city before it kills you...” Shun said, turning and slamming the door on her way out.

Fog swirled around Asami as the setting faded into... a funeral?

There was a little girl standing there... raven hair and green eyes... clinging to her father—who was trying not to sob as he stroked his daughter’s hair. There was a burn on the side of his face.

On the other side of the memorial— there was a family of four... an elderly Suki and Yat-Sen were clinging to each other... buried in their grief. Shun was very obviously pregnant and looked devastated as she put a bouquet of flowers next to a photo of Yasuko...

Another little girl with amber eyes her black hair in a bun was sitting in a chair next to Suki and watching the whole ordeal— with a confused expression, as though she couldn’t understand what was going on and why she was here. She looked at her hands and absentmindedly summoned a little flame, playing with it as—

“How dare you!” Hiroshi yelled at her, “How dare you... Firebend?! Monster!!”

The amber-eyed girl looked up, clearly frightened. Her family surrounded her and berated Hiroshi—yelling that she couldn’t help it, she was only a child.

Through the sea of legs of bickering adults... the two girls looked at each other... clearly mortified and scared of... one another...

Asami was reminded of the day she revealed her Equalist identity to the girl...

“How the moment I first met you... I could feel... the way you looked at me... because I was a Firebender.”

Hikaru hadn’t been talking about when they’d met as adults. They’d encountered each other long before that.

Now they were in a training room, where an old woman was sitting— rocking back and forth as she watched a girl of fifteen or sixteen carefully try and swing a sword around. Her amber eyes held a... fire in them, and loose strands of black hair had fallen out of her Fire Nation bun as she broke a sweat training. The old woman was holding a toddler in her lap and was watching with interest.
“Good… watch your feet… you’re doing well, Hikaru…”

The teenager accidentally missed the target and the sword went flying into the wall.

“Oops! S-Sorry, Nana…”

“It’s alright… you think I was a perfect warrior on my first try? Go again…”

Asami felt tears dripping down her face and touched a hand to her cheek. Sure enough… she was crying— no lone tears, but enough to have smudged the make-up on her face (which didn’t make much sense, as they’d meditated in… Spirit World bullshit). She looked down at her feet and took a trembling breath.

“How mean… Hikaru is…”

“Our cousin,” the Kyoshi-Asami nodded.

“But… but… I shot her… and took her bending…”

“And she recovered… she fought back…”

Asami felt queasy. She swallowed the bile at the edge of her throat and tried to keep talking.

“… this whole time… my Grandmother…”

The fog swirled around the Kyoshi-Asami until the shadow of the legendary Kyoshi Warrior Suki, make-up and all, was facing the ex-Equalist. The woman tried to open her mouth to speak, but nothing came out. Instead— she reached forwards and cupped Asami’s cheek with one hand. The engineer instinctively leaned into the gesture. And then she blinked… and her grandmother was gone.

… this was unbearable…

She kneeled on the dirt ground… surrounded by the Fog of Lost Souls once more. Kuvira was still chained to her, but curled up into a ball— muttering to herself about a “Great Uniter”.

_I don’t want us to spend the rest of our lives here… we have to find a way out… for Hikaru… for Suki… for Mom…_

She looked up at the figure, which had turned back into Kyoshi-Asami, “So… how do you fit into all of this?”

The shadow raised an eyebrow, “I said that I was ‘you who walks a different path’. Unlike your friend here… I am not what could have been… I am what could still be… it’s up to you who you could become… for instance…”
The Kyoshi-Asami waved her hand, and now Asami was looking up at a tall metal warrior, her eyes dark and her face permanently contorted into a sneer;

“*You could walk down the path of the Equalists! Destroying the Benders who took your family! Destroy the Avatar herself if you tried hard enough!*”

“No…” Asami whispered, her fingers digging into the dirt. The filth was not calming—like her mother’s garden—but she forced herself to take a breath and looked up again.

The Iron Warrior was gone… and in her place…

A tall, kind-looking business woman with her hair pulled back into a ponytail and wearing fashionable red and gray business clothes stood, looking out over Yue Bay—a cup of tea in her hands… the business woman blushed as she handed the cup to another girl sitting on the rails of the gazebo on Air Temple Island.

“Korra,” Asami whispered.

“I brought you some tea,” the businesswoman said cheerfully. “I thought you might be cold.”

“You’re so sweet,” the Avatar said, taking the cup and looking at bright green eyes—irises that were full of verve.

“I want to be her,” Asami whispered. “She looks so happy…”

“Because she did the right thing… she stood up to her father… she helped properly defeat the Equalists…” the business woman said, turning to Asami and smiling sadly.

Asami tentatively walked forwards… closer and closer to Korra. The blue-eyed woman was still looking out across Yue Bay, and Asami reached forwards, cupping the Avatar’s cheek and running her hands through short, chestnut hair.

“I love you. I promise to change for you.”

Korra looked at her very suddenly, her eyes blinding white in the Avatar State, “Are you afraid of me? Of my Bending? Of my power?”

Asami swallowed a gulp and answered honestly, “Yes. But I respect you and care for you… I love you so much, Korra. I’m going to fix everything I’ve done.”

Fog poured out of Korra’s eyes and mouth and surrounded Asami yet again. She was back, kneeling next to Kuvira. Kyoshi-Asami was nowhere to be found, fortunately neither was that “Great Uniter” phantom… the engineer took a deep breath and stood up.

“I’m sorry, Hikaru. I… I ruined your life… all for some stupid ideology… we’re going to repair this… I have to… you’re all I have left,” the heiress muttered.

“Who are you?” Hikaru’s voice asked through the fog.

“I am Asami Sato— I am the daughter of Hiroshi and Yasuko Sato… granddaughter of the great Kyoshi Warrior, Suki… cousin of Hikaru and Suki II… I am an ex-criminal… I am an engineer… I am the Soulmate of Avatar Korra… I have changed!”
“How?”

“I WILL FIGHT HIM!” Asami screamed out into the fog, “I’LL FIGHT THE LIEUTENANT MYSELF!! I’LL GET HIKARU AND SUYIN THEIR BENDING BACK!! I’LL NEVER HURT ANOTHER INNOCENT CIVILIAN AGAIN!! I AM ASAMI SATO, ALLY OF TEAM AVATAR!!”

“What makes you so special— you who claims to have changed her ways?!” Hikaru’s voice hissed.

“I’M NOT ANYONE’S PUPPET ANYMORE!! I AM MY OWN PERSON!!”

Her shouts, like the force of an explosion, cleared the fog aside… lost figures were standing here and there… mumbling to themselves… she felt a hand against hers as Kuvira pulled herself up with a gasp.

“The fog’s gone!” the Metalbender cried out of relief.

“Let’s get the fuck out of here,” Asami muttered, tugging her best friend away from the despicable chasm, “I have… I have family to talk to.”

End of Part Two

Chapter End Notes

My favorite chapter... I've had this one open in Microsoft Word for like three weeks...

LEAVE COMMENTS!! COMMENTS MANDATORY!!
“Instead of heading for a big mental breakdown, I decided to have a small breakdown every Tuesday evening.”

― Graham Parke, No Hope for Gomez!


“Mind if I come in?”

“Sure.”

Kuvira closed the door behind her and sat on the bed. Asami folded a corner of her book (Best Fire Nation Tourist Destinations 2015), and leaned forwards so that she was sitting up straight.

“Planning a road trip?”

“Hmm? Oh,” Asami mumbled, looking at the book, “No, it was just laying around in Kya’s room and she loaned it to me for something to read.”

“Must be nice— just to travel around your whole life with no responsibilities.”

“Yeah… sounds… easy… sorry, what did you want to talk about?”

Kuvira shrugged, “I was just wondering… if you wanted to talk about what happened?”

“In the Fog—”

“Don’t say it,” Kuvira said, holding up a hand, “I…”

“I know.”

The Metalbender leaned forwards, resting her forehead in Asami’s shoulder. The ex-Equalist wrapped her arms around the girl and brought them back so that they were laying together on the bed. Asami starred up at the ceiling.

“Hikaru’s my cousin.”

“Shit, son.”

“Yeah… Christ, what a mess. I wish there was some way to take the Unobtainium out— give her… her life back. I’ve ruined everything, haven’t I?” the engineer asked.

“Don’t say that.”
“It’s true.”

“Hikaru chose to join those Coalition kids— she knew the dangers of signing up. What’s worse, honestly, losing your bending or getting killed? She should’ve thought that one through— I mean; she’s got a sister to take care of. What if she’d… you know… died? Yeah you took her bending away… but maybe it was a bit of a wakeup call.”

“I dunno…”

“What if… what if you just called her up?”

“Are you fucking nuts?”

“Yeah.”

“I can’t call her— she tried to KILL me. With a sword!! You were there!”

“Oh, that was months ago!”

“Kuvira— she’d probably do it again if she had the chance!!”

“Oh look, how did this cellphone get here?” the former Captain asked with a sly grin.

“You fucking crazy ass Metalbender— ho don’t do it!!”

“I’m going to do it!”

“NO! NONONONONONONONONONONO!!”

Kuvira gave her a smirk and pressed the “CALL” button on Hikaru’s number while an arm tried to smack the phone out of her grip. Asami tried to jump out of the bed and leave the room, but a metal cable wrapped around her wrist and pulled her back. The phone rang three times.

“H-Hello? Kuvira?”

“Hey there, Hikaru! How have you been? I haven’t heard from you in like… three months!”

“Yeah, last time we saw each other, fire was kinda burning everywhere? And a mansion was collapsing on top of us?”

“Pssshh! Details!” the Metalbender laughed, “Hey, I have someone here who wants to talk to you!”

“What, who?” the ex-Firebender asked on the other end of the line. There was a tone of skepticism seeping through.

“Hikaru? It’s A-Asami.”

There was nothing but silence on the other end, and the ex-Equalist could hear muffled voices, as though the former Coalition member was speaking to someone, no… arguing with… was that Bolin? After about fifteen seconds, Asami heard a sigh from the receiver;

“What do you want?” Hikaru’s defeated voice asked.

“I… I found out.”

“About what?”
“Us.”

“Oh.”

_Oh_ was right. A stillness hung between the two women, separated a thousand miles apart and yet connected by a single breath.

“You knew this entire time?” Asami asked in a shaky voice.

“I’m not discussing this with you—”

“Hikaru, please!”

“— over the phone. If you want to talk… come to Republic City and do it face-to-face.”

The ex-Equalist could feel herself trembling as she muttered a hasty “thank you”. There was a _click_ on Hikaru’s side, and Asami handed the phone back to Kuvira. She felt a tear sliding down her cheek and leaned back into the Metalbender’s shoulder with a sigh.

“Hey lady… you have to pay the fee to cross the bridge!!” a young Fire Nation kid said, looking up at her with wide, demanding amber eyes.

Opal was at a river, where two boys and a girl were pointing sticks at her. There was an old cobblestone bridge that she was intending on crossing, but then the punks jumped out of the bushes.

“Sorry,” she mumbled, “I must’ve lost all my money when I… you know… fell from the sky!”

“Woah!”

“That’s not true!”

“What are you, an Airbender?!” the girl asked, poking her stick into Opal’s thigh.

The Beifong woman smiled and raised her hand; a little tornado whipped itself up and danced along her arms and over her shoulder to her other hand.

“WOAH!!”

“NO WAY!!!”

“Will you let me pass?” Opal asked playfully.

The little kids opened their mouths with optimistic expressions— making Opal’s heart lift a little in joy. But then they gasped, diving back into the bushes from whence they came.

“Hey! Looks like we got ourselves one of them ‘Airbendy’ types!!” a deep voice bellowed from somewhere down the path.

Opal turned with a frown and inquisitive eyes— five or six teenagers, each wielding a various element, were approaching with sneers on their faces.
“Let me guess, you bully the kids here,” the Airbender said.

“Hey! Not our fault the punks want to get in our way!” the ringleader, an Earthbender with a rat-like-face called back.

“Why don’t you pick on someone your own size?”

“Just drop it,” one of the bushes whispered.

“You wanna play hero, girl? Then let’s dance!”

Opal smiled— because if there’s one thing you don’t want to do; it’s challenge a Zaofu-born Airbender to a dance-off. She sent a gust towards their legs, knocking most of them off their feet except the Earthbender rat, who jumped into the air with a column of Earth.

_Perfect, just where I want you._

She whipped up a column of air beneath where he was probably planning to land and punch her. He was suddenly trapped in a vortex— spinning around with a yelp as she sent the tornado back towards the group of teenagers. They fell over again like bowling pins.

“Go!” she whispered to the kids.

She heard rustling as the little ones scrambled out of the bushes and over the bridge. She stepped forwards with a scowl.

“So is this how you feel manly and powerful? Teasing little kids? Pathetic.”

“I thought you weren’t supposed to be violent,” the rat-faced Earthbender groaned, rubbing his shoulder.

“I wouldn’t have to be if it weren’t for people like you!” she retorted. “Besides, you were coming at me— I was just defending myself! And those kids!”

The teenagers hastily sprinted away, and she kicked one of them in the behind with a puff of air. Opal let out a sigh and walked over the bridge.

Walking over the cobblestones, she placed a yuan on the rail to pay for the toll.

_________________________________________________________

“I guess… I’m going to Republic City.”

Kuvira pondered this carefully, “The jeep can’t take us that far— eventually I have to give it back to Suyin.”

Asami’s eyes widened, “Shit, dude— you have to fucking get back to your family!!”

“I… I know.”
“Are you okay? You… you haven’t wanted to go back, have you?”

“No— I do want to go… but I’m scared…”

“Of what?” the engineer asked, putting a hand on Kuvira’s shoulder.

“The things I saw… in that fog… Asami… I saw me, or at least some version of me… I was trying to kill my family… I was trying to kill Korra… how can I face them after seeing that?!”

“It was just the Fog, Kuvira. It was playing tricks on you.”

“So why do I feel like some part of it was telling the truth? That I could be that monster— or that there’s evil within me.”

“Listen, Metalgirl,” the engineer said fiercely, pulling Kuvira by the shoulders to face her, “You are strong, capably, and dangerous, even. But all of that you do to protect your family— whoever that woman was, in the Spirit World, she isn’t the real you. The things you do in life; you do because you’re anything but selfish— you believe in people. We wouldn’t be on the other side of the world if you hadn’t decided to help Korra save me and my Dad. Maybe I wouldn’t even be alive. You’re not an evil person, Kuv.”

Asami pulled the Metalbender into a hug, wrapping her arms around the muscular girl and holding onto her as Kuvira broke down and cried.

“It was just… it seemed so real…”

“I know, Kuv. Tell you what… let’s take you home tomorrow…”

“I’d like that,” the older girl sniffled.

Kya knocked on the door. They looked up, jumping apart a little.

“Sorry to ruin the moment, but I wanted to ask you two something?”

“Well,” the Waterbender said with a smile, closing the door behind her, “I was wondering if… you two wanted to open your chakras?”

Opal stumbled into the room she’d rented for the night (at least having access to her mother’s credit card). She fell onto the bed and let out a long sigh. Her muscles ached and burned and she desperately wished she had a glider still.

*Shouldn’t have told Juicy to go back— then again… Jinora probably needed him more than I do.*

Her heart… panged… for her soulmate. She’d told the younger girl that she needed space— and yet there was nothing she wanted more than to curl up with the Airbending Master, peppering her with kisses and declaring her love for the girl.
I blew it.

Were they even together anymore? Opal had *hurt* Jinora—physically and probably emotionally, too. In a moment of rage, she’d broken her oath of nonviolence and struck out.

And those boys? In the forest? Why had she been so quick to fight? She could’ve reasoned with them! Was Opal becoming…a bad person? It certainly seemed so. To think, in one quick move she could’ve flung them against trees and snapped their necks, or sucked the life from their lungs the way Zaheer had when he—

**WHAT THE FUCK, OPAL?!!**

She sat up with panting breath, frantically scrambling to throw her clothes off. Opal stepped into the shower and wrenched the handle. Cold…ice cold water cascaded down her face and neck and back. She could instantly feel goosebumps on her arms and shoulders.

*I’m not a violent person. I’m not a violent person. I’m not a violent person.*

She sucked in a breath and fell down to the ground, pounding her fist against the porcelain in anger. Eventually, after ten minutes of dousing herself in the freezing shower, she could feel her heart slowing and her lungs calming down.

**Who am I?**

The Airbender ripped a towel off the railing and dried herself, looking at a tired, broken woman in the mirror. Patches, dark like bruises, had found their homes underneath her eyes. It’d been a while since she’d brushed her hair (and her teeth). There was a scratch under her cheekbone from when Jinora had kicked her into a tree to flee…flee from her rage. Other scratches, from when she’d fallen out of the sky and through the trees, dotted her shoulders. Thank the Spirits she’d found a healer for her ribs within an hour.

“I’m a mess. That’s who I am.”

Opal walked over to the bed, putting on the same dirty, ripped cloths that she’d been wearing when she bolted from Zaofu during the attack. She didn’t mind, though. The more she looked like a bum, the more eager people were to leave her alone.

Defeated, she sat down and crossed her legs into the Lotus Position—bumping her fists together and taking a long, deep breath. Exhaling, she put every fiber of energy left into clearing her mind. Opal felt the familiar tug of leaving the Mortal Behind—the strange, sudden feeling of grass under her legs where her bed was supposed to be.

She opened her eyes and looked up, where a familiar—yet sympathetic—face was waiting for her, pulling her up by the wrist with a strong tug.

“You look like shit,” Avatar Samsara said with a merry chuckle.

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Chapter End Notes

... Opal... my baby...
Yay! 300 Kudos! Somebody actually likes me!!

Leave comments!!
“When you touch the celestial in your heart, you will realize that the beauty of your soul is so pure, so vast and so devastating that you have no option but to merge with it. You have no option but to feel the rhythm of the universe in the rhythm of your heart.”

— Amit Ray, Meditation: Insights and Inspirations

“This is where Guru Pathik taught my father about Chakras,” Kya explained. “Dad then took Tenzin and I when we were older to teach us— he thought about bringing Bumi along… but… well… you know Bumi.”

“Your father taught you about the Chakras, even though you aren’t an Airbender?” Kuvira asked.

“I kind of bullied him into it. Growing up— Dad took Tenzin all over the world with him, passing on the culture that was all but lost until after Harmonic Convergence. It wasn’t until Mom opened her eyes and realized how… neglecting this was to Bumi and I that she made Dad begin teaching me everything he knew about Spirituality.”

They were standing in some kind of crevice with a river flowing through it. Kya bent down and picked up a stick, swirling it around in the water.

“See how the water flows through the creek? Think of it as how energy flows through your body. See these little pools— where the water swirls around? Imagine that energy swirls around at points in your body, too… called Chakras,” Kya smiled.

The Waterbender handed the stick over to Asami, who looked at it with confusion.

“All of that algae that’s blocking up the stream needs to be cleared, so that the water can move more freely.”

Asami stirred the stick slowly, allowing the debris to flow down the watery path.

“Opening your Chakras is like clearing the stream, once all that emotional rubble is gone, your energy moves freely,” Kya explained.

They sat down on the rocks— all three of them in the Lotus Position.

“The first of the Chakras— the Earth Chakra… see here,” Kya said, lifting the back of Kuvira’s shirt a little and poking, “It is located at the base of your spine; it deals with survival and is blocked by fear. Both of you, close your eyes… what is it you fear?”

Asami let her eyelids flutter shut, taking a deep breath. Well, what was it that she feared? For one… she feared Korra— she wondered if some part of her always would. And she feared her father; even though he was locked away. She feared the Lieutenant, of that she was positive. His face, his glaring
silver eyes, flashed before her— and she had to take a deep breath and clench her teeth.

Kuvira, on the other hand, knew that she feared… that phantom that she saw in the Fog of Lost Souls… she feared the Great Unit— no. No, she was scared of what that shadow was doing. The Metalbender, a prodigy in Earth and Steel… she was afraid of hurting her parents, her brothers, her friends… Baatar… her love.

“Clear these fears away… let them swirl down the stream and go… you are stronger than them…”

The engineer gripped her hands a little and unclenched her jaw. She thought of Hikaru and Suki and her mother… about how she was fighting for them… suddenly, she felt her mind… ease… a blank slate… in time, whether she was ready or no, she would face the evils… but she would never be alone. Even if Korra was powerful— she was also kind and gentle and warm.

A flash of Suyin etched itself into Kuvira’s mind— her hurting her adoptive mother, kicking her and striking at her with a blade. How could she even think of doing such a thing?

“Clear the fears away…” Kya hummed again, facing Kuvira and enunciating clearly.

Kuvira took a deep breath, in and out of her mouth, and straightened up. She would never hurt her family— and she had no reason to! They’d shown her nothing but love! It had only been a phantom, an apparition… what could have been… but not what was… she couldn’t dwell on it for the rest of her life. Besides… Asami would kill her if she built a giant robot without her.

She felt her mind become blank, almost sensing the color gold flow through her.

“Congratulations— you have both opened your Earth Chakras,” Kya smiled, leaning forwards and putting her hands over theirs.

“The Water Chakra… representing pleasure and blocked by guilt. You didn’t hear it from me… but this Chakra is located in the sexual organs… but pay that little attention. What do you blame yourself for?” Kya asked.

“Everything,” Asami muttered.

“Go ahead and think about it— reflect on your guilt and let go of it… it is in the past now. You cannot change what happened… but you can fix it; and I know you’re going to.”

Kuvira sighed… it was her fault, what happened to Dad. If she’d been taken Hiroshi and Asami to a different city… but… what if she’d made an orphan of someone else? Surely the Equalists… still would’ve followed…

She felt like a coward for running away from Zaofu, and yet she was following the Avatar’s orders, wasn’t she? Though she wouldn’t shift the blame to someone else, she had to let it go. Dad died doing what was right— and the Lieutenant would face his karma in time… It wasn’t her fault.

The Metalbender felt her mind clear and her body to relax.
But Asami was having a hard time, shaking and visibly breaking a sweat. Suddenly she curled up and burst into tears.

Hikaru flashed before her eyes… she’d ruined an innocent girl’s life. How could she even remotely think that giving the ex-Firebender a measly job at Future Industries would fix things? She then tried to _use_ the girl, sending her into danger because she was too afraid to stand up to the Equalists…

More tears slid down her face, and Kya put a hand over hers, “It’s in the past, Asami. You can’t change it. It has been a tragedy thus far, but your story can have a happy ending.”

“How do you know?” Asami asked, trembling in stress.

“I don’t, but I believe that you can overcome any damages you’ve caused.”

__If you want to talk… come to Republic City and do it face-to-face__

She was going to fucking fix her mistakes. Somehow— even if it wasn’t scientifically possible to restore her bending— she would make sure that Hikaru had a better life. Not… no longer because Asami felt guilt… but because it was the right thing to do.

Her heart relaxed, the blood flowing through her veins calmed down… she felt… better.

“Very good, both of you… onto the Fire Chakra?”

“I can feel them doing something, can’t you?”

“What do you mean?” Baatar Jr. asked, looking up from his newest designs.


“I just… I can feel… Asami… she’s changing somehow…”

“Well, you did ask her to. I don’t think she took that lightly,” the engineer mused, erasing an error on his paper.

“I know… I just…”

“Hey, she’ll be alright.”

Korra smiled— he didn’t need to tell her. Asami Sato was one tough girl.
“Willpower, found in the stomach… blocked by shame. What are you ashamed of?”

Korra. She’d willingly lied, freely whispering words of love— no matter how genuine— while continuing to work and develop technology to do harm. The Avatar… she was right… Asami had broken her heart…

“I lied to her,” the engineer whispered. “She’d shown me nothing but kindness and I just… lied to her.”

“It was a part of the life you left behind… you have no need to do such a thing anymore.”

“And she said she’d give you another chance,” Kuvira interjected.

Asami fiddled with her sneakers. Did she deserve another chance?

“What if I lie to Korra again?”

“Why do you think you it might happen?” Kya asked thoughtfully.

“I don’t know.”

“Think of how much you love Korra… how she is a part of you… no ice dodge is free of bumps, but eventually you sail through, no?”

A flash of the Avatar, sitting on the gazebo and accepting a cup of tea from the business woman with a smile. Asami knew, deep down, that the shadow in that scene had never lied to Korra— or if she had… Korra had forgiven her…

But… Korra had willingly rushed to Asami’s life when she’d been poisoned by the roses… the Avatar… was willing to help her… to save her; even after all the horrible actions and speeches that had transpired… Korra still cared for her, didn’t she? What reason would Asami ever have again… to lie to someone so selfless?

Never again.

She felt herself letting go of that shame… letting it flow down the stream and felt energy flow a little more smoothly through her own body.

“Good job… you’ve opened your Fire Chakra,” Kya said. “What about you, Kuvira?”

“My parents.”

“Su and Baatar?”

“No,” the Earthbender said, shaking her head a little, “when I was younger… I lived in a little village outside Zaofu. When I was growing up, Earthbenders were stuck in mines. My parents always tried to sell me to the overseers— sell me off as a slave.”

Kya and Asami’s eyes widened, but Kuvira continued— lost in her own world.
“One day, when I was in the backyard practicing… one of the neighbors saw me Metalbending. I’d been practicing… on my own… just playing around; I was only seven. My neighbor grabbed me by the wrist and attempted to take me to the overseer— trying to sell me off (Metalbenders were worth more than regular Earthbenders). My parents heard the commotion, I was screaming for help, and simply shrugged… they went back inside… they’d given up on me.

“I did the only thing I could. I encased my neighbor’s legs in Earth and ran into the house, screaming at them. I begged them for answers— why didn’t they care about the neighbor taking me? My father merely laughed, telling me that I was worthless… straight to my face… they slapped me, hitting my face because I couldn’t bring them in any yuans.

“In a moment of rage, I shot them both with boulders (we were so poor that the floor was made of dirt). They crashed against the wall, but I didn’t stick around to find out what’d happened afterwards. I ran from the town, sprinting as fast as I could until I collided into a woman. She turned around and kneeled down, instantly tending to the scrapes on my knees. Realizing… how malnourished I was… a little stunted and small for my age; with my ribs poking out under my cloth-sack shirt… she instantly bought me a train ticket. Abducted me, really.”

“Suyin always was a nut-bucket,” Kya chuckled. “So… you feel guilty about hurting them— your parents?”

“It was uncalled for. I could’ve just ran… but instead I chose to hurt them,” Kuvira whispered to the water, watching the ripples swirl around.

“Does it not occur to you that you were defending yourself from horrible people? You don’t need to lessen their atrocities— caring so little as to sell you off?”

“But what if I hurt them?!”

“Kuvira… you are an Earthbender… and in order to live your life— you need to accept that you wield a dangerous tool. Using the ground around you to defend yourself is natural instinct… primal… even an Airbender is allowed to defend themselves from provoked violence.”

Kuvira closed her eyes.

“Earth is a part of you… it is nothing to be ashamed of so long as you take responsibility for it… you are a good person— you’ve never hurt an innocent person.”

The Metalbender saw a flash of the Great Uniter, putting people into reeducation camps...

*That’s not me… that’s not me… that was a false image…*

“I will never hurt an innocent person… I never have,” she repeated; beginning to feel lighter. “I probably wasn’t even that good of an Earthbender— gave them a few bruises and something to think about. And now… I have a real family… one that loves me.”

“Yes you do,” Asami said, taking the Metalbender’s hand.

Kuvira felt her energy flow smoothly, as though a pool had been cleared. Her eyes opened and Kya was looking back with a big smile on her face.

“And now you’ve opened your Fire Chakra.”
“Okay… so maybe I felt something that time,” Baatar said, taking a swig from his beer. “Like, she’s doing some yoga or something in her stomach.”

“I told you so.”

“I miss Kuvira,” the engineer said, slumping onto the workbench with a pout. “And Asami. No offense, but you’re shitty with tools.”

Korra chuckled and gave his messy hair a ruffle, “I miss them both, too.”

Chapter End Notes

Cool, so not a lot of action-packed-Equalist-punching, but good reads all the same!!

Leave comments!!
Chakras - Part 2

Chapter Summary

“Program your life the way you want it to be: don't waste the unused energy that lodges in the matrix of your soul. You are transcendent, be a superintendent.”

— Michael Bassey Johnson

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“The next Chakra deals with love,” Kya said, hesitantly looking back and forth between the two of them, “In the heart… it is blocked by grief. Who is it that you mourn for?”

Kuvira looked at the swirling stream, watching leaves and vines and sticks travel down the little currents. She thought, not of her biological parents— who’d scorned her and cast her away— but of the warm, engulfing hug that Baatar Sr. had given her when they’d entered Zaofu a few months ago. How great it’d felt to sink into his arms… to hear his hearty laugh vibrate through his chest, resonating against her head as she pressed into him. Safe and content.

“I grieve for my Dad,” Kuvira admitted, exhaling and lowering her gaze to the dirt beneath her. Her fingers swirled around, tracing patterns in the dirt. Primal comfort— all Earthbenders go through a stage where they play in the dirt (and most of them never really leave).

“Your father has passed away, and like all the energy in the universe— all lives come to an end. But the love that he feels for you and his family is still here,” Kya said, reaching forwards and pressing her hand against Kuvira’s heart, “It has reformed… into new love… the love that your soulmate feels for you and the love that all of your friends feel for you.”

Kuvira thought of Junior… how the shadow of him, in the Fog of Lost souls, had denounced himself from the Metal Clan— demanding for Baatar Sr. to bow before him. How words of disappointment flew between the two of them. How unlike that Baatar Jr. was in real life. How loving he was. She thought of how much her family needed her to be strong, thinking one last time of how horrible it’d felt when she learned of her father’s death; and took a deep breath, feeling something swirling inside her chest as her Air Chakra opened.

Asami, contrariwise, could only think of her mother. And her grandmother— who she’d never had the chance to meet, even though she hadn’t died that long ago. She thought of the pain she’d felt every time she’d built a new weapon for the Equalists… in memory of her mother, who was nothing if not the most peaceful person Asami had ever met. She thought of how her father had turned into a shell of his former self— sure he had smiled at her and hugged her to keep up some sick appearance— but he’d never properly moved on. And that had consequently dragged Asami down to an unforgivable level.

“My mom,” the engineer finally spoke.

The Waterbender turned to Asami, “Your mother met an unfortunate fate, too. But she was kind and
loving—"

“How do you know?”

“Our parents were lifelong friends— you think I didn’t love your mother like a sister?”

Asami looked at the ground, embarrassed, “I’m sorry… I get a little defensive about Mom.”

“That’s what your father has taught you to do. The love you have for your mother and the love that
Yasuko taught you is… locked away. You’ve been scared to let it out— you’re afraid that if you
do… you’ll lose what you have left of her.”

The engineer didn’t say anything, but her small, defeated sigh signaled for Kya to continue.

“You are loved Asami— by all those around you. Above all… you’re loved by Korra. Immensely. I’m not asking you to let go of your mother; I’m asking you to look inside your heart and accept
that… that she’s gone.”

She closed her eyes, taking a deep breath and… and suddenly something felt… weightless… her
heart felt a million pounds lighter.

“Good job both of you… you’ve opened your Air Chakras.”

______________________________________________

“The Sound Chakra is located in your throat,” Kya described, holding a wrinkled hand to Kuvira’s
neck. “It revolves around truth— but is blocked by the lies you tell yourself.”

“Like what?”

“Have you ever lied to anyone about anything… because you didn’t believe it for yourself?”

“M-Matriarch?”

“Yes, Soldier Kuvira? What is it? What do you need?” Suyin asked, closing her book with a smile
and standing up from the couch.

“I… I need to talk to you about my living arrangements…” the teenage guard sputtered.

“What is it? Did something happen?” the Matriarch inquired, putting a hand on the sixteen-year-
old’s shoulder.

All of a sudden, the straightened, formal posture of the soldier dissolved, and she fell forwards with a
sob, crying into Suyin’s arms. The Matriarch was hesitant at first— unsure of how to react to such
an outburst. It was obvious that this reaction came at a surprise.

“Um… there, there.”
Kuvira didn’t say anything, only wrapping her arms around Suyin’s waist as she buried herself further and further into the Matriarch’s shoulder— letting thousands of bottled up feelings out through tears and wails of stress.

“Please… I don’t want to sleep there… anymore… I want to be part of the… family…” the teenager sobbed.

The older woman’s breath hitched in her throat as she instantly cradled the girl— whispering reassurances that Kuvira had always been a part of the family… Su had just gone about… showing her how much the Beifong’s truly loved Kuvira… gone about it the wrong way…

That night, the then Captain of the Guard was awfully befuddled as to why one of his soldier’s beds remained empty.

The Metalbender’s gaze lowered to the ground, “When I was sixteen… I was scared. I went to my Mom and begged her to let me become a proper member of the family. I begged for her to love me.”

“What are you saying?” Kya asked.

Kuvira wiped away tears pooling at the corners of her eyes, “I… I wasn’t being entirely honest. I didn’t want to be a guard at such a young age. I was only a kid; I was mad at Suyin for not treating me like how she treated the rest of the children. So I went into her study and sobbed until she promised that I could stay in the house. I was just doing it for attention, wasn’t I?”

“You were afraid that she would never see you as anything other than a tool?”

“Y-Yes.”

Kya leaned back and lit a lillyweed joint, filling the air surrounding the stream with a horrid smell; though she looked perfectly content as she let out a sigh;

“Kuvira… sometimes the people we love most can do the stupid thing; not recognizing that we crave the natural affection and comforts that a family provides. It’s within you to recognize that it was not a desire for attention but a fact of survival that you absolutely needed. You are not an attention seeker nor a mere tool for someone to use— you are your own person.”

The former Captain of the Guard closed her eyes and took a shaky breath; allowing memories of tender love and unbridled joy to overcome the guilt of a desperate attempt to feel as though she belonged… but she did belong— both as a Beifong and as a terrific guard (she made the highest rank, did she not?). Her breathing became relaxed and her heart slowed down as… somewhere in her throat… she felt a surge of energy.

“Well done, well done. Asami?”

“What haven’t I lied about?” the ex-heiress scoffed. “I’ve hidden my identity from more people than I can count and—”

“You were dishonest about your life as an Equalist, but you have accepted that your place is among the loving, the caring aspect of society. You have accepted that you will stand by Korra’s side.”

“Yes.”

“Than that is not the lie you have been telling yourself. You Sound Chakra is more blocked than
Asami's eyes fell to the ground, “I began to tell him that my prototypes weren’t ready, that I needed more time. I would say that I needed more information—or that we ought not to attack certain people, namely my friends, because we weren’t ready. I would feed Hikaru information so that the Coalition could distract the Equalists, and then I would proclaim vows to hunt them down myself—sneaking into the night only to spill more secrets.

“When I was around my father… I would act like his little princess, and it hurt inside. It hurt because I was lying to the last bit of family (that I knew of at the time) all so that I could bed his greatest enemy. He was… well… uncomfortable with the idea, but he went along with it so that I could take down the Avatar from the inside. But I was in love with her. How could I just smile and lie to both sides?”

“The people you began truly lying to swapped. You began to tell your enemies more and more…and your father less and less,” Kya deduced.

“Yes.”

Kya played with the stream, allowing the water to flow in beautiful dances around the three women, not a drop landing on their heads.

“You lied because you did not want to accept your true identity. Who are you now?”

“I am… I am Korra’s soulmate. I promised myself in the Fog of Lost Souls—”

“The bravest people are the honest ones, my mother used to say. I think that you need to accept that you’ve hurt yourself more than anyone. You are not an Equalist anymore, Asami. It’s time to move on,” the Waterbender said with a smile.

It wasn’t just that. She’d managed, for almost two decades, to convinced herself that her life was happy. Happy; for the Equalists had gladly taken her and her father in—giving them a place, and a means for revenge. Asami tinkered in the darkness, underneath the Future Industries factory, in retaliation for her mother’s death. How could she have been happy when she thought only of hatred and felt pain? No—it wasn’t until she’d fallen in love with Korra that it’d even remotely crossed her mind that happiness was found in another corner of the Universe. That was the biggest lie—NO MORE!! There were only truths in her future; perhaps one at a time or perchance all at once. But she would never have to lie to herself again.

Asami took a deep breath, allowing a sense of clarity to flow through her like the water in the stream. She was no longer an Equalist. Like Kuvira, she was her own person.
“Ah yes, onto the Light Chakra?” Kya smirked.

“The greatest misapprehension in the cosmos— the thought that everything in the universe is separated. Four nations— divided by races. Benders and Nonbenders. The Spirit and the Mortal world. These are all artifices. The Light Chakra is located in the forehead; the energy of insight blocked by illusion.”

Kuvira leaned forwards, “I was told by my mother that Sifu Toph opened her Light Chakra when she discovered Metalbending.”

“Yes, she realized that metal is not really its own element— it is Earth that has been refined, but still Earth all the same.”

Asami swirled a hand around in the water, “Everything is connected.”

“Yes. Think of when you discovered that you’d… shot… your own cousin. Do you think it was mere coincidence? There are no borders between you and Hikaru— rather, you two are different sides of the same coin. Both of you lost your mother’s at young ages, and began training to fight. Both of you grew strong, but with heavy hearts. For you, Asami, growing up with the idea that the whole world was against you, that you had to fight it head on and prove your worth. For Hikaru… she too had to face the world head on, but she did it for the love of your other cousin, little Suki. She grew to work hard out of love and determination. You both are strong women, fate connected.”

“I can’t believe that I used to hate Benders,” Asami chuckled sadly, “And now almost everyone I love in this world…”

Kuvira wrapped an arm around Asami, “Aww… you’ve grown soft.”

“Have not.”

Unfazed by the joke, the engineer relaxed, allowing the pain she felt when she realized that she’d shot Hikaru— that fateful night that set several machines in motion, to flow out of her head. She felt determination to… to love Hikaru as her new family, and suddenly a weight lifted from her forehead.

“You have opened your Light Chakra, Asami. Well done,” Kya turned to Kuvira, “And what do you think? What boundaries have you put up in this world?”

Kuvira picked at a scar, thinking only of The Great Uniter. How that woman had only the thought to separate the Earth Kingdom— putting people of different ethnicities into reeducation camps. Conquering and dividing up the slices of the Earth Kingdom to merge into her perfect Empire. That… version… of Kuvira was angry, thinking only of ruling an Empire for herself— putting armies in lands of peace.

Such an Empire had separated her and her family— even her with Baatar.

The Metalbender smiled. How could she have anything but love for her people— for all people, really? Zaofu was a land of second chances, after all. The belief that people didn’t need to be segregated as criminals if they truly wanted to try again. Everything was connected… everything was connected.

The Unobtainium in her throat vibrated a little. With every Chakra opened— her forehead suddenly
feeling fifty pounds lighter— she could feel the little piece of metal becoming more and more noticeable.

“The Thought Chakra on the crown of the head— the ability to tap into pure cosmic energy. To reach into the stars, you have to be able to fly (figuratively speaking, unless you’re Zaheer). Such flight is blocked by Earthly Attachments. Oft it is taught that you must give up love in order to open the Thought Chakra, but I do not believe that is so. Kuruk and Roku managed to unlock the Avatar State, and even my father was able to love my mother, Katara, and keep his Thought Chakra open.”

“Then how is it possible to give up that Earthly Attachment?” Kuvira asked.

“Do not think of your love as a lust-filled shackle that binds you to the Earth. Fill your love with compassion, rather than regular passion.”

Asami closed her eyes and thought of Korra, not when she was bending and fighting with glowing white eyes, but when they laid together on the couch for the first time— whispering promises that their identity wouldn’t get in the way of a relationship. And then when they made love for the first time, how there had been no turning back.

She saw a path in front of her, realizing that she was among the stars. Towering above her was a version of her, neither the Kyoshi-Asami nor the metal Equalist version of her, nor the business woman giving tea to Korra in the gazebo. This version of Asami had the short haircut that she’d recently acquired, wearing robes of some sort. Her eyes were covered by a cloth and yet this celestial being looked calm and collected.

She thought of… the need to let Korra go. Could she? She had already— hadn’t she? Though she couldn’t live without Korra, she already had been living a, albeit mediocre, life in Zaofu without the Avatar. And though they were tethered by a predestined soulmate bond, Asami would bring… balance to Republic City with or without Korra.

The path lit up and she walked towards it, touching a sphere in front of her and feeling the skies around her glow.

“You’re not giving her up,” Kya’s voice whispered, “You’re merely letting her fly up with you. And that is the most powerful form of love.”

Power. Not the greedy, tyrannical kind, where one is a king or ruler and commands armies, but instead like a motor that surges a Satomobile forwards. That kind of energy suddenly flowed through Asami’s veins and she opened her eyes.

No celestial stars, but rather two people that she loved fondly, were sitting in front of her with wide smiles on their faces.

“Congratulations,” the Waterbender bowed. “You have opened your Thought Chakra.”

Kuvira bit her lip. She remembered when The Great Uniter had aimed the spirit cannon at the factory— attempting to blow Baatar Jr. to smithereens in a purple explosion. That had not been a detachment of love, that had been murder. That was not cosmic power, but rather madness driving forth a soulless contrivance.
Could she let Baatar go? They were permanently bound, by the love of Soulmates, therefore Kuvira could never truly soar through the galaxies—but how impractical was it for an Earthbender to do such a thing?

Everything is connected. That was only one Chakra ago—and the realization that the Earth and the celestial skies were not separated, but a united entity, surged through her. Perhaps a connection, a never-ending and unspooling rope of sorts, could both connect Kuvira to Baatar Jr. and allow her to fly through cosmic skies. She took a deep breath and felt herself floating.

She was on a bridge, made of shimmering lights, and towering above her was…herself. She didn’t look any different, only with a wide, happy smile on her face. So different from the grim, stone-faced look of The Great Uniter.

Kuvira walked forwards with a determined heart and touched the sphere with cautious hands.

“Make sure I don't float too far into space, will you?”

“Sure thing, girl.”

Baatar’s voice (by Soulmate Messaging™) in her head was all it took, and as she felt both the Earth and the Space around her, the metal in her neck began to feel less and less like an untouchable force, and more like iron or steel or even regular dirt.

Kuvira returned to the creek with a gasp and moved her hands, as quick as lightening. Suddenly, she felt the Unobtainium move up in particles, through her bloodstream, through her throat and abruptly through her mouth. The strange, silver-colored metal shaped back into the point of an arrow and dropped into her hand. She looked at it with wide, disbelieving eyes.

“BRAVO!!” Kya laughed, “You both have unlocked all seven Chakras!! Wow… I didn’t expect that to work.”

“You just…did the impossible,” Asami whispered in wonder, looking at the quirky piece of metal in Kuvira’s hands.

“Impossibility is an illusion,” the Metalbender smirked, pocketing the Unobtainium arrowhead and standing up, pulling her best friend and the Waterbending hippie up with her, “Let’s go home, Asami.”

Chapter End Notes

Sorry I haven't updated sooner! I've had a stressful week, but I'm going to be back on track.

Hooray! Unobtainiumbender!!
“That's ridiculous. The only point in having enemies is so you can defeat them, kill them, brush them aside.”

"Or give them a chance to redeem themselves.”

— Derek Landy, Death Bringer

Asami drove back to Zaofu, using Baatar Sr.’s superhighway that connected all of the Earth Kingdom cities to Ba Sing Sei. In the passenger seat, Kuvira played with the piece of metal, playfully turning it into stars and spheres and other funny shapes.

“How are you feeling?” the engineer asked, glancing at the Metalbender out of the corner of her eye, and signaling into the carpool lane.

“Different.”

“Yeah.”

Kuvira looked at the passing trees and homes and cars and people. Connected. It felt incredible to feel the energy flowing, swirling through her body. Despite every event that had transcended in the past year, she felt light and happy. How queer.

“What about you?”

Asami wiped away a tear, “Like I’ve finally put medicine on a wound. I can’t wait to talk to Hikaru — to apologize and… well… I don’t want to be too hopeful. I suppose… I should also talk to my father, shouldn’t I?”

“I think it would bring you some clarity to confront him. But try not to do it out of anger,” Kuvira advised thoughtfully.

The engineer smiled and let out a small sigh, “No promises.”

When they’d fled from village to village— it had taken hours to drive through the backroads of the Earth Kingdom. Though, by that method, it had been discrete and safe. And perhaps it was more the need to find a safe, concealed hotel room to collect one’s thoughts than the desire to flee from Equalists that’d probably fled from Zaofu themselves.

But now, quickly weaving through semi-trucks and Greyhound buses, the speedometer not dipping below eighty as the wind whipped through their raven black locks, wide green eyes gazed upon the signs on the sides of the highways, signifying that Zaofu was only a few hours away.

“I can’t believe we’ve just driven across a country in only a few hours.”
“Time flies when you’re having fun,” Kuvira joked, “And besides, it’s not as though we were really that far away from Zaofu to begin with.”

“Because you’re ssssssooooooo much fun to hang out with!” Asami teased back.

“Hey!”

“I was just kidding! You know I love you.”

Kuvira looked at the engineer for a long time, taking in a woman who had been broken, no… shattered, only a few months ago. How much Asami had grown in so little a time.

“I love you too,” the Metalbender said sincerely, “And… I forgive you.”

She heard breath hitch in the other woman’s throat. They zoomed down the highway and Kuvira bent a thin sheet of metal from the body of the Jeep to cover their heads from impending rain. Where before she’d unlocked her Chakras, when she’d thought of Metal as another form of Earthbending, now it felt like an entirely new element— as though she didn’t have to think twice. She’d mastered this bending once more with ease, something that took people years to do.

Don’t let it get to your head, she thought to herself with a smirk.

From the other side of the car, she heard a faint “thank you” and gripped the engineer’s hand with a kind smile.

Opal thanked the cashier with a small bow and walked out of the store, clutching the bag. At least she still possessed a little bit of money to work with.

The new clothes were slightly tighter, not because she had grown any in size, but because she didn’t want to wear something frilly with long tendrils— wear it to catch on something mid-flight (not that she had another glider staff tucked away in her pocket, but her father had taught her a great deal about practicality). A leather jacket and skinny jeans; though she’d splurged and gotten a piercing in her cartilage.

She left the strip mall, folding her old clothes up and tucking them away in her backpack— kneeling down in an alley among trash, sleeping dogs, and grumpy homeless.

“Where’re you headed?” a greasy old lady asked, tucking her nose into a ragged, patched scarf (the evenings were beginning to get cooler as summer transitioned into fall).

“I don’t know, ma’am,” Opal admitted.

“Well, if you need a spot to sleep at— that patch of the wall isn’t claimed by anyone.”

The Airbender smiled, grateful for the kindness. She’d begun to grow more and more accustomed to sleeping outside, under the stars (though many cities had no view of such things, giving off only the orange clouds of light pollution at night). She curled up against the wall, setting her satchel protectively between her side and a dumpster.
“What’s your name, dear?” the old woman asked, breaking off a piece of a protein bar and handing it to her.

“Opal.”

“Why, that’s a lovely name. I stole an opal necklace off a lady once— fed me for a week.”

The Airbender smiled, but didn’t say anything. The idea of pickpocketing reminded her painfully of Kai, who she missed dearly— from the days that they would wander the Earth Kingdom on Juicy, helping out citizens here and there. Fond memories, to say the least.

“Why are you here?” the old homeless woman asked, pulling a blanket around herself and chewing on the bar (a little stale, if we’re being honest). “You don’t have that look about you.”

“What look?”

“Listen, dear, all of us who sleep in alleys have been through tough times— we have eyes that’ve seen millions of people pass by without tossing a yuan over. The defeated eyes of a beggar are not on your face.”

Opal sighed, “I’ve seen some things, I suppose— I’ve seen my mother draw poison out of my best friend’s body… I’ve seen one of my friend’s houses burn down while there was an all-out war inside, weapons and all. I’m out here because I hurt somebody, and also… because I don’t want to go home.”

“Someone you don’t want to see?”

“My father… passed away. I’m not ready to go back to my family.”

The old woman nodded in understanding. Thousands of words passed between them and yet the air of the alley remained silent.

“Mau-Dee,” a young Fire Nation boy said, sitting down across the alley and lighting up a fire in a pot hole with some wood, “Jampa needs an extra blanket, I think he’s got a fever.”

“Take mine,” Opal said, reaching into her bag for the blanket she’d taken off of Juicy’s saddle.

“Won’t you be cold?” the boy asked with kind amber eyes.

“Airbenders can regulate their breath to stay warm,” the Beifong girl said, shyly handing over the blanket to the boy.

“An Airbender, eh?” Mau-Dee asked, scooting a little closer to the fire, “I knew you were a special girl.”

Though covered in rags and grime, the boy gave the two ladies a respectful bow, turning down a corner to give an elderly man an extra blanket.

“Listen well, Opal. I think you’re running because you’re scared— now, that ain’t nothing to be ashamed of;” the homeless woman said, holding up a hand to the Airbender’s protest, “You’re just wandering in the wrong direction. Not physically, of course, you can walk wherever your feet take you. I can sense you feeling out of sorts… you know… spiritually.

“The way I see it; you can go anywhere from here. Think of this alley as a crossroads. You can turn back, head to Zaofu, or you can stay here for the rest of your life and beg like we do. Or, you can
keep wandering— no goal in particular,” the old woman gave her a toothy grin.

“I don’t know what I’m looking for.”

“Well, what did Samsara tell you to do?”

“Oh… well… she said I needed to seek out ‘the last one’, but I don’t know what that could possibly mean. Part of me wants to go back to Republic City but part of me— HANG ON!!! I never told you about Samsara, or that I was from Zaofu!”

The old woman merely cackled, waving her hand as all the homeless surrounding Opal, including the Firebender and the sickly elderly man, shimmered and glimmered— turning into Spirits and flying away into the skies. The pot-hole fire pit extinguished and Opal shuddered as she was surrounded by coldness and nightfall.

Great. Now I’m seeing things.

The Airbender wiped away frustrated tears and stood, walking under the orange street lights and nearing the edge of town. Another sleepless night.

___________________________________________

Running on empty as the Jeep pulled up the road to the city gates of Zaofu, Asami felt her eyelids drooping shut— fortunately Kuvira had taken a turn driving. She let out a content sigh and wrapped the blanket around her neck (in that sort of soft cocoon, as you do) while the guards checked the car for stowaways, bombs, contraband— that sort of thing.

“Go on in, your mother is anxious to see you,” Captain Fai said with a firm clasp to Kuvira’s shoulder.

“Thanks.”

The gates opened and they drove on in, all the way up to the Beifong estate— and though parking spots don’t really exist in a city without cars, the two women were too tired to care.

A butler let them in, opening the metal doors. It was well past midnight, but someone had notified the Matriarch, who silently walked up and engulfed both of them in a strong, motherly hug. Asami didn’t know what to make of the gesture, other than leaning into the embrace— for the older woman probably needed the support far more than she did.

“It’s good to see you both,” Suyin whispered, her voice echoing off the ghostly metal walls. “Let’s get you to bed.”

Kuvira stumbled off down a corridor that either led to her old room or Baatar Jr.’s. The Matriarch led Asami to… not a bedroom, but her study.

“Please, have a seat. I know you’re probably exhausted, but I’d like to speak with you first.”

Asami smiled, “I had a nap before we arrived, it’s no trouble.”
She sat down on the soft green couch and accepted a cup of sake that an attendant handed her. He bowed and left the women alone in the room. Suyin stared at her for a few moments before opening her mouth to speak;

“Did everything go alright? We were very worried.”

“Yes, yes. We… we drove around for a while but the Equa— but nobody attacked us,” Asami answered hesitantly.

“Kya called last night, she told me that you found your way to the Eastern Air Temple. It’s funny where we end up wandering when we’re at our lowest.”

“What do you mean?”

Suyin took a sip from her cup, leaning back against the couch opposite and looking at the tiny metal replica of the city that sat on the coffee table.

“Didn’t you wonder why I was… more lenient… to you than your father when you first came here?”

That was a while ago, but it had been sticking around in the back of Asami’s mind, like sticky tack on carpet.

“Yes. I was rather surprised at how… lavish of a treatment I was getting.”

Su sighed, “I owed it to your mother.”

The engineer’s eyes widened, “What does she have to do with this?”

“A long time ago, when my mother— for lack of a better word— kicked me out of Republic City, I traveled the world. Though I started at my grandparent’s house, I never could stay in one place. Eventually I wound up… on the ferry to Kyoshi Island.”

Asami smiled in understanding.

“Aunt Suki took me in like a daughter, caring little of my criminal past and instead letting me stay with her for a while. I was already close to the sisters from years of growing up with them, and Yasuko was closer to my age than the rest of the ragtag Team Avatar family. The kindness that Suki and Yat-Sen and Shun and Yasuko showed me… it inspired me to give others a second chance. So eventually, when I had accumulated enough wealth and hired an architect, I built Zaofu— welcoming your family to visit with open arms.

“I vowed that I would show Yasuko’s family the same kindness, should she ever need it. Hiroshi was… never close to the rest of us, and even worse… he isolated you from your true past after your mother’s death. When he came here, I could only allow him the bare minimum; a cell and the privilege of tinkering here and there on designs. But when I saw you, how much you looked like Yasuko, I couldn’t bear to do the same— I upheld my promise to show you kindness. I must say, without the hair… you look like a completely new person,” Suyin finished with a kind smile.

“I feel like a new person,” Asami admitted.

The Matriarch let out a sigh, “Yes… I’d say you are. I don’t know much about spirituality— but Kya’s told me you’ve gone through a great deal of that sort of nonsense. My mother never taught Lin nor I much about Spirits; but if Kya vouches for you, it’s good enough for me.”

They finished their sake, letting the warm buzz fill their heads. The Matriarch gave directions to a
guest room and Asami walked through the empty hallways (save for an alert and dexterous Metalbending guard at the corners).

She turned round a wall and was face-to-face with none other than a sleepy Avatar.

“H-Hey there.”

“Asami!” Korra gasped with wide eyes.

Chapter End Notes

leave comments!
Chapter Summary

"Sometimes what you’re searching for, is right where you left it."

C. Jay Cox, ‘Sweet Home Alabama’

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Where have you been it’s been three weeks and you didn’t call; and I was so worried the last time I saw you was when you were poisoned with the roses and you scared the fucking shit out of me, and oh my god your hair is amazing… it’s so great to see you—”

Suddenly, Asami threw her arms around Korra, burying her face in the Avatar’s neck and crying. Thankfully, the younger girl was awake enough to pull the two of them into her bedroom, closing the door and hugging Asami back with a long sigh.

“Korra!! I missed you so much!!” the engineer sobbed.

It’d gotten to her. The Equalist attack. The false guard Chul and the poisonous roses, and then Korra saving her. Kuvira rescuing her in the courtyard and fleeing Zaofu. Going from town to town, wandering without a purpose other than to stay off the radar. Learning about Baatar Sr.’s death. Coming across the Eastern Air Temple. The… the meditation. Meeting Samsara. The fucking Fog of Lost Souls— watching her best friend slowly go insane, and then learning of her true family and of the horrors she’d truly committed. And then opening her Chakras, and how wonderful it’d felt to feel free… unlocked. The realization that Suyin and Yasuko was close, and that there was so much she was learning about her life every single day.

And now being in the arms of the woman she loved most in the world… she broke down and leaned into strong tan arms that picked her up— carrying her to a couch where she could properly let out her feelings.

Korra didn’t say anything, merely whispering sweet nothings and rubbing her hand up and down and in circles on Asami’s back.

“I missed you too,” the Avatar cooed.

The engineer could’ve sworn she felt lips on her forehead, but didn’t move her face from the Water Tribe girl’s comfortable and warm neck, where her face was concealed as the sobs lessened to mere whimpers. Tears dripped off her chin and down Korra’s collarbone, though if the younger girl minded— she protested naught.

Eventually silence befell the room.

“Bandit,” the engineer whispered, her lips feeling the steady beat on Korra’s throat.

“Hey there, Widget.”
“I love you,” Asami murmured.

Korra smiled, looking up at the wallpaper and musing to herself, “Mmmm… I love you, too.”

That was it. That was all it took. This was not some standoff— seeing who could outlast who. Asami moved her face up and away from Korra’s neck, looking at the Avatar for a whole minute of silence… searching her eyes with a gaping mouth, for any sort of answer as to how to proceed—

Lips met, not in the passionate and sexy heated flurry, but in the slow and tender dance. The ex-heiress melted into Korra’s embrace; who wrapped her arms around the older girl and hummed into her mouth. An energy flowed through Asami as tears slid down her eyes. She needed more— not solely in the erotic way, but in that desire to bask in the warmth of a soulmate. Her soulmate.

“I love you,” the engineer mumbled repeatedly against Korra’s lips, “Gods, I love you so much. I’m so, so sorry… for everything I’ve done…”

“It’s okay,” Korra whispered, pressing a kiss to Asami’s forehead, “I’m just… I’m not mad at you anymore. These past three weeks… I was too scared to think of anything but how much I yearned to be reunited with you. I needed to see you again. I needed to know that you were safe.”

Asami’s heart swelled, surged, and soared. Their lips crashed together again as the heiress climbed on top of Korra’s lap, who gripped underneath her thighs and carried her to the bed.

“I’ve got you,” the Avatar whispered.

Their clothes eventually slid off their bodies and onto the green-carpeted floor, but not simply in that great desire to have sex.

No… they made love.

Korra’s teeth hesitantly sucked at the pulse point underneath Asami’s throat— her deep voice rumbling in contentment as she wrapped her arms around the ex-heiress’s bare shoulders. After months of hostility and loneliness, the Avatar and the engineer rediscovered each other’s bodies— with lingering and longing fingers, slowly sliding down dips and curves and divots.

And they both felt too overwhelmed with joy and euphoria and bliss and energy to scream, only gasping at each other in amazement when they reached their respective climaxes.

“I love you,” Asami whispered afterwards.

“I love you, too,” Korra whimpered, coming down from the pure ecstasy of intercourse, “So… so fucking much. Don’t you ever leave me again.”

“I won’t. I promise.”

Korra reached out and cupped the sleeping woman’s cheek, letting the back of her palm graze over the perfectly sculpted cheekbones and jaw. Her fingers reached up and delicately caressed through Asami’s short wisps of hair— like when your fingertips weave through soft green grass on a summer
The engineer did not wake, and Korra let out a sigh through her nose, nestling her mouth to the older woman’s forehead.

“I love you,” the Water Tribe girl whispered, pressing her lips against her lover’s brow.

A truth, one that she would never again deny. She’d yelled hurtful words on that fateful day aboard the Airship bound for this cursed Metal City, but what kind of Avatar could she call herself if she couldn’t offer a scrap of forgiveness?

And of all people in the world… she’d seen such great change in Asami’s eyes the moment they met last night.

Dawn’s sleepy rays streamed through the windows as the platinum domes lowered— though the green curtains filtered the color so that the only light in the room was what emerald hues sieved through. It matched up well on Asami’s pale skin, and Korra smiled at the difference— for the ex-heiress was usually so obsessed with the Fire Nation red that she always wore.

Korra wrapped an arm around her love as the older woman began to stir awake, letting out an adorable groggy groan that the Avatar felt compelled to giggle at.

“Morning,” the engineer said, cracking a wide smile and fluttering her jade eyes awake.

The Water Tribe girl pressed a long kiss to Asami’s lips, lingering and breathing in the scent of jasmine as though it was a fact of survival itself. In truth, it was. Korra slid her hand up and down Asami’s sides, playfully running her fingers over the older woman’s ribs and sighing at her silky smooth skin. The engineer good-humoredly bit Korra’s lip and sucked a little on it. Oh boy, how she’d missed such contact.

“I hope you’re not looking for an encore,” Korra said apologetically— before their excitement developed into an event too heated for proper discussion, “I… I was wondering if we could talk.”

A flash of disappointment on the ex-heiress’s face, quickly replaced by understanding, “Of course.”

“Oh… so who talks first? I talk first? You talk first?”

Asami chuckled and pressed another, quick kiss to Korra’s lips, “You’re adorable.”

Korra blushed, “I missed this. Us together, I mean. I missed you so much.”

“We’re… we’re together again?”

The Avatar let out a sad sigh, pressing her forehead against Asami’s and closing her eyes. The engineer’s fingers desperately gripped Korra’s short chestnut hair and cupped the back of the younger girl’s head— demanding them even closer.

“I want us to be. Like you asked… I want us to start over. I want to give you that chance.”

There was a shaky side from Asami’s mouth, as though her nerves were crawling with anxiety— Korra knew that hers were.

“Korra… I learned how to meditate… I went into the Spirit World… into the Fog of Lost Souls…”

The Avatar’s eyes widened, but she didn’t interrupt.
“I saw myself, or some version of me in Kyoshi makeup, that showed me that I was the granddaughter of the Warrior, Suki. She showed me a copy of myself that was this twisted Equalist — commanding me to kill you; and then a copy of myself, a business woman that… was happy and in love with you. I promised myself that I would do everything in my power to make things right.”

“But if you’re Suki’s granddaughter… then that means…”

“Hikaru is my cousin.”

“Wow.”

Asami smiled, looking up at the light streaming through the curtains, “Yeah. Chakra number six— everything is connected.”

Korra chuckled, “Good to see you’ve become a guru while you were gone.”

The girls playfully rolled around on the bed, laughing and smiling and feeling ten tons lighter in their hearts than they had felt in months.

“Korra, did you mean what you said?”

“Hmm? What part of it?”

“Us. Together.”

“Of course. I… I won’t lie… what happened at the Estate… and then on the Airship… I was cruel —”

“Korra…”

“— I said such hurtful things, when it was obvious… you were trying so hard to make things right. We… we went and hurt each other, Asami. But we should know better— gods, we’re destined to be together, how silly was it for me… in the beginning… to think I would’ve continued my relationship with you and ignored my soulmate… when in reality…”

Asami reached out and found Korra’s hand tangled in the sheets, gripping it tightly as tears escaped her emerald eyes. With both her hands pinned down, the Avatar elected to kiss the waterworks away, her lips grazing all across the engineer’s face.

“We already are soulmates,” Asami whispered, completing Korra’s thought.

“Can I take you out on a date tonight? As… as my girlfriend?” the younger girl murmured, her lips against the older woman’s eyelids.

The engineer chuckled, wiping her nose on the sheets and flashing an embarrassed grin to her lover, “I thought I was buying the drinks… that’s what we agreed, no?”

Korra ruffled Asami’s short black hair, “You can still pay for the drinks, but I’ve got dinner.”

“How about that little hole-in-the-wall Water Tribe restaurant on Whitefeather Boulevard?”

“Sounds perfect.”
“… so right after we’ve gone through this spirit shit— she fucking rings Hikaru up on her cellphone and tosses the damn thing to me mid-call!”

Korra roared with laughter, “Oh man, Kuvira! So what did Hikaru say?”

“She said I could talk to her if I go back to Republic City and, quote, ‘discuss it with her face-to-face’, unquote… so I suppose that’s where I’m headed next.”

The Avatar smiled, “Well then, that’s where we’re going.”

“We?”

“Yeah… we.”

Asami’s fingers crept forwards slowly over the table, intertwining with Korra’s ebony digits. She felt a spark of electricity and smiled at the contact.

“This is… really nice.”

“I don’t think we’ve done a dinner… where I actually felt relaxed… this is wonderful,” Asami admitted.

“Yeah, it really is.”

Korra’s hand gripped hers tightly and the Avatar beamed at the engineer with… prideful eyes. The older woman felt her heart leap a mountain and she let out a sigh of relief and serenity as the waiter walked up with Water-Tribe-style noodles, setting the bowls on the table with a bow and walking away.

“Mmmmm!! Oh, god!!”

“I didn’t take you for a noodle gal,” Korra giggled, slurping on her food.

“For the past three weeks, I’ve been through ragtag bars and whatever Kuvira can cook on a hotel stove; don’t get me wrong— Air Nomad vegetarian is good and all… but mmmmmmmmmmm!!” Asami moaned, savoring a bite of meat.

Korra could only hoot at this, and when they finished their meals, she led Asami to the bar next door — her hand resting imperiously (but good natured) on the engineer’s hip. The older woman slid a twenty-yuan bill over to the bartender and he whipped up some impressive blended cocktails for them both within a minute.

“Oh man, is this pineapple? It tastes amazing!” Korra exclaimed after one sip.

Though they were sitting on barstools, Asami’s legs meticulously found their way on top of Korra’s — as she stealthily and mischievously slid onto the Avatar’s lap. Korra wrapped her arms around Asami’s, finishing their drinks together and feeling nothing but love and bliss.

Laughter from the couple rang throughout the bar.

Being reunited felt… wonderful.
“Where are we going?” Asami giggled.

“You’ll see,” the Water Tribe girl answered puckishly.

“Well not like this, I won’t!!”

She was carrying Korra on her back— though lean and tall, she was still pretty muscular— but the Avatar’s ebony hands were covering her eyes. From what she could tell, they were walking through some sort of maze? No… not that complicated to weave through… hmmm…

Oh boy, uphill. Korra tried to slide off her back to make it easier— but Asami let out a playful huff and picked the Avatar back up as she trudged along the slope.

Eventually, the ground leveled out and Korra hopped off her back, removing her hands.

Asami gasped.

They were in a sprawling garden overlooking the Zaofu sunset— surrounding them were orchards and bushels of fruits and thousands of different breeds of flowers… giving off a powerful, yet magnificent aroma.

The engineer’s fingers trailed along the soft, fuzzy leaves of various plants as she walked down the dirt path. She ignored the occasional prick in her finger from a spikey sprig, walking up to the overlook— where a stone bench sat next to a waterfall.

“Zaofu public garden,” Korra explained, “Though I wouldn’t eat the fruits or the berries… you never know what animals… uh… mark their scent here…”

Asami flashed a grin and sat down on the bench, her lover leaning against her as she wrapped an arm around Korra’s shoulders.

“I love you. This was a perfect date.”

“I love you, too. I’m looking forwards to more of them… in our future,” the younger girl chuckled.

“Me too,” Asami whispered, pressing her lips to Korra’s temple.
After 19 chapters of heart-wrenching angst Korrasami is canon again!! I was contemplating making you guys wait another ten chapters but my little gay soul needed this at four AM. Worth it.

LEAVE COMMENTS!! YES!! MANY COMMENTS!!
“All parents damage their children. It cannot be helped. Youth, like pristine glass, absorbs the prints of its handlers. Some parents smudge, others crack... a few shatter childhoods completely into jagged little pieces, beyond repair.”

— Mitch Albom, The Five People You Meet in Heaven


“Come in,” Suyin said, closing her book.

Kuvira opened the door of the study and slowly crept in. She looked tired, but happy to be home.

“How are you doing, Mom? How are you holding up?”

The Matriarch sighed, scooting over slightly so that her adoptive daughter could cuddle with her on the couch— reaching out and pulling the young woman into her arms. The mere thought of Baatar Sr. sent tears streaking down her face, but she rested her chin on Kuvira’s head and closed her eyes without wailing like she had been for the past three weeks.

“It’s been… difficult… the family and the city have been so supportive…” Suyin whispered.

Kuvira didn’t say anything, only burying her face into her mother’s chest and crying herself.

“I miss him,” the younger Metalbender whispered. “I didn’t get a chance to say goodbye.”

Su sighed, “None of us did… the guards told me that… it was quick. He didn’t suffer for that long.”

“What of that slimy bastard… the Lieutenant?” Kuvira asked, looking up into her mother’s elderly face.

“Vanished.”

“Well… fuck… and the guard that poisoned Asami?”

“He’s locked up in maximum security— but questioning him got nowhere… even Lin tried.”

“Did she already leave?”

“Last week… she had to get back to being a Chief, but it was nice of her to come up and see us.”

“And H-Hiroshi?”

“He surrendered back into Zaofu custody… hasn’t been doing much— but questioning him has concluded that he wasn’t in on the attack.”
“No, I wouldn’t think he was— not when they tried to kill him before at the Estate. Is it alright if Asami talks to him?”

“I… I suppose… if you supervise.”

“Thanks, Mom… what about Opal?”

“No one’s heard from her since… the attack. I’ve tried calling, but I think her cellphone’s out of battery. Jinora returned to Republic City without her— said they had a falling out… but she’s asked the Spirits to keep tabs on Opal…”

“I’m sure she’ll be alright— she’s a tough girl.”

“Just like you, Kuv.”

Suyin smiled and tightened her grip on her daughter, letting out a long sigh through her nose. Kuvira’s hand absentmindedly wandered up to the scar on her shoulder, where she’d been shot with an Unobtainium arrow three weeks ago.

“Mom.”

“Hmmm?”

“Can I try something?”

“Um… sure?”

“Just stand up— over here.”

Suyin, confused as to what mischief Kuvira was up to, walked over to her desk— standing across the room from her daughter. The former Captain of the Guard stepped into a Metalbending stance… bringing her arms up and closing her eyes with a long exhale.

The Matriarch could feel something swirling inside her body as Kuvira moved her hands— the way Suyin had done to derive the mercury from Korra’s body all those years ago. She felt herself lift up a little as the Unobtainium flowed through her bloodstream, involuntarily opening her mouth as the metal pulled up through her throat and past her jaws. She impulsively let out a cough and wiped her mouth.

All in all, the substance was no larger than the size of a pebble— yet something lifted within Suyin as Kuvira brought the Unobtainium towards herself and compacted it with the arrowhead she’d been keeping in her pocket.

Suyin let out a gasp— she could feel it all! Her whole city, underneath her feet! She reached out, allowing metal to peel off her wrists and weave through the air; transforming into various shapes with the slightest movements from her fingertips.

“I can… Metalbend again…”

Kuvira’s face broke out into a large smile, and she eagerly rushed forwards— engulfing her mother in a hug.

They sank to the floor, and Suyin could only hear the other woman’s laughter for a few moments before she realized that the girl was crying in her arms— sobbing and wailing as she buried her face into Su’s green Zaofu robes. The younger woman was trembling, clearly afraid of something…
utterly baffling the Matriarch.

“Kuvira, honey… it’s okay… you’re safe…”

“I’m so… sorry…”

“Whatever for?!”

“I went into the Fog of Lost Souls with Asami… I saw things… I was doing horrible things to our family— hurting you and my brothers and Opal and Korra…”

“Vira…”

“I saw myself as a horrible Dictator conquering the Earth Kingdom… hurting people… destroying Republic City… trying to kill Junior!! Mom… don’t ever let me do that, please!! I love you so much…” the younger woman whimpered.

Suyin constricted her arms around her daughter like a snake, surrounding Kuvira into a safe haven. She whispered reassurances that everything was going to be okay, rocking the two of them back and forth on the ground.

“You are a good person, Kuvira. I promise. Everything’s going to be alright.”

“I wish you were here, Baatar,” Suyin thought to her deceased husband, “You always made everything better.”

The engineer took a deep breath, giving Kuvira a smile (more for her reassurance than the Metalbender’s) and walking into the cell.

“Asami!!” the former CEO exclaimed, sitting up in his cot to face her. He twitched involuntarily—as though he wanted to give her a hug, but he restrained himself.

Her face fell; Hiroshi’s clothes had holes in them and were absolutely filthy, one sleeve was burned by Equalist shock gloves. His gold-rimmed spectacles were a little crooked, with a small crack forming in the side of the glass. At least his hair and beard were trimmed and his face looked clean.

“Hello, Dad,” she said, taking a deep breath.

The former CEO began rambling, “I… well… I honestly didn’t expect you to come see me. They didn’t tell me where you were… though I suppose they didn’t really know themselves, but—”

“Dad, why didn’t you tell me about Mom’s family?” Asami interrupted bluntly.

Hiroshi blinked, clearly startled by the question, “What?”


The old man looked shocked, and then very, very tired. He scooted back on the mattress until he
could slump against the cold metal wall.

“You have to understand—”

“Cut the crap, Dad.”

“… fine. Yasuko had grown distant with her family after she married me. She didn’t say it— your mother was always too kind— but I knew that I was the reason she broke off from the rest of them. I encouraged your mother to make contact with her mother and sister… she attempted to call on multiple occasions… but always got cold feet.

“When she… when she died… at the funeral… that little girl, Hikaru— I saw her Firebend and something snapped in me. Despite my… lack of love for Benders… I do feel sorry for yelling at her. After that… I decided that I didn’t want anything to do with them again. Unpleasant people, really.”

“I don’t care if you didn’t want anything to do with them,” Asami countered angrily, “you had no right to isolate me off like that! You know what, Dad? If I’d grown up knowing Hikaru— maybe I wouldn’t have thought so horribly of Benders… maybe I wouldn’t have accepted your terrorist ideology like air to my lungs! Gods… I wouldn’t have destroyed her life…”

Asami trailed off... Kya’s voice echoing in her head...

_Think of when you discovered that you’d… shot… your own cousin. Do you think it was mere coincidence? There are no borders between you and Hikaru— rather, you two are different sides of the same coin. Both of you lost your mother’s at young ages, and began training to fight. Both of you grew strong, but with heavy hearts. For you, Asami, growing up with the idea that the whole world was against you, that you had to fight it head on and prove your worth. For Hikaru… she too had to face the world head on, but she did it for the love of your other cousin, little Suki. She grew to work hard out of love and determination. You both are strong women, fate connected._

“This is pointless… arguing with you gets me nowhere,” she said, standing up and brushing her pants off.

“You’re just as guilty of crime as I am.”

“I know, Dad. I know that and I feel that in my heart every time I have to look at Korra and the Beifongs. Do you still hate Benders? They risked their lives for you, to search for and protect you. The Lieutenant doesn’t care anymore about which side someone’s on—”

“You think I don’t know that, Asami? I watched him kill Baatar with my own eyes. I WATCHED HIM TRY TO BURN OUR HOUSE DOWN!! DO YOU THINK I DON’T KNOW HOW STUPID IT WAS TO TRUST HIM?!?”

The ex-heiress couldn’t take it anymore, but fortunately she didn’t have to stay in the cell any longer. Kuvira bent the door open and grabbed Asami by the scruff of her neck, pulling her out into the hallway with a huff.

“Mr. Sato… you’ll be staying in Zaofu for an extended period— until we can deal with the Equalist menace, and you can safely be transported into the custody of Chief Lin Beifong. We’re all going to Republic City to work on stopping the Lieutenant and his cronies. What information can you give me, so that we can put an end to his sabotage?” Kuvira asked; an authoritarian tone resonating off the metal walls.

“He’ll be hiding in my… our factory,” Hiroshi said, his eyes drooping to the floor in defeat. “They stole the plans that the Beifong boy, Junior, was it? Yeah… they stole his ‘gun’ plans when they
attacked.”

“Oh no…” the ex-heiress whispered, gripping onto Kuvira’s arm.

The former Captain growled, “Come on, let’s get out of here.”

“Asami, wait!”

The girls turned back to face the former CEO, who’s hand was resting on the bars of the cell door. His brow was scrunched up in worry, but he offered a weary smile.

“Don’t underestimate that… that bastard. I don’t want you to get hurt… it’s not worth losing you, too.”

Her fingertips faintly reached out, resting on his hand for a moment in longing before she shook her head and drew her palm back to her side.

“I won’t, Dad. I guess this is goodbye. For now.”

“G-Goodbye, Asami. I love you.”

______________________________________________

“Hey honey, have you seen— RAAVA, SPIRIT OF LIGHT!!” Kuvira exclaimed, walking into the workshop and jumping a foot in the air out of shock.

“What?” Baatar Jr. asked, looking up from his tools.

All of a sudden, his fiancé began laughing uncontrollably. He raised an eyebrow and looked around the room for anything out of the ordinary (besides the gaping hole in the side of the room that some of the guards had fixed with makeshift steel plates). All of his tools were in place, his designs neatly piled on the desk. The floor was clean of litter— so why was she giggling hysterically?

“What is it?” he asked again.

“How many,” she snickered, “How many arrows were you fucking hit with during the attack?!”

“Um… about two dozen? Why?”

Kuvira was shaking, tears at the corners of her eyes from laughing so hard, “Jeez, I could sense you from the hallway— do you realize how much Unobtainium is in your body?!”

“Oh, I didn’t think about it… doesn’t really affect me and all.”

“Hang on one sec! Hey, Wei! Come in here!”

One of the twins (even Junior couldn’t tell them apart sometimes) walked into the room, texting on his phone, “What do you want?”

“Go stand next to Baatar.”
He did so absentmindedly, playing some meaningless game on his cell, “M’kay.”

“Alright, stop this from coming at you!”

She threw a metal ruler at Wei’s face and the boy instinctively held up a lazy palm to stop the projectile—but it hit him square in the forehead anyways.

“Dude, what the hell?!” he shouted at the little ruler on the ground, clearly pissed off.

Baatar and Kuvira began cackling, clutching their sides and doubling over from laughing so hard.

“What did you do?” Wei asked angrily. “Did you take away my bending?!?”

“No!” Kuvira sniggered, “No, Baatar’s a walking signal jammer!”

The boy stomped out of the room, calling for his twin brother to go sparring with him.

“Some egos are more easily damaged than others,” Junior mused.

“Alright, you brave, idiotic goofball—let’s get that Unobtainium out of you,” Kuvira said, giving him a quick peck on the lips and dropping into a Metalbending stance.

“When you’ve removed it, we ought to plant it in the courtyard—see the look on Huan’s face when he can’t make his precious sculptures anymore!!”

Chapter End Notes

leave comments

Check out chapter one for the official artwork by Bevsi

She can be found at:
http://bevsi.tumblr.com/
Peaches and Roasted Nuts

Chapter Summary

“The woods call to us with a hundred voices, but the sea has one only — a mighty voice that drowns our souls in its majestic music. The woods are human, but the sea is of the company of the archangels.”

— L.M. Montgomery, Anne's House of Dreams

Chapter Notes

Be sure to check out the official artwork for this fanfic, on Chapter One!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Jinora sighed as she leaned against the tree branch— though she could’ve floated around through the air if she wanted, soaring through the clouds. After all, her body was back on Air Temple Island.

But she was hiding from Opal, watching as the older girl stumbled through the forest.

*Oh, love… please… just come home…* she thought.

*I forgive you… please…*

She did not dare say the words aloud— Opal had made it quite clear that she didn’t want to have anything to do with her friends and family right now. Jinora couldn’t tell where the older girl was headed… for the past month, since the attack on Zaofu and her father’s death, she didn’t seem to have any clear path. Only aimlessly wandering around the Earth Kingdom— not even with a glider stave or a Sky Bison.

The Airbending Master pondered if her soulmate was going mad; the hollow look in Opal’s eyes certainly suggested so.

“I’ll… I’ll be back,” Jinora whispered, fading back into her body, thousands of miles away.

She opened her eyes and looked around the yard— she’d been meditating in the gazebo. Airbenders were playing ball at the court; having taken an interest in the game a few years ago, her father had been more than happy to commission a ring for playing Airball. Other groups of young Airbenders were having airscooter races, and some people were even meditating.

*Isn’t it wonderful, Grampa Aang?* she thought with a sad smile, *Our culture is returning.*

Mula, the ex-Probender, merrily whistled as he watered the flowerbeds next to the gazebo.

“And how was meditating?” he asked, adjusting his new yellow acolyte robes and tending to the chrysanthemums.

“Hmm… insightful,” she answered carefully, standing up and walking down the steps of the shelter.
“Oh, well… that’s good! I’ve tried it a few times, but maybe I’m just not patient enough for that sort of thing.”

“It takes a lot of practice.”

Mula smiled, “Well… maybe someday I’ll get it down. I was wondering… if you would like to go get some lunch?”

“Er… like a date?”

Mula’s eyes widened, “Oh, no, sorry, not like that… I forgot to mention being ace and all… I meant as friends!”

Jinora let out a sigh of relief and linked her arm through his with a big smile, “Sure thing. Where did you have in mind?”

“Let’s go to the stands along the waterfront— there’s always something new to try!!”

Opal sat down on the bed of pine needles, evaluating her food sources. It was always nice when she had enough that she didn’t have to go to the nearest town.

The cliff she was at overlooked a large, empty bay. There was not a building for miles, let alone a village of any sort. No boats anchored in any harbors… the land here was barren forest. She looked at her map, one that she’d acquired three towns ago after washing dishes in a restaurant for two days.

Strange…

According to the map, the bay was a huge, empty mudflat— too shallow for any sort of boating, yet too lifeless for any fishing profiteering. On the map, the bay stretched about a mile and a half from side to side with nothing in-between.

But in front of Opal… down the cliff and perhaps half a mile from the shore… there was a small island.

_I wonder what that’s doing there, if this map is recent?

She trudged down the dirt trails, stepping over roots and squeezing past prickly bushes. Opal ended up by a small inlet, where calm waves lapped back and forth against the pebbled beach… like a heartbeat’s rhythm. The Airbender found a plank of plywood that had washed up— about two feet wide by three feet long.

With a smirk, she pushed it out onto the water and stepped on top. Though her shoes were a little soaked, using several determined blasts of air she was instantly flying across the water with a makeshift surfboard.

_Been a while since I’ve actually had fun.

The strange island was nearing— and because it had no beaches to land on, Opal had to time herself just so. She jumped off the plywood with a blast of air and grabbed onto a mangrove tree dangling off the side of the landmass. Climbing up to get a good look, she couldn’t help but feel a great deal of
excitement. Growing up in a metal city with protective platinum domes closing in on you every night… one doesn’t get out to explore the wilderness much.

Opal jumped from limb to limb as she made her way up the steep side of the island, using the trees to hop like a **Hog-Monkey**.

The top of the island, in where she supposed was the center, had some sort of stone platform— complete with intricate carvings and… well… a calming aura.

“I suppose I should meditate,” she mused. “Haven’t done for a while, have I?”

The Airship was slow and steady, and listening to the faint humming of the colossal engines put Asami’s heart at ease. The sun was very bright and warm; the way autumn is usually actually a nicer season than summer. Clouds passed to the left and right, yet the deck of the Airship was a perfect temperature.

Strong, muscular arms wrapped around her torso and lips pressed to her shoulder. A sigh could be heard just beneath her ear— and the familiar tone made the breath in Asami’s throat hitch.

“Are you excited to go back?” Korra murmured against her back.

“To Republic City? I miss the hustle and bustle a little… the backroads of the Earth Kingdom aren’t as… lively. But I don’t know where I’ll be staying— since the Estate is, you know, **gone**. In order to afford an apartment, I’m going to have to face Lin Beifong about unfreezing my Bank Accounts… which means I have to face the Chief of Police…”

Korra’s hands clenched around hers, “I’m not letting anything happen to you.”

“I deserve it.”

Silence. Agonizing silence filled the air, and suddenly it felt a lot colder than before.

“Listen,” Korra said, slowly turning her soulmate around to face her, “You’re doing what you can to fix your wrongs… and you’ve got a lot of good people backing you up… I can talk to Lin if you want— in the meantime… you can stay on Air Temple Island.”

Asami pressed her forehead against the younger girl’s, slowly breathing in and out through her nose as Korra cupped both of her cheeks and kissed her tenderly.

“Thank you.”

“Anything for my Widget.”

The engineer smiled, lacing fingers with Korra’s and leaning against the railing of the Airship.

“Do you think there are any wild Sky Bison out there?”
“Hmm… I don’t know… the Fire Nation kept raising them during the Hundred Year War… but I imagine that, despite their symbiotic relationship with the Air Nomads, there might be whole herds of them somewhere up here.”

Asami chewed her lip thoughtfully, “Can you imagine being able to fly?”

Next to her, she noticed Korra stiffen. The Avatar picked at her sweater and let out a shaky sigh.

“You alright?”

The younger girl sighed, “Did I ever tell you about Zaheer?”

“No… but you… you used to mumble his name in your sleep… I never worked up the courage to ask.”

“He was… an assassin. Zaheer believed in this philosophy that man was destined for greatness via chaos— he was the one who killed the Earth Queen, you know.”

“Oh.”

“… the Red Lotus captured the Airbenders. My second family. Zaheer demanded that I turn myself over to him— and I did. Bastard tried to kill my father, too. I only learned after I met her that Kuvira was the one who saved his life. Suyin killed his… I suppose she was his girlfriend… and that’s what allowed him to unlock flight.

“He captured me, took me to this cave… and put mercury in my body. Tried to end the Avatar State, once and for all. I managed to escape, bring him down. During the fight, though… I slammed into rocks and cliffs. I was in the Avatar State— it kinda temporarily numbs pain— so it wasn’t until I landed that it hit me all at once.”

“What about the poison?” Asami asked, brushing a bit of Korra’s hair aside to gaze into her cerulean eyes.

“Suyin managed to draw most of it out. After Jinora got her tattoos, I returned home. Real home— I stayed in the Southern Water Tribe for two years, confined in a wheelchair. It took me so long just to walk again… and the I had to relearn my bending. Eventually… I tried sailing back to Republic City… but I saw a phantom— a shadow of myself. I had to leave, I wasn’t ready to return. Thank god the Beifongs and Zaofu stepped in and helped clean up the Earth Kingdom while I was gone…”

A flash of Kuvira, curled up into a ball and whimpering about a Great Uniter in the Fog of Lost Souls, seared in the back of Asami’s mind.

“I wandered, without telling anyone where I was going, until I came across Toph Beifong in the swamp. She told me that I still had traces of mercury in my body and helped me… well… help myself. I drew the last of the mercury out… but after that I still had trouble entering the Avatar State. Eventually I had to go to Zaheer’s prison and face him myself. He was reluctant… our interests didn’t align… but realizing that I had great potential he agreed to lead me into the Spirit World.”

“What happened after that?”

“Well… I worked with the United Republic to put King Wu on the throne, though we also established a democracy— a parliament so that the monarch didn’t have complete control over his subjects. And then I sorta just… decided that I wanted to actually learn something besides bending… I went to college and met so many new people. After seventeen years of growing up in a compound, it was nice to actually make friends, like Hikaru and Mula.”
Asami smiled, watching the clouds pass by, “And that’s where I met you?”

“Yeah.”

“Do you… do you still have nightmares about Zaheer?”

easier. I’m not going to lie… recently they were about you.”

“Me?!”

Instantly, as the tension had been building up to an unbearable amount, Korra buried her head in
Asami’s chest. The engineer wrapped her arms around the Avatar without uttering a single word.

“I was so scared that I was going to lose you. I still am.”

“Hey— I’m not going anywhere. You made me promise not to leave you. And like you said…
you’re not going to let anything happen to me.”

“I know.”

“If it makes you feel better, I’m not going to let anything happen to you, either,” the engineer said,
pressing her lips to the Avatar’s forehead.

“How can you promise that? I’m the Avatar.”

“Well… any future assholes have to survive the wrath of Asami Sato first.”

Korra laughed and kissed her soulmate, “I almost feel sorry for them.”

______________________________

Opal started a fire on a large slab of rock (bigger than a Satomobile) overlooking the sunset. She’d
always loved the time before dusk— Zaofu’s platinum domes would always close before she could
get that wonderful last glimpse… but the Air Temples always had the best views.

Not like this though. It was as though the world were all to herself.

The fire crackled a little, and she cooked the peaches that she’d found on the surrounding trees.
Unwrapping her bundle of tin foil among the coals, she grinned.

There was nothing tastier than roasted nuts, and this place was chockful of them—

_Puff_?

The Airbender sat up, frantically looking around... she’d felt a gust of air blow through her hair, not
caused by her. But as she searched, she realized that there was not a soul to be found besides herself.
Shrugging it off, Opal returned to her food, letting out a moan of pleasure when she popped one of
the roasted kernels into her mouth—

*Puff!*

“Who’s there?!”

Nobody answered, and Opal hesitantly looked back at her cooked peaches, taking a cautious bite. Spirits, this island had the best food.

“I suppose I could just stay here for a while… it’s not like anybody cares that I’m absent from their precious lives.”

*You know that’s not true,* a voice in the back of her head cooed. *You know she misses you. They all do.*

“Shut up,” Opal growled aloud.

*Puff!*

“Who is there?!” she called out angrily.

She sent a faint blast through the trees, eagerly trying to sense unusual vibrations in the air around her — a trick she’d thought of when she met her grandma Toph. Same concept as seismic sense, just above ground. Maybe that could be her unique Airbending to earn her tattoo.

*If you ever bother to go back,* the voice scoffed.

Opal ignored the words, deducing that from the vibrations that she was the only one on the island. Or this part of it, anyways. How strange those random gusts of air were.

Like the time Hikaru thought that little Suki was bending…

*I must be going crazy,* she thought, returning to her food and letting out a stressed sigh.

Chapter End Notes

Mula: Yellow Acolyte Cinnamon Bun

Leave comments!!
One Week Later:

She heard the com buzz and crossed the living room, a hand on her stomach as she felt a tiny being squirming around inside her. There was already a bit of a curve in her belly, and the ex-Firebender knew that it was only going to get tougher and tougher as the months passed. She unlocked the latch and opened the door, letting out a squeal when she saw the person on the other side of the entrance.

“Hey there!!” Hikaru laughed, opening the door wider and giving Kuvira a hug, “It’s been a while!”

“No way… you have a bun in the oven!?”

The ex-Firebender rolled her eyes and showed Kuvira into the apartment. Suki was at school, having started fourth grade last week, and Bolin was out getting groceries— so besides Hikaru the place was empty. She opened the fridge and slid a beer over to the Metalbender, grabbing a glass of iced-tea for herself. They sat on the cute red barstools that Bolin had purchased for Hikaru and, after three hours of confusing instructions, managed to assemble.

“How was… Zaofu?” the pregnant woman asked hesitantly. “I… uh… I heard about what happened.”

Kuvira took a few sips of her beer (cinnamon flavored) and let out a sigh.

“It’s been… tough… but the family’s been sticking together. Baatar and I moved right back into the house we were previously renting from here— the landlord is this sweet little old lady. Asa— Korra’s looking at apartments right now.”

Hikaru smirked, “They’re back together?”

“W-What? I didn’t say that!”

“Mnhmm,” the ex-Firebender said, taking a sip of her tea. “You’ve clearly never had gay friends before… lesbian dating drama is worse than nuclear warfare. Judging by the look on your face, they
“You’re good.”

“I could’ve joined the police force, they take Firebenders and all… but I always had a soft spot for probending.”

Kuvira hesitated, “Erm… that’s actually… why I’m here.”

“What do you mean?” Hikaru asked, raising an eyebrow and sipping her tea.

“I can bend Unobtainium.”

Hikaru spat her tea out (staining the Metalbender’s skinny jeans) and looked at Kuvira with a gaping mouth and disbelieving eyes.

“Bullshit.”

Kuvira pulled an unmistakable arrowhead out of her pocket and bent it into a ring, setting it on the counter. Hikaru didn’t say anything, only looking at the despicable piece of metal with astonishment. Her fingers grazed the metallic substance for a second and then gave Kuvira a glare.

“Did you sell your fucking soul to the devil?” she questioned skeptically.

“Sort of. A lillyweed-smoking hippie opened my Chakras,” the Metalbender explained with nonchalance.

Hikaru leaned against the backrest of the stool in wonder, taking a sip of her tea and shaking her head. She played with the ring a little more and looked at the former Captain with concern.

“Can you sense it inside me?”

“More or less. It usually spreads throughout the top of the body— so I can faintly sense it if I run my hands over you. You should’ve seen Baatar Jr. He was fucking saturated with the stuff.”

“I’m worried.”

“Why?”

“The baby,” the former Probender responded.

The dawning look of realization on Kuvira’s face confirmed what Hikaru had been fearing; what if the womb had accumulated traces of Unobtainium? When Hikaru had yelled at Asami in the Estate, all those months ago— she hadn’t quite realized how scared she’d been… shouting about how the Unobtainium could potentially be poisonous. What if the child died?

Kuvira held out a hand and pulled Hikaru off of the barstool and put a hand to the ex-Firebender’s stomach. She took several deep breaths and revolved around Hikaru, her hands feeling the other girl’s core, slowly sliding up her back.

“I… I don’t think the baby has absorbed any of the metal— the small amount that’s in your body seems to be in the top half. The metal works to block your Chi, you see, hindering up along the spine — the path of the Chakras,” the Metalbender said as her hand rested on Hikaru’s shoulder. “This is where you were shot, isn’t it? I can feel the scar— hasn’t healed much, has it?”
“It’s been a year,” the other woman nodded.

“Why don’t we do this outside? It’ll be easier with more space.”

_________________________________________________

“Okay… just stand still… I’m going to do this as slowly as possible.”

“Sounds like I’m not the nervous one,” Hikaru teased, impatiently tapping her foot on the concrete of the rooftop.

“Sssssshhhhh,” Kuvira hushed, closing her eyes and taking a deep breath.

As the former Captain began slowly moving her hands around… Hikaru could actually feel something shifting around inside, as whatever particles moved up her bloodstreams and into her throat—

Something was wrong.

The ex-Firebender gasped for air, feeling her throat block up. Her muscles were seizing and her blood felt on fire. Kuvira opened her eyes and began panicking, unsure of what she was doing wrong.

“Shit, shit!!”

Somehow, she managed to undo her Bending, and Hikaru felt something in her bloodstreams ease. Darkness filled her sight and she slumped down, caught at the last moment by Kuvira. Her ears were ringing and her head was pounding as she blacked out.

“HIKARU!!”

“Mmm… still here…” the pregnant woman groaned, sitting up and rubbing her throat. Her esophagus felt as though it was on fire.

“Fuck— I’m still not sure what happened… everything was fine until I… I’m not sure…”

“How long was I out?”

“Only a few seconds… I’m so sorry, I—”

“Kuvira?”

“Y-Yeah?”

“You know that there’s iron in people’s bloodstreams, right?”

The former Captain’s eyes widened in shock and her jaw dropped to the floor.
“Oh… OOOOOOOOOOOOHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!”

Hikaru began laughing, leaning up against the concrete wall, “You fucking genius!! You must be the first Metalbender to ever Bloodbend!!”

“Okay… here we go… I’m going to hopefully do this right this time…”

“I hope so too… I need my blood to live,” Hikaru retorted.

“Shut up smartass.”

Kuvira was standing closer this time, concentrating only on the Unobtainium in Hikaru’s body—rather than whatever metal she could trace. This time, as Kuvira slowly moved her hands over the other girl’s shoulders, it felt easier when the particles moved through the former Probender’s body. Up through her esophagus and past her jaws, a stream of horrid silver substance withdrew, solidifying into a piece of metal the size of a marble.

Hikaru’s eyes shot wide open and she let out a sharp gasp. She could feel the sun. SHE COULD FEEL THE FUCKING SUN!!!

Her fist shot out and she began laughing and crying at the same time as bursts of fire began sprouting from her knuckles. Energy began swimming within her, into her lungs and she let out a triumphant roar as a blaze shot from her mouth into the sky.

“Drama queen!” Kuvira muttered good-naturedly.

With a jet-propulsion, Hikaru shot across the roof and into the Metalbender’s arms, who twirled her around with a laugh.

“I can… I can Firebend again!!” she sobbed, burying her face into Kuvira’s hoodie. “I… I can’t fucking believe it! It’s been… so long…”

“It’s over now,” Kuvira mused, “It’s going to be okay.”

“Honey, we’re home!” Bolin mused, opening the door and somehow squeezing three paper bags chock full of groceries through the entrance.

A wild shape shot at him as Hikaru scrambled through the living room, scooping up Suki in one swift move and engulfing the two of them in a platypus-bear hug. She was laughing and kissing them both on the cheek. The Earthbender was confused, but pleased at this change of attitude. Bolin wrapped his arms around his girlfriend’s shoulders and leaned into her a little. It’d been a long day—and at some point his throat had begun really hurting. He wondered if it had something to do with
Hikaru’s newfound enthusiasm.

“Huka!! I’m hungry!” Suki said, squirming in her older sister’s arms.

Hikaru laughed and brought her kin up for another kiss on the cheek, and then setting her down to grab some fruit off the counter, “How was school?”

“It was good; can I go play in my room?”

“Do your math homework first, Kiki.”

“Aww… alright.”

Bolin watched as the little girl snatched up the piece of fruit off the counter and grabbed her little pink backpack, closing the door behind her. They heard the sound of a Nintendo 3DS turn on and Pokémon X start up. Bolin rolled his eyes; Suki clearly wasn’t going to do her homework any time soon.

“She’s growing up,” he mused. “Developing a little bit of an attitude.”

“She got it from the rest of the family,” she responded.

Hikaru turned towards him, and he realized that her eyes were filled with… happy tears. She gave him a wide smile and kissed him right then and there.

“Mmm… something put you in a good mood,” Bolin chuckled, scratching the small of her back in amusement.

“Bo… Bo…” she whimpered, hugging him tight. She kissed him on the cheek, and he could feel tears dripping down her face pass over and slide down his own jaw.

“What is it?”

“Kuvira bent the Unobtainium out of my body this afternoon…”

“Wait, she bent it? But I thought— wait, does that mean what I think it means?!” he asked excitedly.

Hikaru stepped back and took a deep breath, the way all Firebenders do to collect their energy, letting a small ring of fire, the size of a basketball, circle in-between them. The small blaze snuck its way around Bolin’s back, and he instinctively stepped closer to her— feeling a little bit of heat on the back of his neck from the flames. Thank papaya nothing caught fire.

She grabbed him by the shoulders and brought him into another kiss.

“Wow…” he murmured. Bolin blinked, taking a second to register this, and then nodding his head, “WOW!!! THAT’S AMAZING!!”

She nodded with a wide grin, pulling him into a hug.

“I haven’t felt so… free… in a whole year.”

Bolin was overwhelmed with joy, and if he was feeling this happy— she must’ve been feeling positively euphoric. Wrapped up in the excitement, his hand slipped down into his pocket.

After all, what better moment than this?
He let go of her, dropping down to one knee in the middle of their apartment. The ring in front of him was made of solid obsidian, he’d carved it combining Lavabending and Earthbending. There was a look of dawning realization slowly creeping on Hikaru’s face, but Bolin beat her to it;

“Hikaru… will you marry me?”

“Oh strawberries, I’m so glad you said that; because I didn’t have a back-up plan—”

She cut him off with a fierce kiss, pulling him by the collar of his brown jacket and climbing onto his lap. Somehow while their tongues were in battle with each other— he managed to slip the obsidian ring onto her finger. Hikaru broke their mouths apart long enough to press their foreheads together.

“I love you,” she whispered.

His green eyes excitedly stared into her amber ones, “I love you, too.”

“Hey guess what?”

“Hmm? What?”

She pressed a kiss to his forehead, threading her fingers through his hair, “You’re my Soulmate.”

He let out a genuine giggle, “You’re my Soulmate, too. Which is great, because otherwise that would get pretty complicated and all and—”

“Bo?” she interrupted with a stern gaze.

“Y-Yeah?”

“Shut up and kiss me.”

“Okay.”

Chapter End Notes

There's like five different references to lexitania's... enthusiastic comments... in this chapter

Leave your thoughts! This was happy chapter #50!!
Rainy Reunion

Chapter Summary

“At first, they'll only dislike what you say, but the more correct you start sounding the more they'll dislike you.”

— Criss Jami, Killosophy

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Opal’s eyes fluttered open and she sat up, stretching her arms and back with a smile. Perhaps it was the Earth Kingdom blood in her, but she took to sleeping on the ground easier than most people. It reminded her of adventuring around the world with Kai— helping where she could.

Her daily routine on the island had been most comfortable; collecting fruits and nuts and leafy greens, perhaps meditating for a few hours, drawing flora and fauna in her sketchbook, and keeping an exercise routine. It was simple and uplifting— a schedule without responsibility.

This morning, however, something felt a little off.

She gathered some breakfast, as usual. Opal had built herself a proper fire-pit a few days ago— part of her wondered if she could make a proper shelter and stay here for a while. There certainly was enough food. And she could probably build a thick thatch roof out of the jungle-like leaves with which the trees here were abundant.

It was only when the fire was going steady that she bothered to look up and realize what was wrong.

When Opal had first come across this island, it had been in the middle of a bay; surrounded by land on either side. But now… there was not another land mass in sight for… for…

Opal frantically used her Airbending to scurry up one of the tallest trees, gripping on the thick vines as she jumped from limb to limb. Perched as high as she could muster, Opal searched all three-hundred and sixty degrees. The island was in the middle of the ocean now?! How was that possible?!

“What the fuck?” she whispered.

With a shake of her head and a huff of confusion, she hopped off the tree— using a cyclone of air to slow her landing.

Though she knew that something was up with this place, Opal honestly couldn’t care less as she dug into her breakfast; so long as there was a place to sleep, food to eat, and scenery to gaze at… she was content.
“Tell me again why I’m agreeing to this?” Lin Beifong asked, pinching the bridge of her nose and sighing.

“Because you’re Mom #5, and I’m your Avatar?” Korra smirked, giving the Metalbender Bambi Eyes.

“I don’t give two shits about… oh, whatever! I’ll have her accounts unfrozen by tomorrow!!” the Chief huffed.

“Thanks!”

As Korra walked away from the Chief’s office and the metal door closed behind her, she heard Lin’s muffled voice say something along the lines of, “City doesn’t pay me enough for this shit.”

Asami was politely waiting at the bench in the entrance hall, nervously jiggling her knee as she tapped her red nails on the wooden seat. She stood up and gave Korra a hug, who eagerly leaned into her embrace.

“How did it go?” the engineer stuttered.

“It took a bit of arguing and some of that good old ‘Avatar Charisma’… but she said yes,” Korra said with a wink.

With a sigh of relief, Asami gave Korra a kiss on the cheek and buried her head in the Avatar’s shoulder. They stood there, blocking the middle of the hall, and officers and detectives were forced to weave their way around them in annoyance.

“Let’s go get some lunch, hmm?” Korra whispered in her girlfriend’s ear.

“I’d like that.”

Hand in hand, the two Soulmates walked down the steps of the Police Headquarters and though the busy streets of Republic City. Billboards lit up with the newest Varrick Global Industries tech, and Cabbage Corp advertisements passed by in the form of busses and trucks.

“What happened to Future Industries?”

“From what I can gather… the Lieutenant is in control of the company,” Asami said with a frown, “I was fortunate to have some employees— some of them Equalists— who were still loyal to my Father and I. They passed on information as soon as I returned here. Most of it’s word of mouth… but the board is still functioning and normal production is still underway.

“I’m worried— now that the slimy bastard has access to the company assets and materials— that he’s going to develop some sort of tech, or take advantage of our resources.”

Korra fidgeted with her jacket. She was still a little uncomfortable with Asami’s past— but she knew that the only thing that they could do was move forwards. It did not do any good to dwell.

“A while back, Hikaru texted me,” the Avatar said, watching traffic come and go, “She’d come across an elderly man with an unusual wound— he died telling her that he’d been attacked by Equalists.”
“What kind of wound?”

“A hole in his collarbone, some sort of impact.”

“Baatar’s gun design!!”

“What?”

“Back when… I’d first come to Zaofu… and I began working with Baatar Jr…. he was developing a prototype…”

“And when we were attacked, the Equalists stole his designs,” Korra concluded, her heart dropping.

Asami looked at the hectic metropolis for a few moments, and the Avatar could almost see the gears turning in her Widget’s head. Suddenly, the older girl grabbed Korra by the collar of her jacket and pushed their mouths together. As quickly as it had happened, Asami broke off the kiss.

“What—”

“I love you,” the engineer whispered with their foreheads pressed against each other, “I’ve got to go do something… I’ll make lunch up to you, I promise.”

Korra shrugged and gave her another kiss, “It’s alright… I know you have your reasons.”

She watched as Asami flagged down a taxi and threw a wad of cash (Suyin had given her a loan before they left) at the driver. He sped off quicker than a bolt of lightning. Korra watched the yellow blotch turn a corner and disappear, biting her lip in anguish as she felt rain drops begin to obscure her view.

_____________________________________________________

Hikaru was reading a book about Fire Lord Azulon and his conquest against both of the Water Tribes when the doorbell buzzed. Strange… the Firebender wasn’t expecting any company today. She stood up with a groan, stretching her back and patting her belly— strutting across the room and rubbing her eyes sleepily.

“Hello?” she murmured, half-awake as she opened the door.

The person across from her didn’t say anything, just standing there, clearly trying to work the courage to say something. Hikaru blinked; for with her new, short haircut… Asami was almost unrecognizable. Short, wild black hair was tousled atop her head, and she was wearing a red Fire Ferrets jacket— Hikaru recognized it as Korra’s. Huh. So they did get back together.

“Wow… you look completely different,” the Firebender muttered, her hands on her hips and an eyebrow raised; as though she were issuing a challenge.

“C-Can we talk?”

The pregnant woman bit her lip and her arm twitched to slam the door in the ex-Equalist’s face. Instead, she let out a sigh and opened the door wider, turning and motioning for Asami to follow.
She didn’t offer the other woman anything to drink— instead sitting down in the arm chair and folding her arms defensively across her chest. Asami awkwardly sat down on the couch, her hands nervously fiddling with the fabric of her jeans.

Hikaru inhaled and exhaled slowly, collecting her thoughts before she got too riled up and yelled at the other woman. The pitter patter of the rain against the window was calming, and Hikaru had half a mind to turn off the lights and light some candles. Perhaps then she would be composed enough to—

“So… y-you knew this whole time?” Asami whispered.

The Firebender’s nails dug into her arms, but she nodded, “Yes.”

“Why didn’t you say something?” the engineer asked, a tone of pain seeping through her words.

Hikaru clenched her teeth, and then let out a sigh, “As per your mother’s wishes, contact between us growing up… was forbidden by our families. I was… holding up their wishes.”

“Fuck that.”

The attitude surprised the pregnant woman, who looked away from the rainy windows and towards the engineer. Asami had an angry expression— but something told Hikaru that the fury was not directed at her.

“You shot me,” Hikaru whispered angrily.

“Yes I did.”

This admittance… this confession surprised her yet again. Something had certainly changed in the engineer, she was not the same sniveling Equalist that Hikaru had tried to kill all those months ago. There was a confidence in Asami’s eyes… no… there was a fire.

“You sound at peace with your actions— your horrors,” Hikaru snapped, gazing back at the water glazed windows.

“I’ve found no tranquility with the decisions my past life made,” Asami hissed, “I’m just… I’m ready to accept that I hurt you. I’m here to apologize.”

Her words sounded genuine, and Hikaru closed her eyes.

On one hand, the engineer was a criminal. A threat to the city, to the Firebender’s friends, to little Suki. Asami had tried to injure Hikaru, and had succeeded. Moreover— she’d taken away something very valuable… stolen her life with a single arrow.

But Kuvira had fixed that… and if the Metalbender was to be believed… Kuvira couldn’t have discovered this newfound ability without Asami’s help.

“How did you find out? About us?” Hikaru asked accusingly.

“Kuvira and I went into the Fog of Lost Souls.”

“The F— is that supposed to mean anything to me?!”

Asami shrugged, “It’s in the Spirit World. The point is, the place… showed some horrible stuff to both Kuvira and I… I saw my Mom and yours… grow up… Shun and Yasuko having a falling out… and the funeral—”
Hikaru shuddered at the memory; that horrible man standing over her and yelling despicable words to her.

“I learned the truth about the both of us... and now I don’t even know if it makes a difference. It’s obvious that, between the two of us, you’re the one who isn’t going to change.”

“Really? I’m sorry— while you’ve been going on your important spiritual self-reflection journey, I’ve been trying to live a normal fucking life!!”

Asami stood, looking as though she could punch Hikaru. Instead, she gave the Firebender a lingering gaze, looking up and down her body— notably at the small bump in her belly— and then smirking mischievously.

“Who’s the father?”

Hikaru narrowed her eyes, “None of your business.”

Asami crossed the threshold of the living room and, in the blink of an eye, snatched up Hikaru’s left hand. Instantly, the other girl readied a ball of fire in her right fist, but the engineer astoundingly... didn’t waver. She studied the obsidian band, turning Hikaru’s hand over as she beheld the black stone on the other girl’s ring finger.

“Judging by the... craftsmanship, I’d say that Bolin carved this,” the ex-Equalist simpered.

With those words, Asami muttered a “congratulations” and left the apartment, slamming the door behind her.

Hikaru didn’t realize that she was panting— her blood brimming with anger, her hands shaking with anxiety, and her heart beating like a snare drum in her chest. She leaned back in the arm chair, picking at the fabric and looking out the window as a familiar red dot disappeared into a crowd of pedestrians. A sheet of rain suddenly hit the pane of glass and the Firebender’s vision was obscured.

She sighed, standing up and walking over to the kitchen. Her hand lingered on the knob to the whiskey cabinet for a moment, and then she thought better of her desires— opening the fridge and grabbing the pitcher of tea that she’d grown a sweet tooth for.

*Spirits, what a mess.*

Chapter End Notes

I guess it’s not all rainbows and sunshine sometimes...

Leave comments!!

Update: Cleaned up the main description... there was an awful lot of trash in them tags...
Shooters

Chapter Summary

“The fascination of shooting as a sport depends almost wholly on whether you are at the right or wrong end of the gun.”

— P.G. Wodehouse, The Adventures of Sally

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Bao cracked her knuckles and smiled. Time to strike.

She signaled to her Coalition team— slithering into the warehouse and hiding behind several crates. As quietly as she could, a small tap on the ground allowed her to rip up a chunk of the floor the size of a baseball. She grabbed it out of the air and sent it flying towards the rafters. It collided against the ceiling on the other end of the warehouse, causing enemy heads to turn the wrong direction.

“Who’s there?!” she heard an Equalist cry out. There was a smash and clatter as the criminals stirred up a racket, trying to find the source of the infiltration.

“Go!” Bao whispered to her team.

The teenagers raced, weaving among the parked vehicles and crates— Bao and some of the other Earthbenders working together to create a large wall. Ascending from the floor, about a foot thick, they began pushing the barrier towards the other side of the warehouse.

CRASH!

Anything on the ground in the warehouse (including people, crates, and vehicles) was crushed behind the wall as it slammed into the opposite wall. Bao ignored the cries of pain and last screams of Equalists, now bloody and broken behind the earthen wall.

The Coalition had given up trying to be a bunch of flimsy pacifists. Now, it was kill or be killed.

She heard a sizzle and stomped her foot on the ground. A slap could be heard as, instead of the shock glove colliding against her back, the Equalist’s hand hit a block of earth. She spun around and kicked the slab— watching as it pushed the crook up against a shipping container. Bao ignored the crunch of bones crushing between earth and metal and his final groan of pain as she ran to assist the other Coalition Benders.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

“Take cover!” she yelled at her teammates. “These ones have Shooters!”

That was the nickname some of the Coalition members had given the strange projectile-launching tools that the Equalists began using. A shot could kill you if it hit your head or one of your vital
organs. Bao had lost some good kids to those bastards.

Some of the Waterbenders managed to make a wall of ice over their heads— which not only provided a barrier, but made it difficult for the Shooters to aim at them; the distortion of the water tricked their sights, and they would always miss this way.

“Ground yourself!” Bao shouted.

The Coalition members instantly found the nearest Earthbender and the groups sealed themselves in protective earth. Now it was the Firebenders’ time to shine.

Lightning shot out of index and middle fingers of several kids, aimed up at the metal catwalks. Bao heard the sizzle of Equalists, who were in contact with metal, frying up and falling to the ground. Other Firebenders shot blazes up to barrels of oil, lighting up the warehouse in a terrific glow.

“Orders?” the Coalition member next to her asked with a whisper.

“Plant the explosions and go!” she hissed, grabbing the Waterbender girl in front of her— the former Probender, Eun— and pulling her back by the scruff of her neck.

“You got it, boss!” the other member whispered.

\textit{Crack! Crack! Crack!}

The Waterbender in front of her fell to the ground with a cry, and Bao felt something warm and sticky on her hands. Bao stomped her foot and the squirming Eun was instantly levitated on an earthen platform. She sent the girl towards the nearest Earthbender.

“Get her outside!”

\textit{Crack! Crack! Crack!}

Bao saw more of her teammates fall to the ground, watching from behind a crate as another wall of earth raised up for protection as kids rushed forwards to retrieve fallen comrades.

“Explosions are set, Bao!”

“Alright! Get going!”

\textit{Thwack!}

Bao felt a blunt force collide with her head and let out a groan as she dodged another kick. She was face-to-face with a relentless Chi Blocker, who kept sending jab after jab towards her body. Bao wasn’t going to put up with that shit, though. With a laugh, she fell into the ground and covered herself in the concrete, making a suit of armor out of the earth and sending a powerful punch into the Chi Blocker’s face.

“Nice try,” she smirked, as the Chi Blocker slumped to the ground.

Bao unwrapped the earthen armor from her body and leapt over a crushed van, scanning for any remaining trapped or injured Coalition members. Fortunately, the area seemed clear of Benders, save for those at the entrance— calling for her to get out of the warehouse. Unfortunately, she’d just put herself at the perfect vantage point.

\textit{Crack!}
“Shit,” she mumbled, feeling something rip through her stomach.

Unbearable pain coursed through her abdomen and she crashed to the top of the van, huddling in a ball and clutching her wound.

There was cry— with hazy vision, she watched as a Firebender used a jet-propulsion to launch himself through the air. He landed on top of the van, sending a few bolts of lightning towards the Shooters and scooping her up.

Bao was in pain… so much pain… but as the Firebender carried her out of the warehouse, towards the other side of the street— where a Waterbender began healing her, she couldn’t help but smirk as she watched the night sky light up a brilliant orange and red.

*Explosions are so much fun to make,* she thought— as everything went fuzzy.

The Earthbender could hear sirens in the distance, and smirked as her Coalition members slithered into the alleys. A familiar red vehicle parked next to her and men in white uniforms began lifting her onto a stretcher. Another flash of pain hit her stomach, but one of the paramedics put a clear mask on her face and gave her hand a squeeze.

A gas filled her nose, and she felt herself… calming down… as the… ambulance… sped… up.

With a… relaxed sigh… Bao slipped away… to the rhythmic beeping… of the… monitor… and the occasional… squeeze… the paramedic… would give… her… hand.

________________________________________________

“DAMMIT!! WHICH ONE OF YOU WAS RESPONSIBLE?!”

One of the Equalists shuffled forwards, his head bowed low. The man had a burn on the side of his face and his arm was in a cast.

There had been an attack last night— another warehouse had been blown up, and the Lieutenant had lost at least twenty good men and women. The injured man standing in front of him was in charge of the warehouse. He should have seen this coming. He shouldn’t have been caught off guard. Flies in the ointment could not be abided.

“I can’t afford mistakes like this; how could you just let those Coalition dogs waltz right in?”

“Sir…” the injured man said, trembling on the spot, “Sir, we fought back as best we could!”

“Evidently not,” the Lieutenant hissed— looking out at the horizon of Republic City. This kind of insolence and irresponsibility could not go unpunished.

“Sir, I won’t make this mistake again! I swear!”

“I know you won’t,” the Lieutenant snapped, turning around and grabbing the weapon off of the desk. “I’m not going to let you.”

The injured man’s eyes widened, but he didn’t get to protest as the leader of the Neo Equalists pulled
the trigger. A loud bang resonated through the room, and several of the lackeys jumped, clearly startled out of their wits. Nobody made eye contact as the body slumped to the ground.

“Get this debris out of my sight,” the Lieutenant ordered, kicking the corpse as he set the gun back on the desk. “Where’s Ai?! I want to talk to someone competent!”

“She’s injured, sir.”

“What?! Fine… get me my third in command!”

The Equalist looked down at the dead body and nervously swallowed, “Y-You just shot him, sir…”

“Then get me someone who’s fucking capable of knocking a few heads together! You, with the mask!” he shouted at a woman, “You’re my second-in-command until Ai gets back!”

There was a noticeable gulp as one of the Equalists stepped forwards and bowed. She nervously tapped her thigh as the Lieutenant looked out the window and stroked his mustache. What to do? What to do? He let out a huff and waved his hand, watching as the group of lackeys walked out of the room, save for his new right-hand-woman.

“Or-Orders, Sir?” she stuttered.

“Take the fight to the bastards,” he grumbled. “Send someone a message— I don’t care! You know what? Go bomb some triads, that would cheer me up!”

His new second-in-command bowed (more out of fear than respect) and hastily scrambled out of the room. There was a crash and clatter as his useless cronies began organizing a raid against the Triple Threats.

The Lieutenant opened Hiroshi’s liquor cabinet and poured himself a drink, sipping on something foul and fancy and admiring the new bloodstain in the lavish carpet.

_________________________________________________

One Week Later:

Doctor Kang gave Mako a respective bow, “She’s been awake for about two days, and though I strongly recommended against it… Eun’s agreed to questioning… try not to ask anything too stressful…”

“Thank you,” the Detective said curtly.

The Firebender pushed the door open, and the Waterbender looked up in confusion.

“Who’re you?”

“Detective Mako, I’m here to ask you some questions.”

Eun squirmed a little in her bed, setting her book down and giving him a long stare, “You’re Bolin’s brother, aren’t you?”
This surprised Mako a little, but he was a master at not revealing his emotions, “How do you know him?”

“He was a member of the Coalition for a few months, back before Hikaru quit.”

What?! He was going to have a fucking chat with those two!! No wonder they’d grown pacified in recent months… didn’t want to risk hurting the baby—

That wasn’t his focus right now.

“Can you tell me what position you have in The Coalition for Benders and Nonbenders?” he questioned, formally clicking a pen and jogging down records on a tiny notepad.

“Eh, I wasn’t a higher up, if that’s what you’re asking,” the Waterbender answered nonchalantly.

Mako sighed, “And who is in charge of your little group?”

“Uh… right to remain silent?”

“You can’t just… oh, whatever. We already know who leads you. Earthbender chick… Bao, is it?”

“No comment,” Eun smirked.

“Chief Beifong is questioning her next door.”

“Still no comment.”

Mako sat down on the stool and gave her a lengthy stare. She met his golden eyes with an equally impressive gaze, smirking and then winking. He leaned back with a blink, and her fingers reached out to fiddle with the buttons of his coat— Mako quickly pushed them away.

“You’re kinda cute,” she teased.

“I-I’m sorry?”

“You heard me.”

The Detective sighed and stood from the chair. It was obvious that this girl wasn’t going to disclose any more information— and whatever she knew wasn’t going to help, anyways. Lin was questioning Bao, who was the real prize.

“Are you going to arrest me when I’m all healed up, officer?” she asked flirtatiously.

Mako scratched his collar— was it hot in here, or was it just him?

“No… I think you’ve earned your lesson, and if not… well… just learn your lesson!” he snapped, irritated at how flustered she was making him.

Eun’s face playfully fell into a pout, “Aw, I was kinda hoping you’d frisk me.”

“Excuse me!?”

The Waterbender began laughing hysterically— clutching her belly and reminding the Firebender a little of Korra. A blushing Mako stepped out of the room and closed the door with a “goodbye”, only to suddenly find himself face-to-face with Chief Beifong and Officer Saikhan.
“You’re going to have to do better than that if you want a raise,” Lin smiled.

“I can’t help it, she was— oh, never mind!”

He exited the hospital with his superiors walking behind him, the two elders snickering as he drove all the way back to Police Headquarters.

Chapter End Notes

And back into the action!! I missed writing Coalition vs. Equalist chapters! Also, for reference, Eun was the waterbender on Hikaru’s Probending team... looks like she has a thing for Mako...

Leave comments!!
Chapter Summary

“Once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return.”

— Leonardo da Vinci

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Come on, you three, keep your fists up and protect your face!” Hikaru laughed, kicking her feet up, leaning back, and ignoring the horrible, yet familiar smell of the Probending training room.

Her rookies, the new faces of the Fire Ferrets, gave her a nod and then began slinging fire, earth, and water back and forth. Overall, they weren’t too sloppy— horrible footwork, though. Hikaru winced as the Firebender, Kanji, took a waterwhip to the face. He was sent reeling back into the net, and she stood up with a groan to help him.

“You need to keep your feet a certain way,” she explained enthusiastically. “Otherwise you’re going to break your toes AND get knocked out of the ring.”

“Sure thing, Coach,” Kanji murmured, rubbing the back of his neck.

“Here, let me show you,” Hikaru chuckled— straightening her body into a Firebending stance. It’d been so long since she’d felt that Probending adrenaline (that sounds like a horrible 80’s disco song), and she smiled as the Earthbender, Akara, began sending disc after disc at her.

Hikaru dodged all of them easily, feeling her breath begin to warm up as she began quickly dancing around— retaliating with a quick few blasts of fire from her fists. Akara had to momentarily dodge her strikes, but a quick spin and he sent a disc flying low.

Towards her stomach.

Oh fuck.

She froze up on the spot, petrified. The disc was about to hit her—

A shard of ice smashed the disc into a cloud of sand. Hikaru looked up at the Waterbender, a girl named Rune, who was panting— having skidded over from the other side of the room. The girl’s fist was encased in a pointed icicle, now covered with flecks of dirt. She must’ve punched the disc out of the way.

Rune turned towards Akara, “Are you nuts? She’s pregnant! You could’ve… you know!!”

The Earthbender shyly scratched his brown hair and looked down at the ground, “Sorry, Coach.”

Hikaru, equally embarrassed at Rune’s rather… forthright words… walked up and put a hand on his shoulder, “It’s alright. It was just an accident. The important thing is that nobody got hurt. Now, back
to training— all of you! We’ve got a championship to win!”

She sat back down on the bleachers (the team was careful not to send any projectiles her way), and watched them begin picking up a good rhythm as they danced around the gym— dodging and striking as though it were a dance routine.

The Firebender’s eyes wandered down to her phone. She had two new text messages;

Mula: You’re not going to believe this!! Kuvira came by and restored my Bending!

Hikaru’s mouth curled into a smile.

The Annoying Firebender No. 2: That’s terrific! Are you still going to be an Air Acolyte?

Mula: Yeah, it’s a lot more interesting that Probending… no offense.

The Annoying Firebender No.2: No wonder you were always late for matches… I should’ve motivated you with promises of meeting Opal and the others!! Then you would’ve shown up for practice more often!!

Mula: I hate you.

The Annoying Firebender No. 2: I know. I’m happy you’ve got your bending back.

She looked at her other message— from Bolin, about fifteen minutes. Hikaru’s eyes glanced up at the Fire Ferrets, Kanji and Akara were teaming up against Rune, who was having a great time beating them back with harsh whips of water. Another wave and— OUCH!! The boys went flying back into the gym equipment.

“Take a break, and then I want you two to just work on evasive maneuvers for the next ten minutes!!” she called out to them.

Lava Bear: I talked with Mako, he says he can get you clearance to go and visit both Bao and Eun… he’s also kinda pissed that we used to be in the Coalition…

The Annoying Firebender No. 2: That’s understandable— let’s go see them this afternoon. Can you ask Mako to babysit Suki?

Lava Bear: He’s probably busy… let me check, though.

Hikaru watched as Kanji and Akara dodged around Rune’s attacks— using each other to distract her. Huh… smart trick. She clicked her pen and took note of the move for future matches and practices. Her phone buzzed again.
Lava Bear: Yeah… he’s busy with a case— apparently some Triads were attacked last night by Equalists… lots of death…

The Annoying Firebender No. 2: Yuck. What about Korra?

Lava Bear: Sure, let me ask.

Lava Bear: She’s down with it— says she’ll take Suki to Air Temple Island.

The Annoying Firebender No. 2: Great! I’ll be finished up with the team in half an hour, can you come pick me up?

Lava Bear: Sure thing. Love you!

The Annoying Firebender No. 2: Love you too!! ;)

Hikaru leaned back against the wall running parallel with the bleachers. It was nice to have a proper job— and coaching the rookie teams paid well. She also didn’t have to get up nearly as early as her previous factory job at Future Industries… and the free Probending tickets didn’t hurt. The kids were also polite, and occasionally pretty badass at Bending.

Maybe things would turn out okay after all.

___________________________________________

“We’ll see you at about eight-o-clock!!” Bolin chuckled, giving Korra a platypus-bear sized hug. “Thanks for helping out with Suki.”

“No problem; I figure someone might be pretty excited to ride a Sky Bison!” the Avatar exclaimed, looking down at the little kid tugging on her sleeve.

“Yeah! Sky Bison!!” Suki squealed in excitement.

“Thanks again,” Hikaru said, also giving the Water Tribe girl a warm embrace.

“I’ll see you both at eight!” Korra shouted as the ferry began its departure.

Suki was excited to lean over the railing and stare at the water— more than once Korra had to scoop her away with a blast of air. The little nine-year-old was fierce, like the rest of her family.

“Korra?”

“Hmm?”

“Hikaru says you knew my Gran Gran in a past life.”
The Avatar smiled, rubbing the back of her head and patting the seat next to her on the bench. Instead, little Suki climbed up onto Korra’s lap and looked at her with excited blue eyes.

“I did— in the lifetime before this, I was Avatar Aang. He and your grandmother were really great friends!”

“So can you talk to Gran Gran?” Suki asked with wide eyes.

“Oh, um… it doesn’t work like that… but hey! I know someone who’s a lot like Gran Gran!”

“Really?”

“Oh sure! You’d like her a lot!”

*What are you doing, Korra? If Hikaru found out— she’d kick your ass and also probably never talk to you again…*

She shook her head and picked up Suki, allowing the little kid to sit on her shoulders as they stepped onto the dock. Jinora walked up, giving Korra a kiss on the cheek and ruffling Suki’s messy brown hair. Together, the trio trudged up the marble stairs and passed a group of Airbenders playing a game of Airball.

“Oooohhh!! Can you teach me how to do that?” Suki asked.

“Well… it’s kind of a game for Airbenders—” Jinora began.

Korra elbowed the twenty-year-old in the ribs.

“— but I’m sure we can make an exception!” the Airbending master quickly corrected.

They walked over to the courtyard, where Mula and Kai were playing a game of horseshoes. The piles of rocks on the table indicated that the Acolyte was currently winning— at a score of seven to one.

“… no fair! I swear you’re using Metalbending!” Kai protested.

“I’m not! I’m just really lucky!” Mula laughed.

Someone hesitantly walked up, “K-Korra?”

The Avatar excitedly turned and looked at her girlfriend, “Hey there, Asami! There’s someone I want you to meet!”

She grabbed Suki underneath the arms and lifted her up over her shoulders. The little girl looked up at the engineer for half a second and then energetically rushed in for a very Bolin-esque hug. Asami looked startled, pleading green eyes searching Korra’s for answers.

“Suki, meet Asami. Asami… this is… Suki.”

“Come in!”

Hikaru opened the door and walked into the sterile, hospital room. Bao was sitting upright, clicking the TV remote and searching for an interesting channel.

“Hey champ!” the Firebender said meekly.

Bao rolled her eyes, “I don’t recall you sending me a get-well card.”

“I wanted to stop by and say hello!” Hikaru said in a defensive (but also playful) manner.

The Earthbender pointed to the chair next to the bed, and the Firebender sat down with a smirk. Bao turned the volume down (it was currently a rerun of Judge Joo Dee) and handed the remote to Hikaru, who put it on the tray next to the bed.

“What kind of wound is it?”

“I think it’s called a ‘gunshot’, but we call them Shooter-Bites. It sounds cooler that way.”

“You’re just as irritable and cocky as I remember,” Hikaru teased.

The Earthbender chuckled, and then her face fell a little, “Why did you leave the Coalition?”

“I… I’m pregnant. I didn’t want to… you know…”

Bao nodded in understanding, “It’s hard to live in two worlds at once. Tesmaa didn’t think that one through all the way.”

“How is his mom? And his brother?”

“I send them a little bit of money once a month— whatever I can raid from Equalist warehouses.”

“Oh.”

“It’s not all sunshine and daffodils.”

“No… no, it isn’t,” Hikaru agreed solemnly.

“C-Can I ask a big favor of you?”

Hikaru took Bao’s hand, and though they were never close, it seemed the right thing to do, “Of course.”

“I need someone to take over the Coalition until I’m better… I’m not asking you to fight… but those kids need someone to guide them around— or else they’re going to get themselves killed. You were already my second-in-command before you left… they’ll trust you.”

The Firebender took a deep breath, looking down at her sneakers and then back at Bao’s insistent green eyes, “Alright… I don’t make any promises that this is a good idea… but I’ll see what I can do…”
“Wow!! This is so cool!!” Suki shouted excitedly, running up to Oogi and wrapping her arms around his nose in a makeshift hug. The Sky Bison excitedly nudged his nose forward and reciprocated the embrace.

Korra and Asami laughed, and the Avatar snaked her hand around her soulmate’s waist. They watched Suki bond with Oogi, patting and scratching the large tan arrow on his forehead and climb up his face. She was hanging off of one of his horns as the couple walked up to the newfound friends with a chuckle.

“Wanna ride him around?” Korra asked lightheartedly.

“YES!!” Suki answered in a heartbeat.

“Are you sure we’re allowed to take him for a flight?” Asami whispered with a very… Hermione-Granger-like tone.

“Pppppsssssshhhhh!!! I’m a triple-honorary-member of the Air Nomads! Jinora said so!”

With a blast of Air, Korra lifted herself and Asami up onto the Sky Bison— the Avatar climbing down and picking up the reins. With a “yip-yip!”, they were soaring over Air Temple Island. A few of the Airbenders playfully grabbed glider staves and flew up to join them— weaving around Oogi and doing tricks for the trio.

Jinora landed on the Sky Bison’s saddle and sat down across from Asami.

“She looks like she’s having fun,” the Airbending Master said with a smirk.

“THIS IS SSSSSSSSSSSOOOOOOOOOO AWESOME!!” Suki shouted over the roar of the wind, peering over the edge of the saddle and gazing at the city horizon.

The engineer was in a bit of a trance— it was so strange to think that the little nine-year-old girl sitting next to her and tugging on her sleeve was her cousin… and she couldn’t even tell her. No doubt Hikaru would kill her and Korra when she found out; so Asami decided to enjoy this moment while it lasted. She pointed out the Probending Arena and Future Industries Tower, the Police Headquarters and City Hall.

Airbenders kept twirling around them while they flew over the city— occasionally stopping to catch their breath on the Sky Bison before flashing smiles and continuing to glide over the horizon. Asami looked at Jinora’s Glider Suit that she’d made over a year ago and wondered if she could replicate the prototype for the rest of the Airbenders.

Oogi flew over the Spirit-vine covered Harmony Tower, and Suki let out several oooooloooooooooohhhhh’s and aaaaaahhhhhhh’s at the marvelous glowing sight. Jinora laughed and began rambling about the history of the tower, but eventually piped down when she realized that the little girl had moved onto other sights; Korra flew them over another chunk of the city and a part of Asami’s heart broke.

Eventually, she climbed up next to Korra and leaned her head on the Avatar’s shoulder, who instantly snuggled up to Asami and wrapped an arm around the engineer.

“You know, when you told me we were going on a date, I didn’t expect you to bring my cousin and
several Airbenders along,” Asami whispered with a low voice.

“I just thought it might be nice to meet her… under better conditions than Hikaru would’ve introduced you…”

Asami sighed, “I probably wouldn’t have realized she existed, if not for the Fog of Lost Souls… Hikaru certainly wouldn’t have told me.”

“Well… at least Suki knows you’re not a soulless monster.”

“Gee, thanks,” the engineer whispered with a sarcastic roll of her eyes.

“Hey,” Korra said, with a kiss to Asami’s temple, “It’s going to be okay.”

“I… I know.”

“Come on, I bet you’ve never seen Avatar Aang’s Statue from only ten feet away!!”

“I feel like that’s disrespectful!” Jinora called from behind.

“But I’m like… technically Aang… so… not really?”

“Oh for Raava’s sake!” the Airbending Master huffed, folding her arms and shooting Korra an icy glare.

Their laughter could be heard from all over Yue Bay.

Chapter End Notes

Awwww!! Suki and Asami meet!! Also, the adorable new Fire Ferrets!!

Leave Comments!!
Chapter Summary

“The real glory is being knocked to your knees and then coming back. That's real glory. That's the essence of it.”

— Vince Lombardi Jr.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

One Month Later:

Bolin reached out and rubbed Hikaru’s back in comforting circles. His fiancé sighed— her head in-between her knees as she curled up on the couch and tried to come up with a solution. He knew she wasn’t mad at him or anything, by the way she leaned a little into his palm and nudged her feet against his.

“What am I supposed to do?” she whispered. “I’m raising my sister, I’ve got another kid on the way, and now I have a full-time job to worry about. I can’t lead an illegal band of misfits around the city— Spirits, I’d just get them killed!!”

The Earthbender wrapped his arms around his fiancé and pulled her close to his chest. His hand rested on her belly— which was definitely protruding now… at twenty weeks pregnant.

“Mmm… your hands are warm,” Hikaru whispered, nudging her face into his neck.

Bolin smirked and kissed her loose black hair— nestling himself into her curls and almost falling asleep on the spot.

“Have you thought about asking Korra?” he asked.

“What?”

“I mean, she is the Avatar and all. It’s kinda her job to take care of the bad guys. You shouldn’t be forced to do this all by yourself,” Bolin said thoughtfully.

“I suppose…”

“Hey!” the Earthbender said, shifting her into his lap and threading his fingers through her hair, “When was the last time I treated you to a nice Bolin-style spa bath?”

Hikaru smirked, “Well… that would certainly ease… my mind… a bit…”

She was forced to trail off as he lovingly kissed the back of her neck, massaging his hands all over her body. The Firebender let out a content sigh as he slowly picked her up and carried her into the bathroom; starting the tap and lighting a few candles.
Bolin kissed her along her collar, leaving a few sensual bites— and Hikaru had to grip his shoulders to keep herself steady as he peeled her clothes off. His fiancé’s eyes were closed and she was biting her lip as his hands worked their way down to her breasts; massaging her tender and sore skin and leaving more kisses in his trek downward.

“You’re such a good boy to me,” Hikaru whispered, and Bolin smirked as his mouth trailed all over her stomach— over the home of his child.

At some point, his fiancé had regained some of her senses and had begun undressing him as well— pulling his tank top over his head and giving him a kiss as she unbuttoned his pants. When she got to his boxer briefs, he stopped her hands.

“What?”

“I want to do this for you,” Bolin whispered, lowing himself on his knees and slowly pulling her panties down her toned legs.

“Oh… oooooohhh…”

The Earthbender left love bites on her thighs, lifting her legs over her shoulders and pressing her up against the wall as he inhaled a wonderful musky scent, and began giving Hikaru a great deal of pleasure with his mouth. After a few lingering licks to her sensitive nub, the Firebender’s resistance crumbled.

“Bo!! Oh fuck!!”

He smirked and lowered one of his hands, relishing in the tight warmth of being inside her— even if it was only his fingers. Hikaru let out several moans as she weaved her own fingers through his short black hair, gripping on tightly as she grew closer and closer to her orgasm. He curled his fingers up and felt a soft, spongy texture.

“OH FUCK!! BOLIN!!”

He felt as though his hair was going to rip out of his head, as Hikaru gripped on tightly to steady herself through her climax. He kept moving his fingers, even though her walls were too constricted for him to move (he might break his hand if she kept this up; but it would be worth it).

Eventually, she relaxed and slumped downwards to the floor— Bolin caught her, quickly taking off his boxers and stepping them both into the tub. His fiancé was still coming down from her euphoria, and he began giving her a back massage… taking extra care to scrub her clean.

“Gods, how did I find a man like you?” Hikaru whispered, leaning back against him as his hands meandered around her waist and pulled her close.

“Mmmm… because you’re my little treasure hunter,” Bolin smirked against her shoulder.

_______________________________________________
Korra sighed, “Okay… let me get this straight… you want me to work with the Coalition? Did you not remember the fancy speech I had in front of town hall— you know, where I got blown up?”

She heard Hikaru let out a huff on the other end of the line, “Look… somebody has to take care of the Equalists— the police are tied up with the Triads as it is. I don’t want your help, I fucking need it! I can’t do this on my own!!”

The Avatar pinched the bridge of her nose, “Life was so much easier when it was just you, Opal, and I getting drunk and stabbing ourselves with scissors.”

“Sorry that life caught up to us, Korra.”

She let out an exasperated sigh, “Alright… I’ll see what I can do.”

“T-Thanks. Really, I appreciate it.”

Korra pressed the “end call” button on her phone and pocketed it. She walked back into the almost empty living room— Asami was currently assembling some furniture (everything in the Estate had either burned or been stolen by looters). The engineer’s lips were pursed as she read the instructions.

“This is shoddy craftsmanship,” she mumbled.

The Avatar smirked and sat down next to her soulmate, “Oh come on, how hard can it be?”

“It’s not about how difficult the furniture is to assemble… this shit won’t last three weeks.”

“Don’t have sex on this particular desk— got it!” Korra chuckled.

Asami flashed her a glare but the corners of her mouth were curling into a smirk. She set her tools down and leaned against the Avatar, who put an arm around her shoulders and kissed her cheek.

“Did I ever tell you… how… wonderful it is to be with you again?” the engineer murmured with her eyes closed.

“You could stand to mention how awesome I am a few more times,” Korra whispered playfully.

“Alright, you horny jokester— help hold this up for me.”

Korra lifted up the railing with Metalbending, pushing her weight against the wooden portions do that the engineer could drill a few more holes and add a few screws. Asami began muttering something about how the manufacturers needed to reinforce the corners with metal brackets and Korra couldn’t help but chuckle at her lover’s train of thought.

Eventually, the desk stood up on its own— creaking a little as Korra set a few lamps on top.

“That’ll stand up, right? Right?”

“I dunno. Reminds me of the time we built a lean-to in my Mom’s garden, and it collapsed on top of you! Do you remember me digging you out?” Asami chuckled.

The Avatar smirked and then met her eyes with the engineer’s emerald orbs. They stood there, in the middle of Asami’s new, barren apartment. That day, building in the garden— had also been the first night they’d… slept with each other...

“I would never want to forget,” Korra said solemnly, slowly pulling Asami closer and meeting their mouths together like perfect puzzle pieces.
“Mmm… good.”

Should I tell her? What if… this is a horrible idea, Kor…

“Asami?”

“Hmm?”

“Do you think you could help me with something?”

“What do you mean?”

“Hikaru wants me to assist the Coalition… and they’re going to need someone to lead them— someone with fighting experience…”

“You’re shitting me,” Asami said, facing her lover with disbelieving eyes, “You know how much she… hates me.”

“I mean— what other choice does she have? You know your way around the Equalists, right?”

Korra asked with an enthusiastic expression.

The engineer scowled, “This is a horrible idea.”

“I know.”

“Why don’t you ask Hikaru first… I shouldn’t get in her way…”

Korra let out a sigh and kissed her soulmate’s forehead, “It’s going to be okay.”

“It’s not going to be okay until the fucking Equalists are gone. And… how can it be all right when the only family I have left won’t talk to me?! My Dad’s in jail, Hikaru would rather kill me than see me again— I can’t even tell little Suki who I really am!!”

“Hey, hey, hey… we’ll figure this out together,” Korra murmured, pressing her lips against Asami’s. “Let me try to talk to her— she needs all the help she can get… it’ll be okay.”

Asami let out a long sigh, pressing her face into the Avatar’s neck— who wrapped her tan, muscular arms around the ex-Equalist. They stood there in the middle of the empty living room; staring at a desk and wondering just how fucked up their lives were.

Eventually, the Avatar realized that they were swaying around… and that there was music playing. Asami’s iPad was sitting on the desk, playing some soft Ingrid Michaelson songs as she spun her soulmate round and round. Korra’s clumsy feet shuffled around as she tried to find a rhythm.

“I’m terrible at dancing,” she admitted.

“It’s just like Bending, except you’re not trying to kill anyone,” Asami explained, dipping Korra down.

The Avatar giggled, “You have some smooth moves.”

“It’s all about being free-Spirited. Take a lesson from your past life!” the engineer giggled.

“Who Aang?”

“Haven’t you ever read a book? The guy loved to dance— he held a hundred different festivals for
Huh. Korra had never thought of dancing as a way to feel closer to Aang. Truth be told, she’d spent years meditating and trying to reconnect with her past lives in a formal Avatar “spirity” manner. But as Asami twirled her around and around— spinning and losing her footing (occasionally stepping on the older woman’s toes)— she couldn’t help but realize that the engineer was right. Dancing really did make your spirit feel… freedom…

With a smirk, the Avatar stole the lead and pompously waltzed her girlfriend across the barren apartment— occasionally tripping on discarded tools and spare pieces of the recently assembled desk. Maybe they would have to go out on a date sometime and find a proper studio… she’d never had a hobby like this… and yet the mere prospect thrilled her to bits.

Every single day she spent in Asami Sato’s arms, Korra learned something new.
continued mopping the hallways).

_They’d done it! They’d won the championship!! Her team, her kids!!_

The entire Probending Arena was thundering in excitement, as the Wolfbats begrudgingly climbed out of the water— pushing away medical attendants and flashing dirty looks up at the new reigning champions. Kanji, Rune, and Akara were all dancing around, hugging, and waving at the crowd— their names being chanted by the audience as the ramp slid out to retract them back to the locker room.

The three kids rushed down the ramp, spinning and whooping and bowing to the crowd one final time; thousands of voices roaring in excitement as blown kisses were caught and cosplayers and fangirls cried over their new idols. Some of them were even foaming at the mouth. Her team let out cheers as they bounded into the warm-up area.

“Oh my gods, you guys!! That was amazing!!” Hikaru yelped, clutching them all into a Platypus-Bear hug.

“We couldn’t have done it without you, coach!!”

“Did you see that breath? Dentists must fear you, Kanji!!”

“Does this mean we won the jackpot?!!”

Hikaru pushed them over to their lockers, and one of the referees reminded her that they had a post-match interview with the Republic City Press— hundreds of reporters; eager to publish a story all about the new underdog winners. Shiro Shinobi’s voice could be heard recapping the match (more notably Kanji’s epic fire breath move) as Hikaru helped her team out of their gear— throwing the uniforms into a laundry basket and clapping them all on the backs in excitement.

“Hey!! I just watched THE COOLEST match in Probending history!!” Bolin said, appearing at the door (a little out of breath). He kissed Hikaru on the lips and, wrapped up in the excitement, she went a little weak in the knees.

All of the new members of the Fire Ferrests instantly grew red in the face— their idol was here, praising them for winning the Championship. It must’ve been a dream come true. Bolin ignored their modesty, pulling them (and Hikaru) into a big group hug and leading them out the door.

The conference was long and boring, and Hikaru had to make sure that they had enough water and stayed cool— lest her team faint on the spot from over-exhaustion. Eventually, the reporters died down and dispersed, and she led her team to the training room— where the Scorekeepers were waiting with the championship pot.

“The winnings are yours,” one of the referees said, opening the briefcase. “500,000 yuans— to be dispersed equally among you.”

Holy crap! Hikaru had never even dreamt of that much money in her life— let alone seen a briefcase full of it only six feet in front of her!!
“How do you want to divide this?” Kanji asked, turning to the other two.

“Easy!! 100,000 for each of us, and 200,000 for our coach!” Akara said with a wide grin.

“Hang on, you guys earned this— fair and square!” Hikaru protested.

“… and we wouldn’t have got this far without you!” Rune argued, ruffling the Coach’s bun and messing it up a little. “That winning play was devised by you!! And you’ve been working your butt off training us at the ass-crack of dawn!! Don’t be so modest!!”

Despite her stammering protests that it was too much money, and they had earned every yuan on their own, a grinning Bolin led Hikaru out of the Probending Arena— holding a briefcase with 200,000 precious yuan notes. He safely stowed it in the backseat and threw a blanket over it; kissing her and driving her home. All the way, she had a shocked expression on her face— her veins pumping with adrenaline.

“Huka!! Gyeong’s Dad let us listen to the radio while I was over at her house! He says that your team won the match!” Suki shouted, engulfing her big sister in a hug when the engaged couple walked into the living room.

“They all played… phenomenally,” the stunned Firebender replied, letting Bolin lead her into the kitchen.

She sat on the couch and Suki climbed in her lap, turning on the TV and playing a random Disney Movie. With a wink, Bolin went to go put the contents of the suitcase in her small metal safe that was hidden in the master bedroom. Hikaru didn’t realize that she was shaking with excitement until Suki let out a “ssssshhhhhhh!!” as the movie started.

*I can’t believe this.*

Midway through, during one of the songs, Hikaru slipped out from underneath her sister’s grasp and checked her phone. There were several messages from her friends— congratulating her on coaching a team to victory… and there was another text from Korra.

**Avatar Korra: I need your permission to do something.**

**The Annoying Firebender No. 2: Sure thing, what’s up?**

Hikaru was in a terrific mood… nothing could ruin… her… day…

**Avatar Korra: I think we’ll get a lot further if you let Asami join the Coalition.**

And now her day was ruined.

*Fuck it*, she thought, sitting down on the couch and giving her sister a kiss on the cheek. She could deal with this— she’s been shot, had a burning mansion fall down on top of her, become engaged,
and was now 200,000 yuans richer. Hikaru could take on anything at this point. Even her cousin.

The Annoying Firebender No. 2: I'm going to kill you… but fine…

Avatar Korra: Really? Didn’t expect that to work. Thanks, I know this is hard— but I think we can all work together and stop the Equalists without too much… uh… negative cooperation.

The Annoying Firebender No. 2: No fucking promises. You owe me big time.

Chapter End Notes

My babies having some happy sunshine before... well... I won't spoil anything...

Leave Comments!!
Chapter Summary

“Was it you or I who stumbled first? It does not matter. The one of us who finds the strength to get up first, must help the other.”

— Vera Nazarian

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“You’re shitting me.”

“Please?” Korra asked, shaking the Metalbender’s shoulders piteously.

“In the past year; I’ve been blown up, watched you be blown up on TV, abducted you from the hospital, fought Coalition Members and Equalists in a burning mansion, escaped from said mansion via Airship, moved to Zaofu, be blown up in Zaofu, drive aimlessly through the backroads of the Earth Kingdom for three weeks, go to the fucking FOG OF LOST SOULS and watch myself attempt to murder my family and destroy Republic City, open my Chakras, discover Unobtainium Bending, fucking fly back with you to Republic City, restore Hikaru’s bending and simultaneously discover that I can Bloodbend using the metal in people’s bodies— Korra, all I’m asking for is a few peaceful months alone with my future husband!!” Kuvira whined.

“Okay, but you get to beat people up,” Korra said, sending a rock of Earth towards Kuvira.

They were sparring in a spare training yard that Lin usually reserved for her cops. Korra could see her breath amid the cold winter air— keeping her core warm and regulating her breath using Airbending. She rose up a wall of earth to collide against Kuvira’s rebuttal (which was in the shape of a boulder the size of a melon).

“THAT’S YOUR COUNTERARGUMENT?! Dude, what part of relaxation don’t you understand?!?”

“You’re too hot-blooded for a relaxing life— don’t lie to me, Metalgirl.”

“Whatever, Glowstick… let’s do that trick for your YouTube channel.”

Korra gave Kuvira a wide grin and a high five, rushing over to fiddle with the camera. Behind her, Kuvira cracked her knuckles and back.

Once the camera was rolling, Korra and Kuvira pulled the steel beams in the corner of the training yard over to their spot and took a deep breath. Gradually, they swirling around each other, peeling the steel beams apart like Twizlers as they weaved around the yard. Kuvira slung down a metal cable and wrapped it around Korra’s wrist— launching her up as the Avatar pulled strips of steel with her.

The end result looked amazing— they were not only creating art out of junk, but… dancing. Korra had come to Kuvira earlier in the week, asking the Metalbender to teach her how the move the way Suyin’s Zaofu dancers twisted and spun through the air.
Kuvira smirked and bent the remaining metal pieces into words, flinging them over and letting them land in front of the camera;

*Be Artists, not Crusaders*

“Ironic, considering you want me to join the Coalition,” Kuvira muttered, once the Avatar had pressed the “stop recording” button.

“It was only an offer— the only reason I’m letting them continue with their stupid agenda is because I need to stop the Equalists before they hurt more people,” Korra countered. “Besides, you used to be a guard— that’s ten times the training those other kids have.”

“Key word kids.”

“I’m sorry, how old were you when you became the Captain?”

“… twenty-one. Okay, I get your point— that doesn’t mean I’m going to join your little Cool Kids Club.”

“Mmm… I bet I can get Baatar to join.”

“I’ll kick your ass,” Kuvira frowned.

“Oh yeah?”

Korra chuckled playfully, sprinting out of the training yard to Kuvira’s car— where the engineer in question was reading the latest issue of *Popular Mechanics*. He looked up and raised an eyebrow at the strange sight of two powerful benders wrestling in the mud outside of his car, and then returned to his article on recent space travel discoveries.

Metalgirl managed to pin Glowstick on the ground, encasing her in an earth coffin with a stomp and standing over her.

“Ugh!” Korra groaned, spitting out a mouthful of mud. “You win.”

“I’ll do it,” Kuvira said, opening the door to her Satomobile.

“You’ll do what?”

“Join the Coalition.”

“Really?” Korra asked, breaking out of her earthen shell and looking at Kuvira with wide blue eyes.

“Don’t press your luck. Just… I don’t want you getting hurt. Spirits— I moved to this forsaken city to protect Opal and I end up keeping your ass safe… funny how life works.”

Korra let out a whoop and launched herself into the backseat (getting dirt everywhere, much to Baatar’s frustration). As the car left the parking lot, she leaned forwards and ruffled the Metalbender’s black hair; messing up her braid and earning a glare, which was quickly replaced by a matching grin.

“Hey Korra,” Kuvira called back smugly, as the car began speeding down the highway.
“What?”

“You forgot your video camera.”

“SHIT!!”

With that, Korra’s eyes blinked open in the Avatar State and a brilliant white shone in place of blue as she raced back down the highway on an Airscooter— weaving among honking and beeping cars as she desperately raced to retrieve her video camera. Kuvira and Baatar laughed all the way home.

Asami took several deep breaths, nervously scratching behind her ear the way she always did when she was deep in anticipation. With another slow inhale and exhale, she pushed the large metal doors of the warehouse aside and stepped in.

There was a crowd of teenagers and young adults, hanging out in groups of five or six; smoking and laughing and playing mini versions of Probending— but up at the back of the warehouse, there was one group that stood out from the rest. Korra, Kuvira, Baatar, Bolin… and… Hikaru… were all hunched over a table on a platform— reviewing plans for some raid or fight or excursion. Asami hesitantly walked past Benders; many of them shooting icy glares her direction as she approached the Coalition Leaders.

“Ah, the great Asami Sato honors us with her presence,” Hikaru muttered.

Korra ignored the jab and walked up to give her girlfriend a hug. Bolin, Baatar, and Kuvira all gave her supportive smiles as the engineer approached her cousin, her hand outstretched.

“T-Truce?” Asami whispered, low enough that only the two of them could hear the words.

Hikaru looked at Asami’s hand for several agonizingly long moments— her amber eyes ascending to gaze into the engineer’s green ones. She could almost hear the Firebender’s heart beating, and a part of her began screaming that she was making a horrible mistake.

Unexpectedly, instead of frying her to a crisp, Hikaru let out an almost undetectable sigh through her nose and firmly clutched Asami’s hand.

The Firebender’s grip was calloused and tough, and Asami wondered if she was meaning to have a scalding touch as well, because eventually the engineer was forced to retract her fingers in pain. Sure enough, her palm was slightly red from the handshake and tingling.

“Truce,” Hikaru uttered back, though her tone revealed no sense of kindness.

That would’ve been too much to ask for.

“Great… so now that we’ve gotten that out of the way— I’d like to go over some plans,” Baatar Jr. said cheerfully, spreading out several blueprints on the table. “These are maps of known Equalist Warehouses— I think we’re missing a few sources, though. What do you still know, Asami?”

Five pairs of eyes were suddenly on her, and the engineer swallowed— leaning over the map and
scratching her head.

“Um… yeah… there’s three warehouses along this avenue that should have equipment… and this building has a tunnel to a Chi Blocking training facility,” Asami pointed out, marking the map with a pen.

Korra let out a sigh, “We need to hit them harder than this… so far warehouses have been doing jack shit.”

“Um… well… I don’t think we’re ready to attack Future Industries Tower… but… there is something we could do,” Asami pondered thoughtfully.

“Spit it out, then,” Hikaru snapped,

Kuvira elbowed the Firebender in the arm, “Be fucking grateful you have our help, dude.”

The pregnant woman rolled her eyes, but didn’t say anything after that.

“What about stopping their recruitment?” Bolin offered, trying to defuse the tension between the women. “I mean, it’s like that story about the Hydra, right? Cut off a head and three more replace it, but if you burn the necks… I mean… I didn’t actually read the book in high school… but that’s how it goes, right?”

Baatar nodded, “We could turn the public back against them— hold rallies and protests.”

“That’s what I do best,” Korra smirked, “Plus, it’s a nonviolent approach.”

“We have to keep it that way, though,” Bolin pointed out, “There’s a reason we called you Bandit for a year.”

“I’ll text Lin to keep the pepper spray away from Korra,” Kuvira giggled.

Much to the Avatar’s dismay, all of the friends began laughing— Asami putting a sympathetic hand on her soulmate’s shoulder as Korra tried to defend her dignity (to no avail).

“This way, I can organize more people to protest— and the Coalition can act as peacekeepers. I know that both Benders and Nonbenders are getting sick of the Equalist attacks… so maybe with some Youtube promotion… we can get this off the ground!!”

There was a nervous, quick, and fluttering rhythm in Asami’s heart that told her she couldn’t be in the same room as Hikaru without dropping to the ground and spewing sobbing apologies. She felt herself beginning to hyperventilate— until one of her friends grabbed her by the elbow and dragged her out of the warehouse.

Kuvira pulled her out to the streets and gave her a long, comforting hug.

“It’s going to be okay,” the Metalbender murmured.

At first Asami was confused that it was her of all people, until she remembered something Kuvira had once said at the Eastern Air Temple;

“I knew it the moment you began going out with Korra. Maybe you know this… but some Earthbenders can detect heartbeats— when someone’s lying their heart begins speeding up. Mom trained me when she was younger… when you started dating Korra… your heart was constantly fluttering— I always thought you were nervous… and then when she walked into the room, you
Kuvira must’ve noticed her heartbeat change in the warehouse. Asami gratefully wrapped her arms around the Metalbender and sank into calming arms.

“Thanks, Kuv.”

“Anytime. I know how hard a panic attack can be— used to have loads of them as a kid,” the former Captain chuckled, tightening her grip on the ex-Equalist.

They stayed out there on the sidewalk, other pedestrians weaving around them in annoyance as Asami felt her heart slowing down and her blood cooling.

“It’s so hard… being in the same room as her… Gods, Kuvira… I’ve hurt her so much…”

“I know, Asami— it’s all so messed up. Be brave for me, okay?”

“Okay. Thank you so much… you’ve always been there for me.”

Kuvira smiled and took Asami’s hand— leading her back into the warehouse, where an impatient Hikaru was tapping her foot. What Asami did next surprised every single person in the warehouse, including herself.

She threw her arms around the Firebender.

The ex-heiress could feel Hikaru tense up, and the pregnant woman certainly didn’t reciprocate the embrace— though she also didn’t shove Asami away. Instead, Hikaru raised a hesitant hand to Asami’s shoulder and awkwardly patted the engineer on the back. The ex-Equalist, the very girl who’d shot the Firebender and removed her Bending… drew back and looked sorrowfully into her amber eyes.

“I’m sorry,” the engineer whispered sincerely. “Gods… I’m so… so fucking sorry, Hikaru. F-For everything.”

The other woman didn’t say anything, only looking away and stepping out of the awkward embrace. Hikaru stared at the ground for a few moments and twitched a little, as though she were contemplating either shooting Asami in the face with a blast of fire or accepting her apology. Maybe both.

Instead, Hikaru walked over to Baatar, Bolin, and Korra— who were all looking at her with dropped jaws. She began mumbling about dates for the protests and leaned over the map of the metropolis. Instantly, as though nothing had happened, the other three inelegantly went back to planning with her. The ex-heiress bit her lip, and she could feel tears forming at the edge of her eyes, wiping them away with her sleeve. Thankfully, Kuvira reached down and tightly squeezed the engineer’s hand, allowing her to spiral back into reality.

Asami let out a sigh and rejoined the group, ignoring the lingering stares that Hikaru kept giving her as they planned their future demonstrations for the good of Republic City.
“I’m not going to lie— I honestly expected that to go worse,” Baatar said thoughtfully. “Like, I was almost certain that we were going to be planning Sato’s funeral during the meeting.”

He was currently helping Korra paint the new apartment; Kuvira and Asami were out getting groceries— having decided to have a little one-on-one therapy time after the… well… interesting encounter at the Coalition Warehouse.

Korra waved her hand with a smirk and Waterbent his hair, which was absolutely ridden with lavender paint. She then returned to her own paint roller, using Metalbending to float the brush up to the hard-to-reach corners and dab them a light purple.

“Yeah… I mean… at least it didn’t come to blows,” Korra said thoughtfully, “And we came up with a peaceful solution.”

“I’m concerned that it’s only temporary,” Baatar worried aloud.

The Avatar sighed, “I know. At least it’s something. The last thing we need is more death and… well… gunshots…”

The engineer’s head bowed, and Korra instantly felt horrible for making him feel guilt. She reached out and pulled him into a hug. Baatar rested his chin on her shoulder and sighed, tears dripping down his cheeks.

“I didn’t mean for it to happen,” he whimpered.

“I know, Junior. Gods, it was all just a horrible mistake. We’ll make it better, okay?”

Baatar buried his head in Korra’s shoulder, and she tightened her grip on him.

She had an idea to cheer him up. A terrible idea, but mischievous and pranking and all things that Korra was. And, if he was truly a grandson of Toph Beifong… he might just play along. The Avatar broke off the embrace and grabbed the two paint rollers, tossing one to Baatar.

“What the—”

“En Gaurde!” she playfully shouted.

His paint roller was instantly raised as he tried to fight off her impending strikes. Lavender blotches began flying everywhere as the two laughing adults dueled throughout the living room. Thank Raava they’d decided to put plastic down everywhere beforehand— paint was being flung in every possible direction.

Korra managed to stick him in the stomach, laughing at the “SQUISH!!” that the paint roller made on his abdomen.

“AHH!!! NOOOO!!! YOU’VE DEFEATED ME!! TELL MY WIFE I LOVE HER!!” Baatar dramatically screamed, dropping to the ground and pretending that the lilac blotch was a bloodstain.

“Triumphant again!!” Korra shouted, raising her paint roller in the air, “I’m the Avatar, and you gotta deal with it!!”

Suddenly, her head and neck felt horribly cold as someone tipped the paint tray all over her back. Baatar laughed from the floor, rolling around with a fit of giggles as Kuvira snatched up his paint
roller and began dueling in his place. There were flecks of violet splatter in the older woman’s black braid, but not nearly as much as Korra was now coated with. This demanded revenge!!

“Oh-ho! The Knight of Zaofu has issued challenge!” the Avatar bellowed pompously.

With a giggle, Kuvira and Korra began splashing even more paint all over the room and each other (Baatar having picked up a smaller paintbrush and striking his fiancé in the neck). They were just about to make it into the kitchen—

“WHAT THE HELL HAVE YOU DONE TO OUR APARTMENT!?!?” Asami shrieked, walking in and placing the groceries on the purple-stained counter. Her face held the expression of pure horror as she gazed upon the violet warzone. She held her hands on her hips and loomed over the three cowering adults.

“Um… well… we were painting… and then… you know…” Korra trailed off, sheepishly rubbing her paint-stained neck in embarrassment.

Asami sighed and snatched up Kuvira’s paint roller, smacking it against the Avatar’s forehead, “I want you guys to clean this up before I finish dinner. Or else.”

Needless to say, the other three scrambled to pick up their supplies and soak up the mess with towels. Korra managed to Waterbend what hadn’t dried yet— and since the paint was somewhat made of clay, Kuvira could make an effort to draw it back into the buckets with Earthbending. Unfortunately, in the end most of the apartment was still speckled violet.

“Hey,” Baatar chuckled, trying to get Asami to smile, “think of it this way… it’s modern art!”

“I hate each and every one of you,” the ex-heiress sighed, smirking and chopping more vegetables.

“Yeah, that’s fair,” Kuvira admitted.

They laughed as they sat down at the splotched table— which honestly looked as though it had gone through several rounds of *Splatoon*. Korra opened several windows and Airbent the strong fumes of paint out of the apartment (lest they all become as high as a kite… or worse… as high as Kya).

Asami poured out several bowls of wonton and they all sat down with loud laughs and free spirits. Korra made sure to sit next to her girlfriend— lovingly stroking Asami’s thigh as Baatar and Kuvira recounted the time they discovered that they were Soulmates.

Eventually, the other couple stumbled out of the apartment and returned to their place.

“I’m sorry we got paint everywhere,” Korra said sheepishly.

“Aw, I’m not that mad… but there is a problem…”

“Oh?”

“Well… I can’t help but notice that you’re absolutely covered in paint… looks like you might need someone to scrub all that off for you,” Asami whispered lustfully.

Korra felt her heart race as her Soulmate waggishly led her into the bathroom with a smirk— and something told her that she was already forgiven for wrecking the apartment. Needless to say, the next tenant would be very confused as to why the shower was a permanent tinge of purple.
Chapter End Notes

I'm so happy that I've finally worked up the courage to make the chapters longer... I've decided to make a new category... flangst. Because that is what this fanfic is.

Update: pls leave comments because I get really angsty when you guys don't leave me any criticism pls hello from the other side
The Protest

Chapter Summary

“Silence becomes cowardice when occasion demands speaking out the whole truth and acting accordingly.”

— Mahatma Gandhi

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Korra gave the woman a big smile, “Great to see you here, Chief!”

“Mmhmm… just don’t let these punks try anything stupid,” Lin grumbled.

Coalition members and college students were crowded in front of City Hall, holding up signs and chanting the protest of the Equalists in the city. Though the day was bright and sunny and Police Guards were standing everywhere, their hands tucked behind their backs, there was a nervous flutter in Korra’s chest.

Which was silly, of course, because everything was going according to plan.

“Chief, we’ve received word that the Terra Triad has been attacked— what are your orders?” Officer Saikhan asked, walking up the steps with a grim expression.

Lin let out a sigh and pinched the bridge of her nose for a few moments, “Equalists?”

“It appears so,” Saikhan nodded.

“Fuck… send the Firebending Division out and round up the stragglers— tell them to take the bullet-proof armor.”

Saikhan saluted and walked over to radio the station, scratching his beard as he relayed orders to the Firebending Division. Lin sighed and rubbed her brow in annoyance.

“You have that now?” Korra asked with a curious tone. “Armor that can protect you from the Shooters?”

“Varrick Global has been developing it the past few months, ever since the Equalists started carrying guns. Contrary to your belief, we’ve been doing what we can,” Beifong grumbled.

“You’ve been cleaning up the mess,” the Avatar pointed out. “Instead of preventing it.”

Lin sighed, “They’ve been one step ahead of us, and it doesn’t help that your fucking Coalition has been adding more bodies to the pyre. The Council would rather sit on a pile of cash than give me more power to take the Equalists out. They just want me to focus on the Triads— seem to have this brilliant theory that the Equalists will die off eventually and everything will go back to normal. I’m caught between training enough officers to combat all the crime and picking up after all these fucking vigilantes.”
Korra shrugged, “That’s why I’m trying to organize a peaceful protest— be glad I’m not the old me. *Pre-Red Lotus Poisoned Korra* would be all over the place punching shit; probably getting shot 24/7.”

“Gods… Gives me a headache just thinking about it.”

“Chief Beifong, what is all this rabble about?!” one of the Councilman asked, walking out of the City Hall with an assistant in tow.

“Rally, sir. Just some college students— no harm, no foul.”

“Well clear it away! We can’t work with all this hullaballoo!!”

Chief Beifong stiffened and pursed her lips, “Sir, they have every right to be here— these kids are merely demonstrating their right to protest; they’ve been nothing but peaceful this morning!!”

“I don’t care!! They should be in class or smoking lillyweed… what are they even protesting about?!” the Councilman huffed.

“The Equalist presence in the city that you have yet to deal with!!” Korra accused. “They wouldn’t be here disrupting your precious council sessions if you got off your ass and helped us fix this!!”

“Chief Beifong, remove this girl at once!”

“She’s the Avatar, Sir.”

“Don’t be smart with me, Beifong! This little girl isn’t the Avatar! Look at her, she can’t be older than fifteen!!”

Korra and Saikhan burst out laughing, and Lin merely grumbled as she led the Councilman back into City Hall, promising that she would keep the crowd under control. Beifong slammed the door behind her and the Water Tribe girl was left with the Metalbending Officer.

“See what she has to deal with?” Saikhan huffed.

“I know… I just wish that the Council would pick their heads out of their own asses.”

“You’re not the only one, kid.”

*WHIZZ!!!*

“Shit, what the hell was that?!” Korra shouted, ducking behind the earthen wall that Saikhan raised up.

“Bullets! Take cover, get your fucking kids out of here!” he ordered.

He began radioing for backup, and Korra dug earth out of the ground, covering herself in it. She blinked her eyes and entered the Avatar State— using a powerful column of air to blast herself above the crowd. Her lips turned into a snarl when she realized what was happening.
There was fire everywhere… an Airship with the Equalist emblem was flying overhead, dropping gas down onto the crowd. There were blue flashes lighting up as electric gloves struck against Coalition Members and college students.

Korra flew past Bolin, Kuvira, and Baatar, “Get these kids out of here!! I’m going to try and draw the Equalists away!!”

**WHIZZ!! WHIZZ!!**

More bullets flew past her head, and Korra realized that she couldn’t stay in one place—or else someone could be caught in the crossfire. The Equalists were clearly attempting to assassinate her. Korra’s heart leapt when she saw a glimpse of Asami pulling kids out of the open space and into alleys and shops.

The Water Tribe girl growled as she let a large sphere of air carry her up to the Airship—the Avatar State carrying her higher and higher. She landed on the top of the blimp and ripped the shell open with Metalbending, running along and fighting off Chi Blockers that were beginning to appear. She jumped back off when she heard several *Cracks!!* from the other side of the ship. These assholes had guns, too.

She didn’t want to rely on the simple earthen armor that she was wearing, instead running along the ship towards what she hoped was the end with the cockpit on it. Another sphere of air—and she was hovering right in front of a pane of glass…

And none other than the Lieutenant was looking back at her.

She literally dodged a bullet when he yelled. Several, actually. Grabbing a pistol and beginning to fire through the cockpit windows, the bastard mercilessly shot projectile after deadly projectile towards Korra. She turned and sped forwards, desperately trying to lead the Airship away from city hall.

It seemed to be working.

The ship followed her over the city horizon, and Korra smirked—remembering the trick that Kanji had used in the Probending Championships.

She took a deep breath, and then exhaled a large vortex; amplified with the Avatar State and blinding the Airship. Using the momentary distraction to her advantage, Korra propelled herself up to the top of the zeppelin. She bent the earthen armor away from her body and crashed the slab of rock into the side of the ship, ripping through the protective shell yet again.

**HISSSSSS!!!**

Whatever gas they used to keep the ship afloat began seeping out, and she smirked as the vessel began dropping in altitude. Her work here was done.

Before the Shooters could injure her with a barrage of bullets—Korra jumped off, readying a column of water from Yue Bay to meet her as she collided against the sea. Waterbending up to the nearest dock, Korra smirked as she watched the Airship disappear into the clouds…a trail of smoke littering the sky.
She wouldn’t follow it, though… she had to get back to her friends.

The courtyard in front of City Hall was full of police officers, running around and trying to tend to injured civilians. Most of the Coalition Members and college students had scattered— only a few people had been hurt by shock gloves, and thankfully nobody had been shot. Lin Beifong was still standing on the steps, barking at the City Council members as Korra walked up.

“… and if this doesn’t fucking convince you that these Equalists are a problem, I don’t know what will!!”

“Chief Beifong, this attack was clearly directed towards those pesky Coalition members—”

“There were innocent college students in that protest!!” Korra argued, walking up and poking the head Councilman in the shoulder, “These Equalists were openly firing at your officers, and wouldn’t have hesitated to attack you if you were out here, too!”

One of the Councilwomen, a representative of the Air Nomads who had taken over Tenzin’s seat, pipped up, “What do you propose, Avatar?”

Korra sighed— honestly all she wanted to do was take a nap, “Give Chief Beifong more freedom to start taking the fight to the Equalists. Better yet… let her train the Coalition.”

“Oh hell no!” Lin countered, “Those kids have no respect for law and have already committed hundreds of illegal acts—”

“I think it sounds reasonable,” another Councilman said nonchalantly, “You wouldn’t have to waste officers that way.”

“And risk the lives of civilian teenagers?!”

“Better than them getting killed on their own,” Korra pointed out.

Lin gave the Avatar a glare, but at the demanding looks of the Councils, her posture slumped a little in defeat, “Fine. We’ll recreate the Task Force that we used to combat the Equalists during the first War. At least without Tarrlok’s authority— we can allow both Nonbenders and Benders to serve. Make it more equal.”

Korra flinched at the thought of the Bloodbender, but Lin’s idea sounded genuine.

The Chief of Police looked over at the Avatar, “Why don’t you go home and get some sleep? Check up on your friends. I’ll keep these guys safe.”

“You sure?”

Lin raised an eyebrow, gesturing to all of the Police officers who were standing around, “You don’t trust them?”

“I don’t trust anybody,” Korra sighed.
“That’s… smart, kid. Now beat it! Rest up— I’ll call you tomorrow about getting that Task Force put together. And… here.”

Saikhan handed Korra a heavy padded piece of armor, the same ballistic-protection gear that the rest of the police were wearing, and Korra’s eyes widened in recognition, “Are you sure?”

“Of all people in this damn city— I’m not letting you get killed. After all,” the Chief smirked, “I’m Mom Number Five.”

____________________________________________________

Two Weeks Later:

“Go, go, go!!” Saikhan shouted.

His team of Metalbenders surged forwards, smashing through the doors of the lobby and aiming cables towards the employees, who were all cowering on the floor. They had planned out an assault on Future Industries Tower.

“Please don’t shoot!!” a secretary cried.

“Where are the Equalists?” the Officer shouted, “We have multiple sources that confirm they’ve taken over Future Industries!!”

“We don’t know!! They were pointing guns everywhere and threatened to kill everyone if we called the police!!” another employee cried, his hands raised in the air in surrender.

“Clear the building of civilians!” Saikhan called to his team. “Task Force, follow me!”

Several teenagers, all dressed in armored uniforms, ran forwards and readied fire in their hands. The officer led them through the hallways, where employees were cowering under desks in fear.

“Get out of here!” he called to the civilians.

Task Force Members assisted the personnel out of the offices, where they would be met with Police Officers on the streets. Saikhan reached down and clicked his radio;

“Chief, ground floor is cleared. Over.”

“Copy that, Glowstick and Unobtainium are going with me— we’re going to scale to the Penthouse. Surveillance has confirmed that the building is cleared of hostiles. Over.”

An Equalist glove appeared next to Saikhan, and he tensed up. Looking over, he let out a sigh— the Sato girl gave him a nod and then showed the team over to an elevator. She punched in a code into a key pad and waited. Nothing happened.

“Dammit,” she growled. “This is the way to the underground facility— but they must’ve changed the combination.”

Saikhan rolled his eyes and Metalbent the elevator open. When Asami tried to walk in without
looking, he put a hand on her shoulder and pointed. She let out a gasp and backed away from the open doors, pushing Task Force Members out of the way as well.

The elevator was filled with explosives.

“Fuck,” Saikhan sighed. “Everybody back away—I don’t see a timer, so it’s probably connected to the key pad. Thank the Spirits you used the wrong combination, Sato. We’ll get a bomb squad out here.”

He turned to his radio, “Chief, you’re going to want to come down here. Elevator’s filled with explosives. Over.”

A few minutes later, he received a response on the radio;

“Saikhan, get everybody out of the building. There’s…”

Static crackled and the Metalbender clicked the button repeatedly, trying to reestablish contact with his superior. He gave up and signaled for his Task Force to leave.

“Come on, the stairs are this way,” Asami muttered.

Thank the Spirits there was a large gap in the stairwell, allowing him to sling himself and the engineer up the Tower with his metal cables. They reached the top floor and Saikhan kicked the door to the penthouse open, the ex-heiress in tow.

“Chief!! Oh… oh shit… Chief…”

Lin was sitting at the couch with her head in her hands, Korra and Kuvira were leaning against the walls with their arms crossed and their heads bowed; eyes diverted from the horrific scene. Saikhan could feel bile forming in the back of his throat and sure enough, next to him Asami ran to the nearest trash can and threw up at the sight. The officer had to take a deep breath through his mouth and ignore the smell of blood and brain matter as he walked into the room.

The bodies of the Future Industries Board Members were strewn all over the floor, all of them killed by close-up headshots from a pistol. The walls were spray-painted with the logo of the Equalists and a single shock glove was laying on the ground, like a sickening calling card.

“We were too late,” Beifong muttered, running her hands through her gray hair. “The Lieutenant fled the Tower.”

Chapter End Notes

Violence!! Yay!!

Next chapter: what the hell has Opal Beifong been doing for the past three months!?

Leave comments!!
The Islander - Part 1

Chapter Summary

“Let me tell you this: if you meet a loner, no matter what they tell you, it's not because they enjoy solitude. It's because they have tried to blend into the world before, and people continue to disappoint them.”

― Jodi Picoult, My Sister's Keeper

Chapter Notes

Sorry if it's confusing; the first part of this chapter is present day-- the second part is a flashback... a little bit after Opal first found the island and a few weeks after the attack on Zaofu...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Present Day:

“Leave me alone!!”

“You need to go back to your family, your friends!! You need to go back to Jinora!!”

“I’m not ready!!”

“Opal, you’ve been sitting around on an island for the past three months because you’ve been too lazy to face your problems!!”

“Shut up!! SHUT UP!! YOU’RE JUST A DEAD SOT WHO DOESN’T HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO!!”

Samsara stopped, feeling a stabbing twinge in her heart at such hurtful words. Opal walked to the edge of the cliff, furiously running her hands through her hair (now long and wild from months spent away from civilization). The former Avatar picked at a leaf, running her fingers over the sharp edges — feeling the little pricks from the pointy fern. Dead? Well… not alive… and yet living more than Opal’s been these past three months.

“I love you,” Samsara whispered. “Everything I do now is for you.”

Opal’s shoulders fell, “Then why don’t you just keep me? Why are you trying to send me away if you love me so much? Stop being so fucking selfless!!”

“You already have someone!! And unlike me, you could have a second chance with her if you just
“got up off your ass and did something about it!!” Samsara yelled.

“Maybe I want to stay with you.”

“Opal… it’s like you said… I’m dead… I’m just a shadow that’s being kept alive by your hopes. By your will.”

The Beifong girl turned, marched forward with a determined stomp, and grabbed Samsara by the collar of her ancient Air Nomad robes— furiously mashing their lips together. This love… no… this lust was unhealthy and poisonous… and yet Samsara felt herself melting into the other girl’s embrace. The Avatar broke off the kiss with a sigh, walking over to a tree and pressing her head against the scraggily bark.

“This isn’t… this wasn’t how our stories were meant to be written,” Samsara whispered, her nails digging into the madrone’s trunk.

Opal was trembling, unsure of how to hold herself. The ancient Air Nomad longed to embrace her, to hold her tight and whisper sweet nothings until the moon rose to shine down on them— hanging low in the sky and keeping them hopeful. Gods… she was drawn to Opal like a fly to a spider’s web… but there was never a crueller spider than this woman.

“I can’t go back.”

“Yes— yes you can!! You have to!!” Samsara blurted; turning, reaching out, and cupping Opal’s cheeks in both of her intricately tattooed hands.

She felt tears sliding down her face, and Opal’s fingers reached up, that she might brush away the sorrow with the pads of her thumbs. Simultaneously, as though it were a move scripted in a play— their foreheads leaned closer and touched one another. Samsara closed her eyes and relished in the feeling of physical contact with another being, running her hands up and down Opal’s back and playing with the braid that had grown out— in the barren months the Beifong had spent on this island.

“I love you,” Opal whispered, kissing Samsara over and over.

“No… you don’t.”

There was a sob coming from the back of the mortal girl’s throat— and Samsara cursed herself for uttering such a harsh truth. Yet… a truth all the same.

“Come find me when you’ve… when you’ve done what is needed to be done,” the former Avatar murmured, reaching forward and cupping Opal’s chin for one last kiss.

The other Airbender desperately tried to reach out and grasp at disappearing fabric; but it was too late.

She could still taste the salt from her lover’s tears when she awoke in the Spirit World— once more a lifeless and doomed-driven soul. A Koi Spirit, sensing her bereavement, swam up and gave a friendly nudge against her side. Samsara collapsed against them and let her sorrows pour out onto the skies; screaming and wailing and feeling as though she were being burned alive— over and over again.

_Basho… even in death you’ve managed to break my heart a second time._
Three months ago:

Opal had finally done it! She’d built a thatch-leaf house, slowly and respectfully peeling palm leaves off trees and weaving together fallen logs and sticks; she honestly didn’t expect herself to do it! And, with some crafty engineering—she had a perfect filtration system to collect rainwater!! Not that there wasn’t already an abundance of streams and such, but she had planned on reserving those for bathing.

With a sigh and a pat on the back, Opal sat down on her log bench that she’d carved and began weaving more grass—she would try and make herself a hammock this week.

“Oh-pall?” a voice called out next to her.

The Airbender smiled and reached down, not taking her eyes off her weaving. Aina the Leafy Spirit climbed onto her arm and into her lap, nestling themselves in and letting out a content sigh.

“Why are you out here?” the Spirit asked curiously.

“Because it’s so peaceful and removed… it’s like a dream come true,” the Airbender murmured languorously.

“But you’ve been here for a while… don’t your friends miss you?” Aina inquired thoughtfully, nudging Opal’s hand with their head.

“I don’t think so. Jinora’s stopped contacting me…”

The Spirit’s leafy ears drooped a little, and they nestled their head in Opal’s hands. She could feel tears welling at the corners of her eyes and used her shoulders to wipe them dry.

She didn’t finish the hammock that day.

The next morning; she got up bright and early to watch the sunrise—laughing at the realization that she was currently staring at the Southern Pole. Indeed, the mysterious island moved quickly and in no discernable pattern around the globe; but she had not noticed the drop in heat thanks to the Airbender ability to regulate one’s body temperature using breath.

Amazing…she could see the Spirit Portal from here; it’s definitive glow shining on the rippling water and mixing beautifully with the fleeting sunrise—Opal expected three, maybe four hours of light today. Which meant she would want to get to work.

Her fingers trembled a little while she wove… and more than once the Airbender had to take a break to meditate and clear her thoughts. Unproductive— not at all like a Beifong ought to be.

She didn’t finish the hammock that day, either.
Her hair was no longer the cute bob it had once been, but scraggily spilling over her shoulders. Her shampoo had run out— and now it was just the clean stream water that flowed off the island. Opal had never been able to make a ponytail before— perhaps she would be able to try it in a month or so.

Such a thought reminded her of summer nights in Zaofu, sitting on the edge of Kuvira’s bed and playing with her silky long raven hair; Kuvira teaching her how to braid and heartily laughing when she messed up.

Opal shook the daydream from her head, and continued gathering peaches for her lunch. Kuvira didn’t miss her. None of them did. And why should they? Korra was the Avatar, Kuvira was one of, if not the finest Metalbender on the planet, and Jinora was the youngest Airbending Master of all time. Bolin could Lavabend. Mako had become a police detective at only nineteen. Hikaru was a fully-trained Kyoshi Warrior. Baatar and Asami were some of the brightest engineers the world had ever seen.

What had Opal ever accomplished?

The hammock was looking more and more like a basket today, and she was becoming tempted to abandon the project altogether.

Growing up in a city she was never allowed to leave, with five older siblings and a palace full of servants and advisors and guards… Opal relished in the freedom of solitude. There was no one to tell her what to wear, or that there was a little dirt smudged on her face. No one to dictate where she had to be at six o’ clock, and not a soul to complain about her horrible singing when she bathed.

For fun, she’d managed to combine berries and crush bits of clay and squeeze dyes out of plants—painting the Spirit World on huge rock slabs. Sure, she wasn’t like Huan… but her canvases also made a bit more sense than abstract metal bananas.

This afternoon, she’d managed to make a Lemur-feeder (having spotted some of the adorable little critters on the other end of the island), weaving together some strips of the bark that freely peeled off the trees. An abundance of nuts and hanging on the perfect tree… soon enough she had three new subjects for her next painting.

Her grass-woven hammock was growing moldy from neglect, and she began contemplating whether or not she ought to toss it.

“Oh-Pall!!”

“Hey there, Aina,” the Airbender smirked, sitting up and throwing her blanket off as the little Spirit wandered into her thatch hut.

“Why are you still out here? Your friends miss you,” Aina said sorrowfully.

Opal sighed, neglecting eye contact with the leafy Spirit and scrapping the dirt off her sneakers with her pocket knife. Aina didn’t say anything either, only crawling over and sticking their head in the Airbender’s backpack. When the Beifong girl was satisfied with the state of her shoes, she grabbed her back and stepped out into the morning sunlight.
“What’s so special about this island anyways? There’s no Koh-Rah or Eye-Row… or Amisa,” the Spirit’s muffled voice called from the rucksack.

“Her name is Asami,” the Airbender chuckled, pulling Aina out of the bag and ruffling their leafy ears. “And… I don’t know… I just feel like there’s something special about this place… I’m just not… ready to leave.”

“Well— you know what’s best for you,” Aina said, nudging their head against her palm. “But the real world misses you a lot. Your family wuv you, Oh-Pall.”

The Airbender could feel a tear dripping down her cheek, wiping it away with her sleeve, “I miss them too… I just can’t right now.”

The Spirit’s head bowed low and a melancholy cold filled the air as Aina dissipated and traveled back into the Spirit World; leaving Opal all alone. Not that she minded.

That night, she kicked the rotten hammock over the side of the cliff— letting out a huff as she walked back to her thatch hut.

“Geez, you look awful. I’m liking the hair, though,” a sarcastic, familiar voice behind her snickered.

The Beifong girl instantly looked up from her fire and her face broke into a wide, excited smile. None other than Avatar Samsara was sitting in a tree, her legs casually dangling back and forth as she playfully teased with a hungry lemur— holding up a roasted nut for the primate to snatch and then withdrawing it, back and forth until the lemur finally crawled onto her lap.

“I can’t believe it. You can meditate into the Mortal World on your own?!” Opal laughed, waving her hand and motioning for the Ancient Air Nomad to come down.

“You called to me.”

The words were spoken with a relaxed tone, and yet there was a cryptic message hidden within.

Nevertheless— Samsara climbed down from the tree and walked into Opal’s outstretched arms. The Beifong wrapped herself around the silver-eyed girl and let out a sigh. Not only had it been a while since she’d seen another human… but she missed the former Avatar dearly.

“I hope you haven’t been getting into too much trouble here,” Samsara whispered, still wrapped in the other girl’s embrace.

“There hasn’t been anyone to make rules, so technically any mischief I’ve committed goes without legitimacy,” Opal countered playfully. “Come on, you need to see this place— it’s absolutely magical.”

There was a thrill, a spark in the green-eyed-girl’s heart when Samsara took her hand an impishly winked, allowing herself to be led through the jungle-like woods. She’d never had a friend to go exploring like this before.

Sure, she was loving being alone… but for the first time in a month… for the first time in a long time, really… Opal didn’t feel lonely.
Oh boy... looks like I have some explaining to do... in the next chapter, that is.

"And although Ziraseal's writing skills are great, she's got a long way to go before saving anyone. But she believes angst can save the world."
“Solitude gives birth to the original in us, to beauty unfamiliar and perilous - to poetry. But also, it gives birth to the opposite: to the perverse, the illicit, the absurd.”

— Thomas Mann, Death in Venice and Other Tales

Two Months Ago:

“You’re going to love it here, Sammy!” Opal laughed, tugging the former Avatar along. “Gods… it’s our own little paradise!”

Samsara offered a sad smile, “I suppose you’re happy here, aren’t you?”

“I’ve never felt more freedom!! It’s like this place knew I needed to leave, so it came and took me away!” the Beifong girl cheered, dancing around and laying in the grass.

The Ancient Air Nomad dropped down beside her, resting her intricately tattooed hands in her lap, “Don’t you miss your family? And your friends?”

“You sound like Aina— they don’t miss me, Sammy.”

“But, even if that were the case, surely you miss them?”

Opal shrugged, “I have a right to get away, don’t I? I deserve a break!!”

Samsara bit her lip, but didn’t press the issue— only laying down in the grass next to Opal and staring up at the clouds. The Spirit could feel warmth radiating from the other girl’s body; something she’d gone without for 10,000 years.

“What do you think that cloud looks like?”

“Mmm,” Samsara hummed, “I say… it looks like… a Sky Bison!”

“You need new glasses,” Opal chuckled.

“What are glasses?”

“Oh… um… just a tool to help people see better…”

“Ah, okay,” Samsara giggled. “You’ll have to forgive me— I’m ten millennia behind you in technology.”

Opal looked at the former Avatar with a smirk, and the Spirit could’ve sworn she saw a pink tinge on
the other girl’s cheeks… underneath her mesmerizing green eyes…

Samsara looked back up at the sky, trying to ignore the flutter in her heart, “What about that cloud?”

“I think… that looks like… a Shirshu!”

“Ugh, horrible beasts— the world was full of them when I was your age!”

“You are my age!” Opal argued with a snicker.

“Oh, you know what I mean!!”

There was a definite flutter in Samsara’s undead heart, and she couldn’t help but feel both a twinge of hope and dread for what could possibly be next to come.

“Why don’t you try the peaches? They’re amazing when they’re roasted!!”

Samsara hesitated. It had been ten thousand years since she’d last felt the pleasure of food. Could her body handle it? Was she even in a real living body right now? She’d meditated from the Spirit World… so perhaps not… It didn’t hurt to try though.

The Avatar hesitantly took the food from Opal, holding it in her hands for a few seconds and then biting into the fruit. As soon as the peach passed her lips, however, she knew something was wrong. Suddenly, her mouth was filled with ash, and she ran to spit it out— desperately trying to drink water from the nearest stream. But that too turned to ash.

“AAACCCCKKK!! Ugh… I think I’m going to vomit,” Samsara groaned.

“I don’t understand— what happened?”

The Ancient Air Nomad shook her head, spitting the filth from her mouth and shaking her head, “I can’t eat food… or drink… in the Mortal World… I’ve been dead too long…”

“Oh… Sammy… I’m so sorry…”

“It’s not your fault, Opal,” the Avatar smiled, messing up the younger girl’s hair. “I’ll just wash it down with some of Iroh’s tea. Spirit stuff, you know.”

“Ah well, you would’ve loved the taste of the peaches…”

Samsara gave her friend a hug, ignoring the tugging in her stomach, “Thanks anyways… I’m going to see if Iroh can make me a fresh cup of tea… be back in a bit.”

She didn’t need to sleep— one’s body does not find exhaustion when it’s heart does not beat. But… if her heart did not beat anymore… as she lay on her side watching the other girl sleep… why were her expired lungs suddenly gasping for air?

Even though she could close her eyes and lay still, she had not slept for ten thousand years. And yet when Opal had offered to let her “bunk” in the thatch hut— Samsara had said yes instantly. Without second thought.
Samsara’s long and nimble fingers reached out, tracing over Opal’s slack jaw and gaunt cheekbones — amplified and bony from her time away from civilization. Her skin was warm and twitching a little, the way a living body does… her hair was scraggily and coarse… and yet Samsara couldn’t help but run her fingers through it.

“Mmmm… that feel’s nice…” Opal mumbled, leaning into her digits.

The former Avatar quickly withdrew her hand, “I’m sorry.”

Green eyes groggily fluttered open, “Don’t be… it was pleasant…”

Samsara gulped a little as Opal moved her head so that their noses were touching. Pale moonlight seeped through the cracks in the hut, illuminating the younger girl’s ebony skin just so. In this midnight… she appeared as a goddess.

Opal leaned forwards, cupping Samsara’s cheek and kissing her.

How gentle could lips truly be? After ten-thousand years she had all but forgotten. Soft, and yet firm — pressing against hers and stirring lost feelings within. There they lay, hundreds of miles away from civilization and its troublesome worries… discovering each other’s smooth features and losing themselves in one another’s mouth.

This was voodoo. Magic. Witchcraft. Trickery. Samsara shouldn’t be enticed like this.

And yet this was what she’d hungered for… for thousands of years. She could feel Opal’s soul… Basho… pulling her in… like a horrible saccharine net— she felt trapped, and yet wanted to kiss the younger girl. Over and over again.

Eventually… Samsara realized that she was sitting up, straddling over Opal’s hips. The younger girl’s mouth was open, panting for breath— her eyes dark with lust.

“You don’t want this,” the Avatar whispered, biting her lip, “You’re not in your right mind.”

“Fuck yes I do… you’re driving me crazy,” Opal murmured, tilting upright, “You’re so beautiful… my Avatar…”

Samsara’s heart leapt— was this truly the Beifong whispering to her, or King Basho? She protested naught when Opal’s warm fingers slithered around her neck and pulled them back together. Her soul… her will was weakened… the Spirit could not stop this… and she didn’t want to. Instead, she let out a sigh into Opal’s mouth and closed her eyes, feeling tears dripping down her face as she relished in the warmth of another human being.

Opal made her feel alive again.

“Mmmm… morning,” the younger Airbender chuckled, holding up her hand and shielding her eyes from the sunlight creeping in.

Samsara was sitting on the other side of the thatch hut— her knees drawn in tight to her chest. She’d watched the sleeping girl all last night after the Beifong had fallen back asleep. Opal realized her distress and crawled across the dirt floor, placing a hand on her leg.
“Are you alright?”

“I shouldn’t have done that.”

“Done wh— you mean when I kissed you?”

“It was wrong, I shouldn’t have. You already have someone significant to you…”

“Hey, hey, hey…” Opal cooed, pulling Samsara’s hands away from covering up her face, “It’s okay… I’m not with Jinora right now… we had a falling out… we haven’t been together for months… what you did… what I did… it’s okay… I promise.”

Samsara’s lower lip trembled a little when the other Airbender pulled them together, pressing two mouths into one. Opal kissed her with such ferity— and a primal need bubbled within the Ancient Avatar… her feelings swirling around and confusing her. This was not right… this was not right…

Opal pulled Samsara into her lap and began attacking her lifeless neck— attempting to leave blemishes. Though Samsara could not feel the pain of a bite… she could definitely feel the desire. Such hunger had been absent within her for… so… long…

This is messed up.

The other girl’s nails scratched down her back and Samsara let out a gasp of pleasure.

I hate myself.

Samsara could feel tears threatening to spill down her face as she pulled Opals robes off— her own ancient garments falling to the dirt. And now someone was staring at her own body… with desire and… pride…

“You’re so beautiful,” Opal whispered.

One Month Ago:

“Your form is a little crooked,” Samsara mused with a smirk, watching Opal circle around the strange stone circle at the center of the island.

“This is how Tenzin taught us,” the younger girl countered, twirling her hands and creating a small whirlwind.

“Many things have changed over the years… your modern styles are more for practicality— the need to repair nations calls for a modification in the Airbending arts.”

“Did you not have to repair nations?” Opal asked, focusing on the wind around her.

“No— I had to build them.”

“How did your people see Airbending, then?”

“As a way to experience one’s happiness. Originally, as you do now, we used it as a tool for survival
until our villages were build and our walls erected. Then… it was something to make music with. To paint pictures. To write poems…”

“Air was an art,” Opal concluded with a nod.

“And that’s why it’s frowned upon to channel your anger through your Bending.”

The younger girl’s shoulders instantly stiffened. The whirlwind dissipated like sand blowing across a beach— flowing down the island forests. Samsara’s eyes narrowed, realizing that she’d touched a nerve. Indeed… she’d grown impatient with Opal’s desire to stay on the island. And someone who’s been alive for thousands of years doesn’t usually grow impatient.

Instead, Opal made a comment about going to start dinner, and left Samsara all alone at the top of the island.

Every single time that they touched, Samsara hated herself more and more. Deep feelings coursed through her veins— feelings for the other Airbender… and all she wanted was for Opal to be happy. Gods, her aura was damaged.

She was in so much pain.

They both were.

Opal’s hands built up pleasure more and more until Samsara’s body couldn’t handle the tension— her back arching and her toes curling as energy flowed through her. Pleasure. It went against her teachings… everything she knew… and it shouldn’t have been physically possible.

And so, when the younger girl fell asleep with a peaceful smile on her face— Samsara slipped back into the Spirit World and began crying, old Uncle Iroh throwing a blanket over her shoulders and promising her a warm cup of tea.

“You know you sometimes murmur ‘Raava’ in your sleep,” Opal commented, cooking breakfast for herself and leaning against Samsara’s legs.

The Airbender looked up at the sky, “I miss her.”

“What do you mean?”

“The only reason I can come and go freely from both worlds is that I’m no longer tethered to the Avatar’s Soul. For ten thousand years… and then all of a sudden Harmonic Convergence occurred and I was wrenched away from… from one of my loves.”

“One of your loves?”

“Of course. Wan loved Raava with all his heart— as do I. She was the light within me. Almost every single Avatar after me had help and guidance… I was all alone until I unlocked the secret within myself. When she spoke to me the first time… it was as if I’d been cured of some sort of sickness.
And now she and I are separated.”

“Do you ever find yourself blaming Korra?”

“Of course not… I only wish I could’ve offered her my guidance… the way she felt so lost for so long… I was there…”

Opal was silent for a while, chewing on her breakfast with a slightly fallen face. Eventually she looked up at Samsara with piercing green eyes;

“Do you think I’m lost?”

Samsara didn’t say anything, only stroking Opal’s long black hair and pressing a kiss to the top of her head.

“Say it. Spit it out,” Opal yelled, chasing the fleeing Avatar through the jungle-like forest.

“What the hell are you talking about?!” Samsara called behind her with a frown.

“You’ve been tense all week— like you’ve wanted to yell at me. Go ahead and get it out of your system!!”

“I think you’re the one who needs to take a break!” the Avatar countered, hopping over a fallen log.

Opal scoffed, “Me?! I was fine until you showed up! Everything was peaceful and perfect— and then you decided to come and judge me for wanting to be left alone!!”

“I just think you’ve spent enough time away from the people who need you!!”

“They don’t need me! If they truly wanted to talk to me, they would’ve contacted me by now!!”

“You’re stuck on a fucking island with no means of communication!! What, are you expecting search parties and hound dogs swimming through the ocean?!”

“It would be nice if someone put some effort in!!”

“STOP ACTING LIKE NOBODY LOVES YOU!! YOU DON’T TRULY KNOW WHAT IT’S LIKE TO BE UNWANTED!! MY OWN VILLAGE KICKED ME OUT WHEN THEY REALIZED I WASN’T NORMAL!! NO NATION SOUGHT AFTER A DISAPPOINTMENT FOR AN AVATAR!! IT WASN’T UNTIL I SAVED OUR PEOPLE FROM NEAR-EXTINCTION— BY KILLING THE LOVE OF MY LIFE— THAT THEY FINALLY TOOK ME BACK!!”

Opal stopped dead in her tracks, looking at the Avatar with a shocked expression. Samsara was shaking in anger— something that she hadn’t felt until she watched Unalaq attempt to murder Raava a few years back. Tears blotched her vision, and she forced herself to meditate back into the Spirit World…

When she opened her eyes, surrounded by the familiar spectrum of colors and shapes that she’d grown used to, a little spirit crawled into her lap and pressed their face into her stomach.

“I don’t think you’re a disappointment,” Aina whispered in their childish voice.
“T-Thanks… you’re a good Spirit.”

“So are you,” Aina chuckled. “If a little astray.”

“How did you come to be so wise?” Samsara chuckled, wiping away her tears and hugging the little leafy sprite.

“Kor-Rah says that practice makes perfect.”

“She’s a smart lass. I hope she has better luck than I do,” the former Avatar sighed.

“Oh my gods… I didn’t think you’d come back!!” Opal said, rushing forwards and engulfing Samsara in a hug.

The ancient Air Nomad’s stomach did a somersault as she wrapped her arms around the younger Airbender. She let out a sigh and buried her nose into Opal’s collar—breathing in her scent and leaning into the other girl’s body.

“Opal…”

“Yes? What is it? I’ll do anything to make it up to you, I promise!!”

“We… we need to…”

“What is it?” the younger Airbender asked with pleading olive eyes.

Samsara took a deep breath and prayed for a surge of bravery;

“We need to talk about you and Jinora.”

Chapter End Notes

*makes whimpering noises of distress*

Leave... comments...
**Grow**

**Chapter Summary**

“We are all connected; To each other, biologically. To the earth, chemically. To the rest of the universe atomically.”
— Neil deGrasse Tyson

**Chapter Notes**

See the end of the chapter for notes

**Present Day:**

Samsara had vanished into thin air, retreating back into the Spirit World. For the first time in months — Opal realized how much pain she was in. Anger… fury… lust… jealousy… sorrow… mourning… loneliness… disappointment… anguish…

*Gods— I’ve fucked everything up.*

Hyperventilating, the Airbender fell to the ground. She began openly crying, sobbing for her mother and father and sister and all her brothers. She called out for Korra and Mako and Bolin and Asami and…

“JINORA!!” she screamed into the dirt, “I’m so fucking sorry!!”

Her fingers dug into the filth, clutching at rocks and leaves and roots as tears mixed with mud. She could feel her heart pounding— desperately trying to break free like an exotic bird in a cage. She laid there, wallowing in the grime until her lungs ached from heaving and her eyes stung from crying.

Worst of all, she’d broken Samsara and *used* her. Taken advantage of her desperate need for human contact and masqueraded it as a sick and twisted relationship.

At some point, Opal managed to pull herself up and lean against a tree— her face pressing into the rough bark as she tried to take a few gulps of air. But she’d grabbed onto peeling bark, ripping off in her hands and causing her to fall— her face scraping along the trunk of the madrone.

“Arrrggg!!” she grunted, clutching her cheek and kicking a blast of air in fury.

“You’ve hurt yourself, haven’t you? Take a deep, slow breath for me… one… two… three…”

Opal’s green eyes wallowed with tears at the sweet familiar voice— calling to her from gods-know-where. Her brow scrunched in anger, not at her Soulmate, but at herself.

“I don’t deserve you. I’m a horrible person,” she thought, choking back a sob.

She waited. Minutes turned into an hour, it seemed. She picked more at the peeling bark and ignored the drops of blood running down her cheek.
“Bring balance within. Feel your pain, but don’t let it consume you. Don’t hold your feelings within— but let them go. Focus on your breathing, Opal.”

The Airbender’s green eyes widened as she realized just how shaky her breath was. She stood and walked around— trying to slow down her lungs and clear her mind. But to no avail— a flash of her heated conversation with Samsara bolted through her head;

“I love you.”

“No… you don’t.”

Furious at her failed attempt, Opal’s fist raised in the air and she let out a yell— attempting to smash it against the tree. But there was suddenly another flash, this time of Jinora’s face, searing through her mind, sending the Airbender reeling back into the ground. Another round of tears dripped down her face, mixing with the dried blood and filth. Once more, her fingers dug into the earth as she tried to get a grip on…

Earth.

Earth.

Earth.

That was the whole problem, wasn’t it?

Opal had selfishly sacrificed her love for her primal desire of earth— sinking into her family’s ways of stubbornness and a rock-solid foundation instead of appreciating the privilege of the Air Nomad’s culture. She had chosen to become a steadfast boulder rather than— for lack of a better metaphor— a leaf in the wind. It was the Air Nomad way to let the wind take you, swirl you around as life does, and then it shall be on its way. Opal had thrown that philosophy right out the window when she’d attacked none other than her Soulmate in her rage.

Gods, what would her father think of her right now?

Avatar Aang had lost his entire culture; his friends and mentors and loved ones— but he had not let it break him. He chose to find meaning in his suffering. Opal had let her father’s death… devastate… no… devour her. And… Gods… instead of properly mourn him… she’d locked herself away and ignored her emotions. Now it was hitting her, like a wok to the back of the head, just how much pain she was truly in.

“It hurts so much,” she cried to the love of her life, like a child moaning to their mother.

“Life is ephemeral. It moves like the tides, our vitalities swirling around like leaves through the worlds— both Spirit and Mortal. What energies we take… we must eventually give back.

“Your father left this world with more love in his heart than a whole nation could be capable of. Look inside yourself, call to him. Your dynamisms are, and always shall be… one… but only if you open yourself up and let him in.”

A few moments passed before Opal realized that her breath had slowed down… just listening to
Jinora’s voice in her head was a far better medicine than any day on this forsaken place.

The Airbender stood, gathering her bag and looking out at the horizon. As though… as though…

As though the island had expected her needs; it had arrived back at the bay she’d first found it in. This couldn’t possibly be a coincidence.

Opal took one look at her belongings— a backpack, a dead cellphone, a sketchbook, a blanket, some clothes, and a pocket knife. With a sigh, she grabbed the knife (it might come in handy), and kicked up a pile of dirt— creating a hole in the ground. She buried what little of her belongings and looked at the thatch hut that had become her… home…

She took a breath and gave the place a pat, whispering “thanks” and walking away. The island, usually teeming with fauna, was eerily quiet— and it set her nerves alight.

*Be the leaf.*

There was a sudden lurch, like when the bus brakes and lets people off at a stop. Opal tripped over a root and held out her hands, air shooting from her palms and breaking her fall. She regained her balance and broke out into a run. Time was precious, and she had spent far too long avoiding this mystery for the comforts of her own selfishness. Spirits, her Chi must be devastated.

She felt weightless, the way an Airbender is supposed to feel— rather than tethered to the rocks as her family was.

Cliff! Cliff!! CLIFF!!!

The Airbender slipped and nearly fell into the salty ocean, were it not for some roots of a tree— dangling like crazy little fingers. She draggled in the air, hanging off the filthy limbs and desperately gripping for her life… when…

What in the name of Raava was that?

There was… a rock? In the ocean? In front of the island?!

But… intricately carved?

No…

It looked like… a paw? A giant paw?

Why, that didn’t make any sense!!

Opal took a deep breath and kicked herself away from the cliff— pushing her arms forwards like *Supergirl* and blasting air out in front of her. Though it broke her fall somewhat, she was instantly met with the shock of cold water. Resurfacing, she took a deep breath and willed the air to speed her forwards, gliding over the water like a speedboat.

She approached the rock cautiously, and when she climbed on top of it— the texture felt nothing like a rock, but indeed like fur!! How… strange…

Opal turned around and nearly screamed. Staring back at her was the face of a… a giant Lion Turtle.
Long white whiskers flowing over his mouth like ropes on a ship. Fangs piercing up from his jaws the size of sequoia trees. A large, flat nose that breathed a steady beat— louder than drums on a warship. Long pointy ears as tall as skyscrapers decked the sides of his head, reminding Opal of fantasy stories where elves roamed the pages. He had a glorious curly mane, wet from swimming and yet glinting a fantastic ember in the sunlight. His head must've been as large as the Beifong Palace in Zaofu, but his eyes… his eyes were golden, like crowns that donned atop the heads of kings and queens. Or perhaps golden like the color of Air Nomad robes. Or perhaps golden like the Probending Arena at night time— lit up and illuminating itself across Yue Bay; a beacon to Republic City. Just like how this Lion Turtle felt like a beacon to her.

Opal wasn’t sure what to do. Part of her wanted to jump off his paw in fear, fleeing and hoping that he wasn’t feeling hungry (though in hindsight she was probably as appetizing as a toothpick). Another part of her wanted to merely sit and observe the way he held himself as still as a statue. But then she could think only of the gratitude of his welcome— how she’d lived aboard his back for three months without a shred of thought to him. She owed him a great deal of respect.

And so she bowed, her right palm covering her left fist and her back dipping very, very low. More so than any formal bow she would ever give a governor or a city official. After all… this magnificent beast was… well… practically a god.

“Thank you for being so generous,” she said, enunciating every syllable loud and clear.

The Airbender wasn’t sure if he could smile, but it did look like he was trying, “Many years have passed since man made his home on our backs— once in a while a guru would come along during their travels and seek enlightenment upon me. Yet, you were here for a different reason.”

“I came here to run away from my troubles,” Opal admitted, her face growing red in shame.

“Your father passed, and like many before you— the natural instinct to flee took ahold of your soul, and in your trauma… you let that instinct command you.”

“I was weak.”

“No, I do not see this as a weakness,” the Lion Turtle mused, “More as a call to grow.”

“Grow?”

“Feel the light within you. Not the Spirit of Raava— that the Avatar takes command of, but the natural good within you. In every soul, from the smallest cricket to the largest Lion Turtle, there is a constant dance of darkness and light. Close your eyes and listen.”

Opal sat down on the Lion Turtle’s paw, clearing her head properly for the first time in months. Thinking of nothing— not even Jinora nor Samsara— only listening… to the darkness… and now the light… as though she were on a swing set… one… and then the other…

“Find the balance within yourself,” the Lion Turtle’s voice echoed.

Her spirit felt like a pendulum, swinging back and forth; her breathing and heartrate slowing all but to a stop as she thought only of light and dark. Black and white. One and then the other. Stars, and

“Again,” the calm voice in front of her instructed.

Fire
Air
Water
Earth
Light
Dark
Spirits
Energy

“Let your soul move through every part of your body— feel the blood within your heart, the air flowing through your lungs. The tingling in your fingers and the way the wind whips through your hair. Sense my voice in your ears and let it rumble through your body. My paw beneath you. Every drop of the ocean surrounding us. The warm rays of the sun beating down. Let your soul flow through all of these things… connect them all together and think only of the energy that we all share,” the Lion Turtle inculcated.

Her loose hair flowed through the wind, whipping its way around her face a little— though she was far too entranced to let it bother her. Instead… she only felt its energy.

“Now… let all that energy float away. Start from your feet, and think only of erasing your toes. Let them drift away and disconnect from you.”

With her eyes still closed, Opal thought of her toes— as silly as it seemed— concentrating on the energy in her body. She could almost feel her life leave her as she detached limb by limb of her body (figuratively), following the command of the Lion Turtle’s voice. Her torso. Her hands. Her arms. Her shoulders. Her neck. Her head. She let the energy leave, and it didn’t feel like dying. More like sleeping.

“Bring the energy back in, Opal Beifong.”

She did so, starting with her head— feeling the way blood flowed through her brain and cheeks, and the flavor of the sea still on her lips. The smell of the salty air in the edges of her nose. The crashing of the waves in her ears. The flecks of water on the back of her neck. The way her stomach ebbed in and out as her lungs took in air. Her fists instinctively bumped together in the Lotus Position. Each finger told her a story. She felt the texture of the Lion Turtle’s paw beneath her thighs, and the mud that had accumulated on her shoes. She felt the water sloshing around in her socks. She felt aware.

“All of this is one energy— one being. We are connected. We are one.”

“We are one,” Opal repeated, more in tune with herself than she had felt… ever.
There was a steady pressure on her forehead, and Opal finally took the time to open her eyes. The brightness of the sun was blocked by a large shape directly in front of her face.

One of the Lion Turtle’s claws was resting lightly, gently against her— and it seemed almost impossible that a beast of this… magnitude could be so gentle. She felt something swirling within her becoming more and more apparent, like when you slowly turn up volume on a stereo. The Lion Turtle’s claw glowed as golden as his eyes— and Opal felt the air surrounding her match its hue.

Energy.

Energy!

ENERGY!!

She took a sharp inhale as she felt it surrounding her, from the smallest wave all the way up, miles up in the air— to the largest clouds. The beaches of the bay surrounding them. The mountains in the distance. Every single tree on the Lion Turtle’s back! She could even sense his heart, somewhere tucked away protectively in his shell… every… single… beat… for… the… past… ten… thousand… years…

“I will say to you the same thing I said to a young boy many years ago; in the era before the Avatar, we bent not the elements, but the energy within ourselves. To bend another’s energy, your own spirit must be unbendable, or you will be corrupted and destroyed.”

The Lion Turtle gently guided his paw up to the nearest cliff and Opal slowly stepped off, feeling the lives surrounding her. Every flora. Every fauna. She gave the Lion Turtle a deep, respectful bow— somehow exchanging millions of words in the simple gesture.

“But… Sir… how can I… Energybend? I’m no Avatar. I’m not powerful like my friends or my brothers. I’m just… Opal.”

“Sometimes the most powerful soul has the delicate spirit. And in turn, more often than not, the delicate soul has the powerful spirit.”

“What should I do with this gift?”

“It is not a gift, Opal Beifong. This is a tool. Use it wisely to bring balance to the chaos. Light to the dark.”

“A tool?” she repeated absentmindedly.

“Use it to grow,” he said, his mouth lowering back into the ocean.

Opal Beifong bowed to him one last time and felt her heart leap as the Lion Turtle turned and calmly swam through the bay— disguised as an island to those… who could not… feel his energy… as the Airbender now could…

“You’re a remarkable individual, you know that?” a voice behind her asked.

Opal turned, and was met with not one person… but two. The turquoise spiritual projection of Master Jinora, and the undead being of Avatar Samsara.

Opal felt frozen on the spot, staring at the spiritual form of the girl she had not seen in months… and the girl she had kissed not two hours ago… and it was supposed to be the other way around.

“I’m not sure. I can feel so much energy… flowing around us like air,” she said, looking at the trees and shrubs around her and feeling the life within. “Do you think Korra feels this?”

“I don’t know… you’ll have to ask her,” Jinora shrugged.

Samsara, however, was looking intently at the Beifong girl with piercing silver eyes, her wild brown hair whipping around in the wind like wheat in a field, “You can Energybend now, I know you can. Which means… you must…”

“What?”

“You remember when I first met you and Jinora? When you were trapped together in the Spirit World?”

“Yes.”

Samsara’s eyes fell to the ground, “And you recall Roku, Aang, and I using our Energybending to free you?”

“Y-Yes…” Opal trailed off, unsure of where this conversation was going. She looked at Jinora, who’s expression had turned… sorrowful…

“I need you to use it now to free me. We were all deceased Avatars, powerful yes… but expired, respectfully. You… could… Energybend me… and end all my suffering.”

“What?” Opal cried, forgetting that Jinora was watching and grabbing the Avatar’s lifeless hand. “But… you’re not tethered to Raava anymore!!”

“I know. Which means I would finally be released. Into darkness. Or perhaps into light. Or perhaps finally reborn again as a new person— with no past life to bind me.”

“I don’t understand… you’re practically immortal in death now that Harmonic Convergence has segregated you from Korra,” Opal argued. “You could go anywhere, do anything!”

“Opal…” Jinora said calmly, “She has not eaten for ten thousand years. She has not slept. She has not felt pain. She has not felt the joy of family. She cannot Bend outside of the Spirit World— and even that is mediocre compared to what even the weakest Bender could do.”

The Beifong desperately tried to counter this, “But—”

embrace I could cope. But now… without her… now I’m just astray… please… set me free…

“The Avatar is well and powerful, and it’s a responsibility full of sacrifice and losses… I readily accepted that for ten millennia. But now… Opal… I just want to sleep. Will you please end my suffering?” Samsara asked, her hands squeezing a vice grip on the Beifong’s.

Opal hyperventilated, how could they just ask her to… end Samsara’s life? I mean, you know, again!?! The Avatar answered this by putting her forehead against Opal’s and closing her eyes. Opal found her own eyes shut as she listened for the energy within the Avatar.

It was not swirling, coming and going like the ocean or the trees or her own body or the Lion Turtle. Samsara’s energy felt like a battering ram slamming against stone walls, over and over again. Like a cat tossing a mouse against a rock— playing with its food. Her energy felt like a prisoner banging against a metal cell, desperate to be set free.

And in those few moments, their foreheads pressed together, Opal understood Samsara’s suffering.

Maybe Aang and Roku were content playing Pai Sho in the pink fields of the Spirit World. Maybe Kyoshi was at ease, training in the bamboo forests with her swords and fans. Maybe Kuruk would always find a destiny chasing Koh the Face Stealer. Maybe Wan was reunited with his friends, the Aye-Aye Spirit and the others from ten thousand years ago. But Samsara was not. She was in so much pain, and she had been for so long.

Opal stood back, giving the two other girls a nod, “Alright… I’m ready.”

She felt every fiber of energy that had connected Samsara to herself— every moment, every rip in the fabric of time and every stumble along the dusty road they walked down. Every hug. Every caress. Every kiss. More importantly— Opal thought of every time she had ever seen Avatar Samsara smile. In this life, and in the thousands that they’d met beforehand.

Without thinking about it, the green-eyed Airbender raised her hands… swinging Samsara’s energy back and forth like a pendulum, the way the Lion Turtle had taught her.

Back and forth.

Fire
Air
Water
Earth
Light
Dark
Spirits
Energy

Goodbye
She heard a “thank you” whispered as she felt Samsara’s energy float up and dissipate into the stars. The world’s energy suddenly felt as though it were a puzzle, and a piece were missing. Opal’s eyes opened, and she half-expected a trickster of a girl to ruffle the green-eyed Airbender’s hair. But only Jinora was staring back at her; the Master’s face a mixture of sorrow and understanding and pride.

“Come home?” Jinora whispered.

“I will… but… did she tell you about…”

“Yes.”

Opal’s heart fell in disappointment, and then she took a sigh and looked into the turquoise projection’s eyes, “I’m sorry.”

Now the Master’s expression was absolutely unreadable, but she repeated her prior sentence;

“Come home.”

And then Jinora’s projection returned to Republic City— leaving Opal Beifong all alone on a cliff with a great deal to dwell on.

_End of Part Three_

Chapter End Notes

Please leave comments if something confuses you, I'm happy to answer. It's a lot to take in.
Chapter Summary

“It takes very little to govern good people. Very little. And bad people can’t be governed at all. Or if they could I never heard of it.”

— Cormac McCarthy, No Country For Old Men

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Kuvira let out a yawn and strapped on her bulletproof armor (loaned to her by Aunt Lin). Baatar was still asleep in the bed, one arm dangling off the edge and his black hair sticking out in every direction. She smiled and pressed a kiss to his cheek, and then another to his forehead.

“I love you,” she whispered with a smile.

“Mmm… love… too…” he mumbled, rolling over and pressing his face into the pillow.

The Metalbender chuckled a little and walked into the kitchen, grabbing a bagel and downing her lukewarm cup of coffee with a few gulps. The sky was cloudy today, and a few light raindrops were tapping against the window as she pulled on her boots and grabbed her baseball cap. Korra’s car pulled up to the driveway and let out a few honks for her to hurry up.

“I’m coming!” she shouted from the kitchen window, taking a few bites of her bagel and grabbing her metal cables from the dining table (hidden underneath several of Baatar’s blueprints).

She closed the door and locked it with her house key, frowning at the drooping daffodils that she’d been neglecting recently. Another honk from the car startled her and she contemplated whether or not she could toss a whole Satomobile into the river with her Metalbending.

Kuvira hopped into the car and flicked the Avatar on the forehead with a grin, “Someone’s impatient.”

“I don’t want to be late!!”

Korra backed the Satomobile out of the driveway and they were off— speeding along the neighborhood to get to the Republic City Police Headquarters. There was a silence between the two of them and Kuvira picked at the leather seat she was sitting on in anticipation. Out of the corner of her eye, she though she saw Korra bite her lip.

The Metalbender let out a sigh, “Did you hear about Opal?”

“Hmm? No, what happened?”

“Jinora texted me this morning to let me know what’s going on; apparently she’s been living out in the woods or something— for the past three months.”

“I wish that she had reached out to us; we could have helped her,” Korra frowned.
“I miss her so much… apparently something big happened, but Jinora won’t tell me what.”

They pulled up to the parking garage beneath the Police Headquarters—Korra merely looked at the security guard and he let them pass without hesitation. Avatar perks.

Another silence fell between them as the elevator rose up to Chief Beifong’s office. Kuvira couldn’t help but feel dread at whatever plan Lin had devised for the Coalition— the Equalists were getting more and more ruthless every day. It wouldn’t be long before the City turned into a battlefield, no matter how peaceful of an approach Korra tried to take.

“Glad you could make it,” Lin grumbled, stiffening a little when Kuvira gave her a small hug (but still patting her adoptive niece a little on the back).

Korra had gone over to Asami, who had been working non-stop at the station. After the attack in Zaofu and the… slaughter… of the board members—Aunt Lin had decided that she needed to stay under the protection of the police; provided that she work with them and supply any and all intel that she had on the Equalist agenda. The engineer’s eyes had dark bags underneath and her short black hair was a little greasy (completely unlike the old Asami Sato)—but her face broke into a wide smile and her eyes lit up like fireworks when she saw Kuvira and Korra.

“Morning,” Asami murmured, kissing Korra with a smirk. She gave Kuvira a strong, lingering hug and they all sat down at the conference table together.

Other Task Force members—most of them extremely proficient benders who were already in charge of their own teams in the Coalition—filed into the room and sat down, tapping fingers against the armrests of chairs and looking at the Chief for instructions. Metalbending Police stood attentive along the walls, their hands calmly resting behind their backs.

Kuvira’s heart jumped a little when Hikaru and Bolin walked into the room—the Firebender was very clearly not going to be partaking in any of the action anytime soon; her pregnancy looked tiring and Bolin kept a supportive hand on his fiancée’s back. Realizing that there were no more seats left… Hikaru sat down next to Asami—flashing her a neutral look and then looking up at Lin Beifong.

“Let’s get started,” the Chief grumbled. “Our intel suggests that the Equalists have been using the network of tunnels beneath the city to continue their assault on civilians. In the past week we’ve had three separate attacks—they’ve been saving bullets for us and are still using their pitiful Arrows to attack citizen Benders.”

Kuvira stiffened. Depending on how many people had been shot by Unobtainium Arrows—she was going to get back home late tonight.

“We’ve managed to relocate the homeless living underneath the city to a shelter near Republic City Park—which means we can properly flush out Equalist activity.”

“Surely that’s impossible,” a Coalition member across the room countered, “There’s miles and miles of channel beneath the city.”

“And what if it’s an ambush?” another Task Force member questioned.

Lin Beifong held up a hand to the commotion, “Please, let me finish. We’re going to send in rovers—setting up a camera surveillance to monitor activity below. If we take a stealth approach… maybe,
we can trace the Equalists to wherever they’re hiding.”

“So what are we supposed to do in the meantime?”

Hikaru turned to the ex-heiress. “Do they have any underground facilities near the Art Museum?” she whispered.

Korra, Kuvira, and Asami sat there, blinking. Those had probably been the first non-hostile words spoken to the engineer in months. The ex-Equalist bit her lip in thought and scratched her pen back and forth on a scrap piece of paper.

“I… I think they do… we drilled out a tunnel to… to dig some samples a while back…”

The Metalbender could feel Korra’s heart rate quicken, no doubt still a little torn between the love she had for Asami and the pain of losing the Art Museum—a project she had personally worked so hard to keep afloat.

“Chief Beifong,” Hikaru interrupted, “What about the Museum?”

“What about it?” Lin huffed with a raised eyebrow.

“We think… that there’s probably a tunnel network still running underneath that the Equalists could be using.”

“In order to access it, we would have to clear away more rubble,” Saikhan pointed out. “Which means we would lose the element of surprise.”

“The one element I can’t bend,” Korra joked, earning a nudge in the ribs from Kuvira.

“Actually… since the place is already destroyed… and you’ve cleared out homeless… there is another option,” Asami pondered, looking over at Bolin—who had fallen asleep in boredom.

“Glowstick and Unobtainium, you are good to go,” Saikhan called over the static.

“Alright, let’s go,” Lin whispered, leading her team around the alley.

Korra, Kuvira, and Bolin darted through the rubble of the Art Museum. Detecting her heart beat, the Metalbender could feel the Avatar’s heart sink as she was forced to step over ruined statues and burned paintings, weaving around collapsed walls and locating where the basement was supposed to be.

“Go for it,” the Water Tribe girl told Bolin halfheartedly.

The boyish Earthbender made several stomps to the ruined floor; hard and strong movements that Earth requires to bend to one’s will. Kuvira watched the ground beneath them turn into lava and melt away debris as he parts it to either side and clears up a path down through the ground—burning away the rubble and pushing the molten rock aside.
She’d always been jealous of such an ability, to create such a deadly tool with a wave of one’s hand. And yet… she’s the sole Bender of the unbendable. Despite the Light Chakra— understanding that Metal is connected to her because of the unrefined bits of earth within… Kuvira couldn’t help but feel as though bending Metal was an entirely different element on its own.

And so while Bolin cleared away the rubble of the Museum, Korra watching his back— Kuvira looked over at a former abstract metal statue and began playing with the steel, letting it flow around her like… water… rather than earth. It twirled around her in tendrils, like ribbons, and she began to feel like an artist rather than a soldier on an espionage mission.

“Alright, I’ve found the tunnel!” Bolin’s whisper echoed up to the two girls.

Korra’s hands lit up in fire and Kuvira’s hand hovered over her metal cables. The tunnel seemed empty at first, but when the Avatar lowered her ablaze palms to the ground, the Metalbender saw the tracks in the ash.

“These are recent,” Korra muttered.

“Are you sure?” Bolin asked.

“I’m Water Tribe— there are no better trackers in the planet, other than Shirshu… come on… this way!”

They followed Korra along a tunnel route, passing a grate that had been clearly destroyed by a blow torch. An eerie silence hung in the air as they swiftly moved along, passing discarded drills and such. A few pieces of Unobtainium lay scattered on the ground, but other than that there was no sign of human activity.

“Are you sure that someone’s been down here… recently?”

“Yes,” Korra hissed, clamping a hand over Bolin’s mouth.

Kuvira tapped her foot against the metal, listening for the vibrations. Waves carried through the floor and the walls around them— she could see everything. Someone else was down here. More than one person… and they were just sitting around… relaxed and clearly not expecting an ambush…

“Come on!” she whispered, pulling her friends along and adjusting her bulletproof armor.

The tunnel led to a large room, filled with pipes and steam and pressure gauges. Kuvira could detect… only three Equalists (confirming their identity from the three shock gloves lying on a table), all sitting around and smoking. Which that meant their masks were off. A dry laughter filled the air, mixing with the scent of cigarettes, as a teenager told some story about his sister-in-law.

Korra tapped Kuvira’s hand with three fingers… she wanted to capture these guys and bring them back to Police Headquarters. The Metalbender smirked— now was her time to shine.

Kuvira surged forwards, peeling strips of metal off the nearby pipes, which not only filled the room with steam but caused the Equalists to turn their heads to the source of commotion. Which meant the Metalbender could blind them. A strip over three pairs of eyes and the Equalist lackeys were kneeling on the floor.

“What do you want!” one of them cried out, desperately searching around for an attacker.
Korra waved her hands and Waterbent the steam into ice— instantly cooling and clearing the room, allowing Kuvira to properly make out their captives. A woman, a middle aged man, and the teenage boy were trembling in fear as they unsuccessfully tried to pull the metal binds off their eyes. With a flick of her wrist, Kuvira wrapped their wrists behind their backs and secured them with more metal.

“What were you doing down here?” Korra asked, putting a hand on the female Equalist’s shoulder.

“W-We were posted here by the Lieutenant!! We weren’t doing anything bad, I swear!!”

“Let’s take them back for questioning, see what intel we can come up with,” the Avatar said to Bolin and Kuvira.

Each of them guided a captive through the tunnel, and the Equalists— clearly new recruits— were all too scared to scream or try to run. Resurfacing at the Art Museum, Kuvira let out a laugh;

“You didn’t need to wait for us— a master Metalbender, a Lavabender, and the Avatar? We can take care of ourselves!”

Lin signaled for some of the Police Officers to take the hostages back to Headquarters, “That’s understandable— but I was more worried that I sent Korra, Kuvira, and Bolin down into a fight. Your Bending abilities are one thing, but you three get into more trouble than I care to think about sober.”

Kuvira had to admit, it was pretty funny watching Chief Lin Beifong scare the shit out of three trembling and sniveling Equalists— who clearly were regretting their decision to join up with the faction, and really looked like they just wanted to go home. She watched the exchange from behind one-sided glass, taking a sip of horrible Police Headquarters coffee and smirking as Lin brought out the Bad Cop tactic. Korra had an arm slung around Kuvira’s shoulders and laughed along with her at every jump that the Equalist captives made when the mighty Beifong raised her voice.

Five minutes later, the Chief came out of the questioning room with a huff, “They don’t know much — all of them are new recruits, but at least I could sense that they weren’t lying; judging by their heartbeats.”

“So what do they know?” Asami asked, looking up from a table covered in schematics and raising an eyebrow.

“The tunnels are connected to several underground bunkers that the Equalists have been working on for the past decade— since the First War; apparently they were commissioned by Amon. Where you found them was a dead end, though. Apparently they were sent in to see if there was any remaining Unobtainium and decided to take a smoke break instead of doing their jobs.”

“Do they know where the bunkers are?” Hikaru asked, a protective hand over her belly as she looked at the three cuffed prisoners through the glass.

“I think so— we’ll keep them here until we’ve gotten all the information we can and then throw them into prison. They’re too low on the Equalist food chain to ransom.”

Finally, some good news, Kuvira thought— reaching for her phone and texting Baatar that she would get home late.
Chapter End Notes

Badass blinding people Kuvira doing what she do best
Chapter Summary

"Without a family, man, alone in the world, trembles with the cold."

-Andre Maurois

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hikaru stared at the snapshot in her hands— a little wrinkled and torn on the left side and slightly smudged fingerprints form the time she’d let Kiki go through the photo album. Several smiles gazed back up at her, and Hikaru felt a pang of sadness as she stared into two sets of green eyes and a pair of blue ones. Yasuko was sitting on Shun’s back, her arms wrapped around her older sister’s shoulders while her grandmother Suki laughed at the chaos— a hand ruffling Shun’s Fire Nation bun.

Her finger lightly traced over Yasuko’s face; her bright smile and the way she held her hair. Her pointed chin and pronounced collar. Her bright green eyes that were so full of hope. How much of the world they would see, yet how little time they had left—

Thump!

“Ow… you’re a lively little one,” she hummed, placing a hand over her belly.

The last visit to the pediatrician revealed that her baby would be a boy— and she was still conflicted on what to name him. Not Yat-Sen; when she told him a month ago of her pregnancy… Grandpa had assured her that he didn’t want a child named after him, that he would want the child to be called something original. Certainly not her father, Qiang; that bastard had stuck around long enough to realize that Shun was pregnant a second time, and then he dashed off for good.

One of the names she’d come across in the Probending manual had caught her eye… Dequan.

Dequan.

That had a nice ring to it. She would have to tell Bolin.

Hikaru stood, taking a stretch and walking over to the window. It was funny; so much had changed in one year of her life— and yet the city horizon looked the same. Then again, she didn’t have a view of the Museum. She looked around… the apartment seemed so dark, so empty right now. Bolin was out at the Police Headquarters, and Suki was at school. She decided to take a bath; clear her thoughts up a little.

The warm steam filled the air, and Hikaru relished in the feeling of heat. Primal Firebending comforts— like playing with a candle’s flame or holding one’s hands out to the fireplace. She could almost fall asleep in the bathtub— what with the jasmine incense and the soft James Taylor CD playing on the shelf. Hikaru rested against the porcelain back of the tub and let out a sigh.
What was she going to do about Asami?

Poor girl was trying her hardest to be on good terms, but there’s only so much one can do to make peace with an assailant. And yet— unlike when they had first spoken a few weeks ago— her apology in the Warehouse stirred and twisted Hikaru’s insides. It was genuine, of that much she was sure. The Firebender had no doubt that the ex-Equalist felt horrible, remorseful even, for shooting Hikaru all those months ago. So why was it so hard to forgive her—

*Thump!*

“Ssshhh,” she cooed, rubbing circles on her stomach, “It’s okay— Mommy’s going to keep you safe and sound.”

*Gods, this family is so fucked up… half of it has passed away and the other half is broken… do I really want to raise my little boy with that?*

*What if…*

*Should I?*

*What if something happens to me and Bolin… Grandpa is far too old to take care of…*

*No… I can’t…*

*Besides— I have so many friends that I trust far more than she… friends who are financially and socially responsible…*

These thoughts swirled around in her head— slowly becoming louder and louder until she gave up and plunged her part of her head under the bathwater. Her ears were suddenly subject to the loud pressure of water as her black hair freely swirled around her face. The pregnant woman took a sigh and closed her amber eyes.

*“Hikaru!! Check out this magazine!!”*

*“Liling, I’m going to be late for class,” the fourteen year-old complained with a whisper.*

*“Come on, I picked this up at the grocery store during lunch hour— look at this!! She looks just like you!! And I mean really, really looks like you!!”*

*The freshman Firebender snatched the magazine (Popular Mechanics) from her best friend with a skeptical glance. On the cover of the edition— a teenage girl, presumably her age, with wavy black hair and wide green eyes was leaning up against an engine the size of Hikaru’s house. Next to her, a large man with salt and pepper hair, a beefy neck, and a bushy mustache was laughing… he must’ve been the girl’s father. The cover read;*

*Designing with the Sato Family*

*Sato? But wasn’t that the last name her aunt had? So… did that mean…*

RING!! RING!! RING!!
“I have to get to class, can I borrow this?” Hikaru asked Liling.

The junior shrugged, “Sure— just bring it back when you’re done!!”

All throughout Earth Kingdom History 101, the Firebender’s fingers traced over every feature of the photo. Sato… Sato… Sato… but did that mean this girl was her cousin? Wow… she was so pretty. And elegant. And surely, she was really smart—if she was on the cover of a magazine.

Hikaru clutched the volume on the bus ride home, hopping off and running up to the porch steps. A two-year-old toddler was sitting on the carpeted floor, absentmindedly playing with a pile of Duplo bricks. At the kitchen sink, an elderly woman was scrubbing a wok.

“Nana… you’re not going to believe what Liling found and gave to me!” Hikaru exclaimed, holding up the magazine with a proud smile, “I think she’s my cousin!!”

The old Kyoshi Warrior stiffened, turning with wide blue eyes and staring at the cover photo—and the Firebender instantly knew that she’d done the wrong thing. But Nana Suki never lost her temper… walking up with a sad, yet soft smile and taking the magazine. Like Hikaru, her fingers lightly traced over the photo of the girl, mesmerized at each and every feature.

“She’s really grown…” the elderly woman murmured.

“Can we go meet her?! I mean, if she’s on the cover of a magazine—she’s probably really famous, right?” the young teenager asked excitedly.

Nana Suki turned, discreetly wiping a tear away, “I don’t think we’re welcome, love. Now then… have you done your chores for today?”

“Erm… no, Nana.”

“Come on then! The sooner we clean the house the sooner I can take you to hand feed the Unagi!!” Nana Suki said with a laugh.

With a groan, and a hand on her stomach, Hikaru sat up—water rushing off her collarbone and out of her long black hair. There was a creak in her neck, and she had to grab the side bar with a chuckle.

“You draw quite a bit of energy out of me, I’ll have you know,” she whispered to her little boy.

She closed her eyes again and leaned back against the wall. After several moments of tranquility, she came to a decision.

Asami was sleeping on the couch at Police Headquarters, her head resting in Korra’s lap. Every few minutes or so, the engineer would murmur or twitch, and the Avatar was hesitant to leave her alone. She ended up fishing her phone out of her pocket—after fifteen minutes of squirming bit by bit so that she didn’t wake her Soulmate. The screen lit up and Korra squinted—quickly turning down the
Tenzin: Korra, when are you going to start staying on the Island again?

Avatar Korra: Umm… raincheck?

Tenzin: You can’t just raincheck…oh fine… I hope you know what you’re doing.

Avatar Korra: I hope so too— I love you!!

Tenzin: I love you too, stay safe and come have dinner with us tomorrow.

Avatar Korra: Sure thing. Mind if I bring Asami?

Tenzin: As long as you keep it PG. I still haven’t forgiven you for the Mako Fiasco.

She let out a small chuckle and shifted her body so that they were laying parallel to one another. Subconsciously, Asami wrapped her arm around the Avatar’s waist— prompting Korra to squirm (she was ticklish) and giggle a little. The engineer mumbled something in her sleep about Kyoshi and her head dropped a little against Korra’s.

“I love you,” the Avatar whispered, chastely kissing her girl.

“Kyoshi… loves… me… that’s so… weird…” Asami murmured.

Needless to say, Korra was trembling with that silent belly laughter that one gets in a situation like this.

“I mean, I was technically her once upon a time— so you’re not wrong,” Korra muttered with an amused smile.

Footsteps approached the office hallways, and a familiar voice was heard speaking to the security guard.

“Ma’am, I understand that you have special privilege to be in this building— but I’m going to have to ask you to return during office hours,” the guard argued, trying to keep his voice down for the sake of the sleeping couple inside the headquarters’ main room.

“I just need to speak with Miss Sato for a few minutes,” Hikaru’s voice echoed against the wooden door.

Korra slowly sat up, Asami’s pale arm tethering her to the couch. Eventually, she heard a sigh as the security guard unlocked the door with a special code combination and a plastic card. The door creaked open and the Firebender stuck her head through.

“Erm… can I speak with her?”

“At this hour?” Korra smiled, groggily rubbing her eye.

“It’s important.”

The Avatar yawned and shook the engineer awake. Asami let out the cutest sleepy girl sounds as she
slowly stirred— her drowsy voice mumbling a few questions as to why someone would wake her at this ungodly hour.

Hikaru sat down on the couch with them— intimately close. Asami curled up against Korra and blinked a few times, a little unsure of her surroundings.

“I accept your apology,” the Firebender whispered, her voice resonating in the dead of the night.

With those four words, Asami suddenly found herself wide awake— sitting up and letting out a breath that she’d been holding in for a whole year. Tentatively, as though her cousin might blow away like ash if she were not gently enough, Hikaru reached out and cupped Asami’s cheek.

“We’re all we have left of our families… we deserve to be happy, too,” the pregnant woman sighed seriously.

Asami didn’t say anything because, to be perfectly frank, she couldn’t. Instead, she leaned forwards and pressed her face into Hikaru’s shoulder, smiling when she felt warm arms wrap around her.

“I also came to say that… I’m sorry, too.”

“F-For what?” Asami stuttered, looking into her cousin’s amber eyes.

“I tried… tried… to kill you… in the Estate, all those months ago. I was so enraged that I couldn’t stop and think clearly. Gods… what if…”

The engineer closed her eyes and let tears freely fall down her cheeks. How much more pain did her family need to feel before things could be right again? She tightly held onto her kin— as though the ocean might carry her away, and Hikaru was her anchor.

“What made you change your mind?” the engineer whispered into the Firebender’s shirt.

“I can’t… I can’t hold in this hatred anymore. It’s not fair to Kiki… or healthy for him,” Hikaru admitted.

Asami’s hands slowly drifted down from the Firebender’s shoulders to rest on her stomach, where a tiny life was blossoming. She felt a small kick and gasped.

“He’s going to be strong,” Korra murmured, placing a hand over one of Asami’s.

“Just like his great-grandmother. His grandma. His great-aunt. And just like his auntie Asami.”

That was all it took for the engineer’s walls to come crashing down. She leaned forwards and buried herself into Hikaru’s neck— crying an ocean and begging for forgiveness, even though she’d been granted such a thing only moments ago. Again and again she pleaded, until eventually she felt herself drift to sleep, caught somewhere between the love of her life and a woman whom she was just starting to truly come across.
Chapter End Notes

I was going to write angst, and then The 100 happened tonight and I thought some of you lezzy's might need a hug. So have some fluff. My hopes and prayers go to the Clexa fandom.

Leave Comments!!
A Night at Song's

Chapter Summary

“A Spiritual Samaritan lives knowing that if we were to leave this world tomorrow, we were the best humans we could be and we touched the lives of as many souls as possible. We are not asked to be perfect. We are asked to make a difference.”

— Molly Friedenfeld

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Opal wiped the sweat off her brow and continued walking through the town. People flashed her dirty looks— as though she were a criminal, and she couldn’t quite place her finger on it…. until she walked into a public restroom.

Oh spirits… I look like a mess.

Her hair was scraggily and unkempt— messy strands sticking out in every direction and making her look like she’s received a nasty shock of electricity. Dirt smudged down one side of her face, and the other side held that nasty scratch from her last day on the Lion Turtle’s back— when she’d scraped her cheek on a tree. The cut was a lengthy gash, with dried blood caking all the way down to her chin.

The clothes she had on were greasy, sweaty, filthy, mud-ridden— and filled with holes. Part of her sleeve was torn on her leather jacket and parches on the shoulders of the coat were peeling, just like the madrone bark. Of course the townspeople were shooting looks at her— she looked like a bum.

Had she looked this way for the past three months? Even longer? Since she’d first fled Zaofu?

Opal’s fingers twirled around the scraggily braid that she had her hair set in. Her left hand wandered down to her pocket— where her sole possession, a pocketknife, was resting. Carefully, her fingers reached for the blade and unclasped it from its metal shell. A few sighs and a number of jagged swipes— her hair began falling into the sink. By the time she was finished… her hair now looked like its former hairstyle, though a little longer and a slightly choppier. Rugged. Wild. Feral.

She scrubbed her face clean, using lots of soap from the dispenser and ignoring the sting on her cut as she washed the blood and muck off her face. What was it Jinora had once said? There’s nothing an Airbender likes more than being clean. After spending so long caring about earth and dirt… yes… being hygienic was doing Opal’s spirit wonders.

The Airbender walked out of the public restroom with a smile on her face— something that she’d gone without forcing for a great deal of time.

In fact, she was so relieved at the change of pace; she didn’t realize that she’d blundered into a large shape. Opal took a few steps back and looked up at the creature… clearly a Spirit.

“Oh, forgive me— I didn’t mean to walk into you,” she apologized politely.
The Spirit turned, and Opal realized they looked familiar. Yes… a Dragonfly-Bunny Spirit over six feet tall… but… that couldn’t be…

“Are you Furry Foot? Jinora’s friend?” she asked with wide olive eyes.

A nose nudged against her forehead in happiness, and she ended up giving Furry Foot a hug, colliding against something rather stiff.

Furry Foot had… a stick in his paws… no… a Glider Stave!!

“How did you get that?” Opal gasped.

Her fingers ran over the delicate wood, intricate carvings that looked… fresh… this stave had been crafted very recently. The stave was smooth, not a splinter could be acquired. Not a ridge nor a bump could be found as she ran her thumb up down its side.

“Who gave you this? Jinora? Did she make this?”

The Dragonfly-Bunny Spirit didn’t say anything, only turning and walking into the forest. Opal thought for a moment to follow it, and then decided that such would be a fruitless task. She looked at the Glider Stave in her hands for a few moments, and then up at the sky. Not a cloud to be seen, even though it was a little cold out.

It’s been three months since I’ve last flown. I’m probably a little rusty, she pondered.

Earth could only tether her for so long, though. Opal could feel the energy of the sky calling to her—and it set her heart adrift… she needed to roam the winds again. It had been so long, and now the beckoning was too much to ignore. Her feet lifted a little off the ground in excitement, and she quickly zipped up the pocket with her knife— ready to return to Republic City as soon as possible.

She took at off a run, smiling at the tug in her heart as she began to take off, her feet no longer touching the ground and her back pressing up against the spine of the glider. The green wings of the Glider picked up air and began lifting her higher and higher.

Her sneakers grazed the top of a pine as she aimed for the skies; feeling a freedom surrounding her. Opal closed her eyes, allowing her energy to swing back and forth just as the Lion Turtle had taught her. She willed her dynamism to fly up, up, and away.

A tear rolled down her cheek, falling off as it was swept away by the wind.

Freedom.

How could Opal survive without this for so long?

She willed the air currents to take her further up, until she could see as much of the sprawling land as possible— aiming the afternoon sun to her left and heading north… which would lead her to Republic City. Fortunately, this Gilder had straps that she could put her wrists through; relieving her of any fears that this stave, like the last, might wrench from her hands.

Her now short hair whipped behind her face and let the sky thread through its tendrils— though she felt no cold from the touch. Opal let herself dive down for fun. Playing through the atmosphere like Icarus (though she was slightly more practiced than the boy from Greek Myth), barrel roles and loop-de-loops and laughing with loud whoops as she began to truly feel like an Airbender… for the first
time in so, so long.

Her endurance was unlimited right now, it seemed.

Nighttime upon her, Opal was charting her flight home by the stars— grateful that her trek was North, of all directions. Moonlight streamed down onto her, lighting up the clouds and making the journey rather beautiful. She dipped down, allowing the Glider (which was by no means flimsy) to speed up and torpedo her through the air like a falcon. With her newfound knowledge, Opal felt a little overwhelmed at the energy of the sky surrounding her.

_I am going home._

The thought boosted the currents that carried her, surging both her heart and her Glider. No longer did the device seem like a tool, merely an extension of herself; her own pair of wings.

_“Thank you,”_ she thought with a smile, letting the tears drip away like raindrops on a windshield.

By Fortune’s Grace, it seemed that Jinora knew what she meant;

_“Of course. I just want you home. And thank Baatar Jr. He’s the one that crafted the Glider in so short a time.”_

Her brother. Her family. Opal’s head turned to the right, somewhere to the East— the rest of her kin were in Zaofu. She longed to join them, but the Airbender already had a destination. Therefore, to Kuvira and Baatar. To Jinora. To Korra, Mako, Asami, and Bolin. To Hikaru and Mula. And then to wherever the winds of time might carry her.

Opal eventually ran out of stamina. As far as she could tell— she was halfway home, and deserved a rest. The Airbender flew down to the nearest source of light, gliding among the trees and landing at a farm of sorts.

She walked up to the door and knocked, biting her lip when she realized how late in the night it was. And elderly woman opened the door with a kind smile, soothing some of the Airbender’s nerves.

_“I’m terribly sorry, but I’m a traveler looking for a place to stay— you wouldn’t happen to have any space to rest at, would you?”_

The old lady chuckled, _“Are you going to steal my ostrich horse?”_

_“I’m sorry?”_ Opal asked with a confused and nervous chuckle.

_“Long story, come on in.”_

The Airbender walked through the house, which was empty— save for a few resting Spirits, snoring on the couches and chairs. Opal pointed at them;
“Do they bother you?”

“Bother me?” the old lady mused, “Not at all, I’m merely sharing what’s mine with them. Not their fault the Avatar opened the Portals. In return, they help me around the fields. It’s been nice to have some help— my kids are all grown up and my back isn’t what it used to be.”

With a small chuckle, the elder showed Opal to a guest room, “Stay as long as you like, dear. I’m making breakfast in the morning if you’d like something before you’re off.”

“Thank you,” the green-eyed girl said with a respectful bow.

The bed was soft and warm, and Opal let out a gasp at how good it felt to not sleep on hard ground for once. She sighed in relief and pulled covers over her head— absolutely exhausted and yet so damn happy.

There were clothes laying on the chair in her bedroom. Clean, fresh clothes. The bathroom adjacent to her chambers was warm and steamy… and Opal quickly realized with a happy and excited exhale that a bathtub of warm water was waiting for her. She grabbed the garments and a towel from the closet, stripping off what practically constituted as rags now and—

“Oooohhhh… oh Gods…” she sighed as she sat down in the tub.

A bottle of peppermint oil rested on the shelf, and the Airbender poured a bit into the water, relishing at the strong aroma that quickly filled the room. Allowing the waves to slosh over her body, Opal sank into the warmth and rinsed her damaged hair. Spirits… this felt wonderful.

Reluctant to get out, Opal stayed in the tub until the water grew cold— and then slowly stepped out, blowing herself dry with several puffs of air. She laughed when she rubbed her short hair against the towel and looked at the cloth; now stained with dirt. She’d been living absolutely filthily!!

The clothes that the old lady had set out for her were soft but form-fitting, and Opal felt like a regular college student in them. She walked down the stairs with her old garments and put them in the trash can outside.

“Ah, there you are!! Fried rice, dear?” the old lady asked sweetly.

“Yes, thank you!” the Airbender chuckled gratefully, sitting down at the table (but not before bowing again).

“What is your name?” the elder asked, passing a plate full of food to the girl.

“Opal Beifong. What’s yours?”

“I am Song. I’ve lived here for a great many years, but I’ve never encountered a Beifong. Met the Fire Lord, though, wandering around the Earth Kingdom with his Uncle. That was an interesting night.”

“What was he like?”

“In pain,” Song answered without making eye contact, instead taking a bite of her noodles and chewing thoughtfully.

The Airbender let a small sigh escape her nose, “It’s funny how people in pain tend to wander
around.”

“Yes they do. Sooner or later though, Opal, you’ll remember how to heal.”

“Thank you for the rest. A-And the clothes,” the green-eyed girl bowed respectfully, grabbing her Glider Stave off the wall.

“Always a pleasure to help a traveler. Especially one that doesn’t steal my ostrich-horses.”

“Did he return them?”

Song laughed and gestured to a pasture with an entire herd of livestock peacefully grazing, “That he did. Farewell, Airbender Opal Beifong!!”

Opal waved goodbye and took off at a run, racing along the road until her Glider picked her up and carried her through the air. She had her face set in a determined smirk and the wind pounded in her ears like a war drum— beckoning her to fly further and further up, until Song’s farm could no longer be distinguished among the rest of the Earth Kingdom countryside.

A few drops of rain hit her Glider, and she smirked at the challenge— rolling herself over and over until she’d created a protective sphere, a bubble shielding her from the rain. She must’ve been a sight for anyone cloud-gazing below.

Chapter End Notes

awww... callbacks!!! All the callbacks!!

Leave comments!
“Grief, no matter how you try to cater to its wail, has a way of fading away.”

― V.C. Andrews, Flowers in the Attic

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“This is a photo of our moms and Nana in the Temple of Jiao-Long,” Hikaru said, handing Asami a beer and sitting down next to her on the couch with a warm cup of tea.

“Wow… she’s so young in this photo,” the engineer murmured.

“I think she was twenty-three… which made my mom twenty-eight here.”

The cousins were sitting in Asami and Korra's apartment— the ex-heiress moved back in after the White Lotus agreed to move in next door, since the Avatar shared the apartment. The Police still wanted to make sure she was safe, so they set up a security monitor in the hallway; not that Korra would let any Equalists get to her. At least she’d changed her appearance, and stopped wearing so much red. Bolin and Mako were at the Police Station tonight, and Suki and Gyeong were happily enjoying a sleepover at the latter’s house— meaning the Firebender had the night off to enjoy with her newest family member.

Hikaru had a photo album in her lap, leaning up a little against Asami as they looked at lost memories of their family. The photos were old and faded, but the small details of faces and hair and emotions were still ever so prevalent.

“I’ve actually seen this memory… in the Fog of Lost Spirits…”

Hikaru’s amber eyes looked up at her solemnly, “What really happened there?”

Asami shivered, “A lot of nasty shit. The place is one big Spirit… it messes with you… I think the worst part was when Kuvira began standing there and screaming… she was hallucinating… and I didn’t know how to help her or what to do…”

“NO!! OH GODS NO!! MY OWN MOTHER!! HOW COULD I?! PLEASE STOP THIS!! PLEASE, NO MORE!!”

The engineer let out a shaky sigh and continued, with her cousin’s rapt attention, “I saw myself… some strange phantom of me… wearing your make-up and armor.”

Hikaru blinked, but didn’t say anything.

“I took the phantom’s hand and… well… I saw our grandmother— steering an Airship during the One Hundred Year War. And then Team Avatar in a Tea Shop in Ba Sing Se. I saw Suki give birth
to my mother… our mothers growing up together… I saw the memory of this temple, your mother and father meeting,” Asami whispered, taking the photo and running her finger over Shun’s face.

“She liked that memory a lot…” Hikaru murmured tensely.

“Do you remember your dad?” the engineer asked, looking up with wide green eyes.

“Just about as much as you probably remember your mom. Shun died giving birth to my sister— but Qiang left before that.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Life was confusing after Mom was gone. Suddenly I had a kid to take care of, even though I was only twelve… thank god Nana and Papa took us in with open arms.”

“What was our grandmother like?”

“You would’ve loved her, Asami… she… she was the best storyteller in the world— the way she told it, you were right up there with Fire Lord Ozai and kicking Zuko’s ass on Kyoshi Island… busting out of Boiling Rock prison and fighting Azula in the forest… and she was so kind— the first night she took us in I broke a china dish out of stress and she just looked at me with her blue eyes and smiled…”

Hikaru trailed off, staring at the photo in her hands and sighing. Asami rested her head on the Firebender’s shoulders. It felt… relieving to be near her— and to not fear for her vital organs. There was obviously still a slight tension between them, and Asami wondered if it would ever go away. They’d been in a lot of pain for so long… could they ever truly be family to each other?

Asami would be damned if she didn’t try.

“What do you think is going to happen?” the Firebender whispered, looking up at the Lavender-speckled apartment.

The ex-heiress sighed, “I don’t know. Whatever this is… whatever we mean to each other… I’m going to do my best to earn it, Hikaru.”

“That… that means a lot to me.”

A few hours later, when the lights were dimmed down low and a steady stream of moonlight lit up the lilac walls, Hikaru looked down at her sleeping cousin and smiled softly. Asami was curled up against her, with an unconscious arm thrown protectively around the pregnant woman’s stomach. As if they’d known each other their whole life.

Honestly? She’d really wanted this. Hikaru had wanted this for such a long, long time— and though it hadn’t shown, she’d been devastated that fateful night on Hyun Boulevard… when she’d discovered the truth of Asami’s Equalist identity. It’d been her worst fear, confirmed before her very eyes. More than anything before that point, the Firebender had been dreaming of finally revealing the truth to the ex-heiress, reconciling and becoming a family.

And then real life caught up to them.

The Firebender’s fingers absentmindedly ran through her slumbering cousin’s short black hair as she leaned back against the couch and thought about the past year. How hostile she’d become. All in the
name of… justice? Revenge? Part of her wanted to substantiate her anger… but another part of her could only feel ashamed. At least now things were on the mend.

She looked up when she heard someone unlocking the platinum deadbolt. Korra silently opened the door and smiled, walking up to Hikaru and pressing a kiss to the top of her head, and then one to Asami’s forehead.

“I’m… I’m so glad you two are getting along,” the Avatar whispered proudly.

She put a supportive hand on the Firebender’s shoulder, who covered it with her own.

“More than that, I think,” Hikaru said, wiping a tear away and looking at the somnolent engineer. “Gods, she’s just like Bolin. The two of them could move an entire building with their snores, if they tried hard enough.”

Korra chuckled and sat on the other end of the couch with a sigh, lifting up Asami’s legs and setting them in her lap, carefully untangling the ex-heiress’s shoes and setting them back on the carpet.

“Long day?”

“You have no idea,” the Avatar complained quietly. “Despite Beifong’s interrogations… we’re nowhere near finding that bunker, there’ve been three separate attacks against the Triads and the Equalists today, and I’m pretty sure Kuvira’s getting sick of Bending all that Unobtainium out of innocent civilians— she might just make me learn how to bend it too.”

“I feel like that’s impossible,” Hikaru teased.

“When Kuvira’s pissed, anything’s possible.”

Buzz! Buzz!

Korra checked her phone. She had a message from a blocked number; raising her eyebrow as she clicked on the text. Her blood instantly boiled at the photo before her.

FUCK FUCK FUCK!!! she thought, panicking and trembling in fury.

The Avatar instantly shot off the couch— it was well past midnight, and Hikaru had fallen asleep. Without a moment’s hesitation, Korra shook her soulmate awake. The dozing engineer mumbled something in her sleep (goodness knows she spent too much time awake) and rolled over a little into Hikaru’s shoulder.

“Asami… Asami… fucking wake up!!” she hissed angrily.

Eventually, the engineer groggily let out a few groans as Korra dragged her into the bedroom and
locked the door— showing her phone to her bleary-eyed girlfriend. Asami blinked for a few seconds, and then grabbed the phone and held it closer to her face. Her eyes slowly widened as she realized what the photo meant.

“Shit… SHIT!!”

“Shhh!! Don’t wake up you-know-who!!” Korra shushed her, pushing the two of them into the adjacent bathroom.

“Fuck fuck fuck, Korra what the hell are we going to do?!” Asami whispered, trembling in fear.

“I don’t know… Stay in the apartment, I’m going to go get the White Lotus,” the Avatar commanded, giving her girlfriend a squeeze on the shoulder with her hand and then silently dashing through the living room.

Within two knocks on the door, the White Lotus sentries were alert and ready. Korra rapidly explained the situation and had them stand guard next to Hikaru and Asami— the pregnant woman awakening and frantically beginning to ask questions. The engineer kept her stalled, though by Korra’s command, unable to disclose the full truth to her cousin.

The Avatar dialed a few digits on her phone, which was instantly answered.

“I know,” Chief Lin barked, “I got the text as well. Get yourselves down to the Station— I want my staff protecting you at all times right now!!”

There was a click! on the other end of the line and Korra angrily shoved the phone in the pocket of her hoodie. Hikaru and Asami were standing in the living room, the White Lotus sentries protectively prepared for anything.

“We need to get to Police Headquarters,” Korra commanded.

“We have an armored vehicle ready to meet you, right this way,” the commanding sentry nodded, putting a hand on the Avatar’s shoulder and guiding the trio of women out of the apartment.

Situated in the truck, Hikaru turned to Korra, “What the hell is going on?!”

“I’ll explain after I talk to Beifong… you’re in danger. We all are.”

The White Lotus guard in the passenger seat radioed several other units to dispatch to Air Temple Island, in order to protect Tenzin and the other Airbenders. The armored car weaved through the streets, thankfully at midnight traffic had practically vanished. Asami kept a reassuring hand on Hikaru’s arm, promising her that it was going to be okay.

A set of security guards were waiting at the parking garage underneath Police Headquarters when Korra, Asami, Hikaru, and the White Lotus arrived. The ride up the elevator was painfully silent.

“Good, you’re here,” Lin said, pulling Korra into a protective hug for a few seconds. “Come on, we’re formulating a plan in the conference room.”

“Are you including Task Force?”

“No. This is something the adults need to properly take care of. I can’t let college students get in the way of this.”

Hikaru was looking pissed at this point, “Someone wanna fucking fill me in on what’s going on?!”
Korra’s eyes darted between Asami and Beifong for a few seconds before her shoulders slumped in defeat. She held up the phone, watching as the Firebender’s eyes went from disbelieving to shock to horror.

The smartphone screen showed a grainy image of the Lieutenant holding little Suki, her friend Gyeong, and Gyeong’s father hostage. The two kids looked unharmed, but Mr. Uhm had a nasty black eye.

The message read: *Bring me Avatar Korra in the next twenty-four hours, and they go free.*

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**Chapter End Notes**

Sorry I didn't post yesterday or Friday night!! I got to see my mom for the first time in three months, so I took a little break from writing. 400 kudos!! yay!!

Breakfast today is pancakes, scrambled angst and bacon.
Chapter Summary

“The object of terrorism is terrorism. The object of oppression is oppression. The object of torture is torture. The object of murder is murder. The object of power is power. Now do you begin to understand me?”

— George Orwell, 1984

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

One hour later:

“No, no, no, and no!” Lin argued with a huff. “We do not negotiate with terrorists!”

“Look,” Korra stated defiantly, “It’s my responsibility to keep the balance! That means I have to do my best to protect innocent civilians!”

“You don’t even know that he’s going to keep his word.” Mako snapped.

At this, Hikaru couldn’t bear anymore. She ran out of the room, finding a corner to sink into in the hallway— crying an ocean as two pairs of arms wrapped around her. Through blurry eyesight, she realized that both Asami and Bolin were cradling her, rubbing her back and whispering that it was going to be okay. It was going to be okay.

No, it wasn’t.

Her finger’s absentmindedly clutched onto the Lavabender’s sweater, curling further and further into his chest as she let tears pour out onto her face. Bolin’s scratchy beard rested against the crown of her head as Asami continued rubbing her back— tears flowing freely down the ex-Equalist’s face as well.

How could he?! How could a human being stoop to such a level?! Suki was only nine years old… she was an innocent child… what kind of man did this?


“Mmmm… coming…” Jinora called groggily.

What kind of emergency needed to wake her up at 1:00 in the morning?! She was going to kill Ikki or Meelo if it wasn’t an absolute crisis.

She pushed the bedspread off her body and swung her legs over the side. A long light streamed in from outside the paper-thin door, illuminating a faint shadow… of a figure slightly taller than herself, bouncing around on their toes in anticipation and anxiety. With a raised eyebrow and a curious purse to her lips, Jinora pulled on a robe and slid the door open.

None other than Opal Beifong stood before her.

The older Airbender’s mouth was slightly open, as though she wasn’t sure what to say, and her body twitched a little— either in the primal desire to flee or the undeniable urge to embrace Jinora.

“Hey there…” the Airbending Master murmured, rubbing her eye groggily and smirking.

“I w-wasn’t sure y-you’d answer,” the older girl stammered nervously.

Perhaps she should’ve yelled at Opal, for disappearing for about five months. For striking out and physically hurting Jinora. For… sleeping… with another person— even if that other was a dead spirit. But all Jinora could think to do was step forwards and give Opal a long, soft hug.

The Beifong was clearly trembling, unsure of what this enfold meant— but the younger held on, pouring out all of her emotions into the embrace.

After a few seconds, Jinora pulled away from Opal’s lingering arms; knowing that she couldn’t be tempted to keep herself ensnared like that forever. There were scratches on the newfound Energybender’s face, and her hair was short again— but choppy and unkempt. A bit of dirt covered her face— though a great deal less than when she’d left the Lion Turtle’s island. Opal was wearing new clothes that were out of fashion but clean, and there was a bit of color in her eyes… as though perchance she might be returning to her former self.

“You must be… tired,” Jinora whispered, keeping her voice low for the sake of the other Airbenders.

“Oh… well… yes, I’ve been flying for the past two days— which, uh, reminds me…”

Opal took the glider stave off her back and pressed into Jinora’s hands. The younger regarded it for a few minutes and then smiled at her former lover;

“Keep it. I know you lost yours.”

The elder girl seemed as though she wanted to spew as many apologies as she could, kneel before Jinora and beg for forgiveness— but the Airbending Master saw another look in her eyes… Opal seemed a little defeated. Blue and ivory fingers pulled along ebony ones as she silently led the Beifong towards her old room; from when she’d first joined the Airbenders.

She stopped at the door, sliding it open and regarding her former girlfriend. With a humble bow and a smile, Jinora squeezed Opal’s shoulder and walked away.

“G-Goodnight,” the Beifong called after her, with a slightly broken voice.

“Sleep well, I know you need it,” Jinora whispered without looking back.

The Airbending Master walked to the door of her room and put a hand on the sliding wood. A
glance down the hallway, and she realized that Opal was still staring at her with sorrowful olive eyes, a little lost in thought. Jinora sighed through her nose and slid the entrance to her bedroom open, slipping inside and wiping away a lone tear.

At least… at least she was back.

Korra took a deep breath, walking forwards with a flutter in her chest. He was standing in the abandoned junkyard with three hooded captives— one adult and two small children— were kneeling behind him. Several sentries of Equalists were pointing guns at her from a distance, and the Avatar knew that now was the time for a passive encounter.

“Keep your end of the bargain and I vow to uphold mine,” Korra warned, her hands raising in surrender.

The Lieutenant scoffed, “You’re lucky that these three are Nonbenders. I didn’t feel like spilling decent blood, even if it’s precious to you. Hmm… it’s… good to see that you came alone. Even if you are the Avatar… you have common sense, don’t you?”

Korra held back a barrage of insults, instead choosing to walk past him and lift up the hood of the taller captive. Sure enough, Mr. Uhm was shivering and panting— looking at her with frantic, pleading eyes.

“It’s okay, it’s going to be okay,” she murmured, bending the metal cuffs on his wrists to the floor— doing the same to the girls and removing their hoods. She gave Suki a kiss on the forehead, and the little girl bravely hugged her before being tugged along by Gyeong’s father.

“You’re going to walk to the end of the street; the police are waiting for you there,” the Avatar instructed.

Korra watched as Gyeong’s father quickly ushered the two confused and upset girls through the scrapyard— where the police swiftly escorted them into armored cars. The Water Tribe girl took a long look at Chief Beifong, who was waiting at the end of the street with begging eyes— silently pleading for her to cancel this arrangement.

At least they probably don’t know how to remove the Avatar State— I doubt they’re as smooth as Zaheer.

Instantly, the Lieutenant locked her in platinum handcuffs; and Korra felt a sharp pain in her neck as he snapped off an arrow into her collarbone. The ground beneath her… she couldn’t feel it… the air surrounding her… the light rain falling down. He’d taken her Bending away for safe measure.

It’s okay, Korra, you can probably still bend in the Avatar State if it comes to that… let’s just… take it one thing at a time…

Someone threw a smoke bomb in between the Lieutenant and Korra… and the view of the Police. She felt several jabs to her spine as the Equalists paralyzed her and dragged her into a truck— speeding away from safety.
It’s going to be okay… the kids are safe now, she thought, as the Chi Blocking began to spiral her into darkness.

Hikaru looked up from the couch at the Police Headquarters. The radio a few meters away was crackling in static— but Beifong’s voice sounded through;

“Saikhan, we have the civilians. I repeat, we have regained custody of the civilians.”

The second-in-command quickly grabbed the microphone, “What about Korra?!”

“She chose to turn herself over. The Equalists have her.”

Hikaru’s nails tore through the musty, stained fabric of the old couch as her heart dropped five-thousand feet. One of her best friends had just… willingly given herself up for Suki, Gyeong, and Mr. Uhm… just like that. Korra barely even knew those people— and she’d done such a selfless act, all in the name of her Avatar oath.

Nobody in the room spoke, their eyes casting to the floor as they moved about. Hikaru looked over. Across the room, Asami Sato was curled up in a ball and crying. The Firebender stood up, walking over and kneeling beside her cousin.

“She’ll be alright…” Hikaru murmured.

The ex-Equalist looked at her kin with teary green eyes, “How can you say that? You know what he’s done to people who’ve merely gotten in his way— Tesmaa… Kuvira and Junior… Baatar Sr… my father and I… the board members… this is his greatest enemy we’re talking about.”

“If he willingly took her, and didn’t kill her on the spot… he’s going to probably hold her hostage until… whatever bullshit plan of his comes to a close. That means that there’s hope, Asami.”

Hikaru wrapped her arms around her cousin, just as the engineer had done earlier that morning. Asami fell into her, the two women sitting on the floor as the ex-heiress cried into the Firebender’s chest. Police Officers solemnly walked around them, trying to keep the Headquarters running smoothly— Saikhan even kneeled down and silently squeezed Asami’s hand in understanding, giving the two of them a grim nod before returning to business.

Wherever Korra was, whatever was going to happen to her… Hikaru could only pray the Spirits that the Avatar knew what she was doing.

“Hikaru?”

“Yes, Asami?”

“I lov— I mean… thanks…”


She knew what the engineer was about to say, but despite the current situation… the Firebender
silently agreed that it was too soon to whisper such a statement. That didn’t mean that—deep down—she didn’t love Asami back. If anything…yes. Yes, she did. Even after everything that had transpired; all of the horrible things they’d said and the violence…the animosity. Even after all that, Hikaru had grown to love Asami. Perhaps someday there would be a chance to tell her.

Perhaps someday she would work up the courage.

Korra grunted through the strip of filthy cloth covering her mouth—trying to Firebend it to shreds and remembering that the Lieutenant had stuck a piece of fucking Unobtainium into her shoulder.

*How many times in one life am I going to get my Bending taken away? The enemies are slowly getting less and less original, aren’t they?*

She sat up, looking around. From the looks of it, the Avatar had been placed in a platinum cell in what could only be the underground bunker that the Police had been searching for…for quite some time. Mechasuits were walking back and forth as armored Shooters moved crates of Equalist gear to and fro. Korra’s wrists hurt, and she looked down with a frown—realizing that they’d put her in platinum cuffs as well.

With a few uncomfortable tugs, she managed to rip out the cloth gag. Her jaw ached horribly, and Korra let out an annoyed huff at their *inhospitality*.

“Ah, you’re awake. Good…” a familiar, sickly voice seethed.

The Avatar looked up into the gaunt, phantom-like face of none other than the Lieutenant himself, standing next to her cage with his electrified kali sticks at the ready, in case…what? Korra was stupid enough to try something?! Dumbass.

“So what’s the plan, Stan?” she asked nonchalantly, leaning back against her cell with a smirk.

His silver eyes narrowed and he leaned forwards with a snarl, “I could kill you, right here and right now.”

“I know you can, but what good would it do? Another Avatar would take my place, and you’d have to search for fifteen years until you got ahold of him or her and repeated it…over and over,” Korra deduced thoughtfully. “Might as well hold me here for the rest of my life and spare yourself the effort?”

“It’s good to see that you’ve grown smarter since the Last War. Yes…I intend to that. Amon was always worried about public support—bastard never had the balls to do anything…impactful. We would’ve won the war if we’d just captured you in the beginning.”

“That, and him being a Bender must’ve gotten on your nerves,” Korra offered with a sly grin.

His mouth twitched, and his thumbs hovered over the buttons of his kali sticks…before Korra knew it, her cell was lighting up in electricity. Pain coursed through her, and it took everything in her power to resist the Avatar State. Korra let out a few yelps as her body involuntarily trembled from
The shocks.

“How does that feel, you fucking bitch!? Not so high and mighty now, are you?!"

The pain only lasted a few moments, though— she was correct in assuming that he would want to keep her alive, without bending and locked up where she could do no harm. The Lieutenant removed his kali sticks and stepped back with a sickening smile;

“I may be choosing to keep you here… but I don’t have to make it a pleasant experience… if you behave, things might end up better. At any rate, now that you’re here… we have a pretty good chance of winning this war. And a pretty good chance at taking out that lovely… girlfriend… of yours.”

“Korra!! Are you alive?! I felt… that pain… are they torturing you?! Please say something!!” Asami’s voice echoed through her head.

The Avatar let out an angry sigh through her nose. At least the bastard didn’t know that the ex-heiress was her soulmate. He would surely use that to his advantage. Instead, she curled up against the platinum wall and pretended to go to sleep. She heard a click clack of boots on concrete as he walked away with a laugh.

“I’m alright… please stay at the Headquarters… he’s going to try and come after you if you leave the safety of the Police…” Korra thought faintly. “I love you… we’ll be okay…”

She felt herself falling asleep, her body weary from the electric torture… she felt herself slipping away and hearing a familiar voice calling to her as Raava whispered reassurances that they were going to make it through this together.

Rest, my brave Avatar, the Spirit whispered. You did a brave thing today.

Chapter End Notes

Jeez… umm... yeah...

My thought is that the Equalists aren't smart enough to know how to end the Avatar State, but the Lieutenant has removed Korra's bending and locked her up... so things are looking pretty shitty...

Leave Comments!!
"An alliance with a powerful person is never safe."

- Phaedrus

What makes a healthy relationship? Trust. Yes, trust is definitely one of the foundations to a long and happy love shared with your significant other. Respect. Ah yes, that’s the cornerstone of any relationship. You have to value each other’s choices and beliefs—otherwise you’re never going to get anywhere with each other.

So how the fucking hell did Korra and Asami manage to stay together and be happy? Kuvira didn’t fucking know, because the ex-heiress sure as hell wasn’t respecting the Avatar’s wish to lay low.

The Metalbender had received a text message earlier that morning— and I mean early early early in the fucking morning—from none other than Sato herself; the engineer needed a getaway car from Police Headquarters. Despite Korra’s warning that Asami needed to stay under Aunt Lin’s careful protection, the ex-Equalist had relentlessly messaged Kuvira until Baatar eventually threw the phone at the wall and sleepily grumbled for her to go get Asami.

And that was why, at the ass crack of dawn, Kuvira had stolen away a top security figure from Police Headquarters, texting a quick “sorry” to her Aunt Lin, and speeding away.

“I hope you know what you’re doing,” the Metalbender grumbled, pinching the bridge of her nose as Asami weaved through the traffic.

“I don’t. But that bastard has my soulmate, and I’ll be damned if I let him hold her hostage and torture her for the rest of her life,” Asami grumbled. “And I think I have an idea of where the Equalists are holed up.”

That’s a game changer.

“Where too?” Kuvira asked, even though she was in the passenger seat.

“I had Hikaru message me an address last night.”

“Where’s your cousin, then?”

“Air Temple Island—with Suki and Bolin. I figure that they’re safe there with all those White Lotus. And Tenzin’s not going to let anything happen to them.”

“Gyeong? And her dad?”
“They left the city— he told me last night that they have family in the Fire Nation that they’re going to stay with. He doesn’t blame any of us one bit, says the Equalists were bound to begin hurting innocent Nonbenders at some point or another.”

“He doesn’t know about Hikaru’s Coalition Activities?” Kuvira asked with a raised eyebrow.

“Not a lot of people do,” Asami answered, signaling to exit down a ramp and off the highway. “I doubt the Equalists will go after them a second time— Suki just happened to be staying over at Gyeong’s house when the bastard decided to… abduct… her…”

Kuvira put a hand over Asami’s, “Are you okay?”

The engineer let out a shaky sigh, “Gods… what if something had happened? When this is over, the first thing I’m going to go do is take my cousins on a fucking vacation— far away. Maybe I’ll go see… my grandpa… Kyoshi Island…”

Kuvira let out a small breath through her nose and squeezed the ex-heiress’s shoulder— Asami looked lost in thought as they drove through the run-down neighborhood.

“You sure she lives here?”

“I’m pretty positive.”

The Metalbender was a little hesitant to let Asami park her car on the side of the street in… this kind of neighborhood— but in all honesty that was the least of their worries. Kuvira locked up the car while Asami walked up to a grocery store manager, who was sweeping the steps of his shop.

“… yeah, she lives across the street. Apartment 16B. She’ll probably be home right now,” the elderly man whistled cheerfully.

“Thank you!” Asami called behind her as she gripped Kuvira’s arm and pulled her through the road. They weaved around a car and clicked the buzzer at the entrance to the Apartment Complex.

“H-Hello?” a tentative girl’s voice answered through the intercom.

“Hey, it’s Kuvira and Asami— Hikaru’s friends. We need to talk to you.”

“Oh, alright. I was worried you were Equalists… come on up!!”

Bao set down some tea at the coffee table and nervously traced the knuckles of her left hand with her right hand’s fingertips. Though she’d been shot a while back— she had a weary smile on her face, and was moving around the apartment with ease.

Kuvira took a sip of tea (it was a pretty good brew, all things considered), and leaned back against the couch. “We need your help.”

“With what?” the other Earthbender asked.

“Korra’s been captured… well… she traded herself over to the Equalists in exchange for some civilians— including Suki,” Asami answered.

“Hikaru’s sister?”

“Yes,” Kuvira nodded. “We need a team to go in and strike them down— and rescue Korra before
they try anything.”

“Why do you want my help?” Bao asked skeptically.

“Besides the fact that you’re a damn good Earthbender, and know how to take the fight to the damn thugs? You’re a natural leader, kid. The Coalition will stand behind you, and you need only ask,” Kuvira pointed out.

“There’s not nearly enough of us to take on a force of that magnitude!”

“What do you mean?” Asami asked, setting her tea down.

“Oh don’t play coy, you were one of them, Sato! Do you honestly expect that the Avatar is holed up in some dainty warehouse? No, she’s going to be in their most secure facility! I don’t even know where that is! And even if I did, we don’t have enough people to take on a small army of Shooters and Chi Blockers.”

Kuvira picked at her jeans. Bao was right; if they tried something— they’d just be getting a lot of people killed. Even a stealth mission to sneak Korra out would likely be impossible… wait… no… no fucking way…

“I want you two to go round up… the Triads,” the Metalbender ordered, standing up and gesturing between Asami and Bao.

“What are you talking about?” the Nonbender asked, raising her eyebrow.

“Red Monsoons, Terra Triads, Agni Kai, and the Triple Threats. Talk to them, convince them that they need to work together to stop the Equalists, I don’t care what kind of deal you make— just get us an army of Benders.”

“Are you sure about this?” Bao asked, standing up and pulling Asami with her.

Kuvira tossed her best friend the keys to her Satomobile and walked out the door, “Yes… an army of dumb thugs at their gates? It’ll provide the perfect cover for a covert operation.”

_________________________________________________________

Someone was rapping on the paper thin doorway, and Opal looked up from her wooden necklace that she’d been carving. She adjusted her new set of Airbending robes and stood up. With a thrust of the door, the Beifong instantly began tearing up.

“Oh my gods!!” she cried, throwing herself into her sister’s arms.

Kuvira didn’t say anything, merely pulling her sister into her arms and holding on with a vice grip. Opal breathed in the smell of the Metalbender’s leather jacket and her Old Spice deodorant. Home. That’s what she smelled like. Kuvira’s hand rubbed up and down Opal’s back, and the Airbender snuggled further into her sister’s arms— absolutely content… and feeling… safe… for the first time in months.

“I’m so sorry,” Opal whispered.
“It’s okay. It’s okay,” the Metalbender assured repeatedly. “It’s going to be alright. Spirits… I love you so much, Opal.”

“I love you too,” the Airbender cried— burying her face in Kuvira’s neck.

The two sisters stood in the doorway, silently exchanging millions of words in the embrace as tears dripped down their cheeks. Opal pulled her older sister into her bedroom and onto the bed, where they continued their cuddle— Kuvira lovingly running her hands through the Airbender’s short (and now clean) black hair.

“Where did you go? After the attack?” the Metalbender asked with a murmur.

“All over the Earth Kingdom,” Opal answered, snuggling up into her sister’s collarbone, “Eventually, I ended up on… an island… stayed there for three months. I was… I was selfish and isolating, Kuv. I’m so, so sorry.”

“You’re here now,” the former Captain of the Guard whispered, pressing her lips against Opal’s forehead. “That’s all that matters.”

“I d-did something horrible…” the Airbender stammered, “I hurt J-Jinora and then… I… I… I slept with someone else…”

A few tears dripped down her face when she felt Kuvira tense up beneath her. But the Metalbender kept stroking her hair and whispering sweet nothings into her ears— like their mother used to do during thunderstorms in Zaofu.

“It was a Lion Turtle.”

“What?” Kuvira asked, looking down at her sister.

“I was living on the back of a Lion Turtle for three months— I didn’t know it until I decided that I was ready to leave; the island had been moving all over the world.”

“And you didn’t think that something was up?” Kuvira smirked.

Opal pushed her playfully, “Korra’s become a giant blue spirit in Yue Bay, and I’ve met dead Avatars— at that point I figured that it was just some… you know… mystical divine stuff. It didn’t occur to me that Lion Turtles were still alive.”

“Well, one of them. You ought to consider yourself lucky— most people never get to glance at him in their lifetime, much less ride on his back.”

“Lucky,” Opal sighed, threading her fingers through Kuvira, “I don’t think I’m all that lucky. I… Gods, I was in so much pain, Kuv. And I selfishly kept Samsara all to myself— I managed to convince myself that none of you wanted me… that you didn’t want me.”

At this the Airbender’s eyes widened, because her sister began crying; pulling her close and sobbing into her shoulder, “Of course I fucking want you! I love you so much Opal— DON’T YOU EVER THINK FOR A MOMENT THAT I DON’T WANT YOU, YOU HEAR ME?!”

Opal began crying to, pressing her forehead against her sister’s and clutching onto Kuvira’s leather jacket, “I’m so sorry, Kuv. I was so wrong… I love you too. I’m never leaving any of you guys again…”
It took her a moment to realize that someone was listening outside, and when Opal closed her eyes and sensed the energy surrounding them and her bedroom… she realized that Jinora was leaning against the wall outside, the Airbending Master’s aura noticeably shaken. The Beifong listened for footsteps as Jinora walked away from the door, and a tiny sniffle could also be heard… whether it was Opal’s or her former lover’s… she did not know.

After half an hour— the two sisters had poured all of their emotions out and were sitting upright in the bed. Opal had told Kuvira everything; from how she attacked Jinora to the months on the island to learning Energybending… to having to end Samsara’s life. Kuvira silently listened, not judging and not protesting to anything the Airbender whispered, merely cuddling her sister with a human fondness that Opal had gone without for so long.

Buzz! Buzz!

Kuvira checked her phone and sighed.

“I need to go,” the Metalbender whispered. “I have a boat waiting for me.”

“What do you mean?”

“Korra’s been captured by the Equalists… the Coalition and hopefully the Triads are devising a plan to rescue her… I just wanted to see you in case… something happened…”

Opal’s eyes narrowed, “I’m going with you, then.”

“What? No!”

The Airbender sat up, “Korra’s my best friend— I’ve already let you all down once… I’m not going to abandon you a second time.”

“Opal, this plan is probably going to end in violence… you’re an Airbender. You can’t commit and unprovoked attack.”

She closed her eyes, thinking of how her mother sent her from Zaofu, how she had blamed Jinora for her father’s death… how she’d just been running away from her problems for so, so long.

No more.

“This is provoked. Korra is our family, too. Tenzin can kick me out if he wants, but she’s more important than a passive approach. She’s the Avatar, Kuvira, and besides… it’s part of the new Airbending vow to keep the balance. That means we have to get her back.”

Kuvira took a deep breath, cupping Opal’s cheek and pressing her lips to the younger’s forehead, “You know what’s best for you.”

“The last time someone said that to me… they were wrong. I don’t know what’s best for me, Kuv. I only know what I can do for others.”

Opal pulled the Metalbender out of the room, grabbing her new green Glider Stave and walking down to the docks, where a speederboat was waiting for the two of them— a Coalition member giving them a nod as he started the engine. Sitting down in one of the cushioned seats, Opal couldn’t help but look up at the Air Temple Island cliffs.
Jinora was standing, a hundred feet above her, and though they were too far apart to actually make out each other’s faces… Opal could’ve sworn that her former lover had just given her a smile and a nod.

“Be careful… you’re doing the right thing,” the Airbending Master’s voice echoed in her head.

“I hope so,” the Beifong responded, as the boat turned and carried her away, towards the horizon of Republic City.

“You’re shitting me,” Shady Shin muttered, raising an eyebrow at Asami and Bao.

“Please, we need your help to stop the Equalists… and we can help some of your men get their Bending back if they were shot by Arrows!”

Two-Toed Ping smirked, “That’s not a bad deal, boss.”

Viper scratched his styled beard, “I need more than just a little bit of Bending, pretty girls… you’re talking taking the fight to a small army— much as I want to kick their asses, I need some collateral.”

“How about a warehouse full of Satomobiles?” the engineer asked.

This caused the Waterbending Mob Boss to lean forwards in interest, “And where did you possibly come up with all those vehicles?”

Asami remembered that she no longer looked like the Heiress of Future Industries, now that her hair was cut short and choppy, and she’d stopped wearing red clothes and makeup to disguise herself from Equalists, “I own them, if that’s what you’re asking. Please, the other Triads have agreed… but you have the most people— the most power!”

“Damn straight,” Shin grumbled.

“— Hell, I can get you whatever you want from Future Industries, I just need your help to get Korra back.”

“Tell me why I want the Avatar back where she can do us damage?” Viper inquired, picking at his nails in boredom.

“Because if she gets loose again, you can bet your ass she’s going to take down the Lieutenant—which means you guys go back to ruling the city.”

“I like that plan, Boss,” Two Toed Ping interjected.

“Shut up, you pathetic Firebender. Alright! ALRIGHT!! We’ll join up with you… I want the cars first, though… gotta drive all my men to the Equalist hideout, don’t I?” Viper sneered. “In return…
you get all of us against some shock gloves… doesn’t seem like much of a gain to you, but what do I care?”

“And you’re willing to work with the other Triads? This plan only happens if we all collaborate…” Bao pointed out.

Viper let out a sigh and stood up, walking forwards and towering over the Earthbender— though she was hardly intimidated (and could probably take him out with one stomp), “Sure thing, missy… so long as we get cars and punch some of those fucking Equalists… I’d even fight alongside my stepmother.”

“You sure about giving up all those cars?” Bao asked as they walked back through the money-laundering restaurant that the Triple Threat headquarters was based out of. “That can’t be good for you… business.”

“Future Industries is already heading down the drain,” Asami grumbled, pushing the door open and walking out of Triad earshot. “It was a company founded by my parents… but after my Mom died it just became a shell for the Equalists to live in. I’d rather start with something fresh. Besides… I never said I’d give Viper the good vehicles… only that I’d give him a lot of vehicles…”

The Earthbender snickered as they walked down the street to where they parked, “I gotta admit, Sato… you’re one sneaky Nonbender.”

“Where the hell is Sato?!” Lin Beifong growled, causing a few of the lower ensigns to jump in surprise.

Saikhan straightened his posture; he was the only officer on the force who couldn’t be intimidated by his boss’s tone, “Your niece… removed her from the premises this morning.”

“What?! She had no authority to do so!” the Chief huffed, checking her smartphone and snarling at the lone “sorry” on the screen. “There’s been a huge transfer of Satomobiles from Future Industries… headed straight into Triad territory. I think the Triple Threats are robbing the factory— but our resources are spread thin as it is. I need to let her know.”

“Erm… Chief Beifong? That… won’t be… um… necessary,” a small voice behind her meekly piped up.

“What do you mean— what do you know, Hikaru?”

The Firebender, who had stopped by that afternoon to work some more on Task Force strategies, apologetically held up her own phone; where a text from Opal explained the situation, “Asami and Kuvira are teaming up with the Triads and the Coalition to… get back Korra…”

Lin Beifong sent a few metal chairs flying in anger and stormed back into her office, “GOD FUCKING DAMMIT!!”
Saikhan put a hand on the pregnant woman’s shoulder and steered her over to the employee lounge, “Let me handle this one, kid. You don’t want to talk to Pissed Off Lin. Why don’t you get yourself some lunch? I’ll take care of the situation.”

With a gulp, the Metalbending Captain walked back into his Chief’s office— raising his arms in case Lin decided to fling a few more metal objects at the wall.

“Chief, what are your orders?”

“Fuck me, Saikhan… they’re going to get themselves killed… I can’t stop that many people!!” Beifong complained, her fingers running through her gray hair and her head pressed against her desk.

“I’ll warn the Emergency Rooms spread across the city and gather a few squads. Do you know where they could be headed?” he asked, jotting down notes on a pad.

“No I— yes. Yes, I know exactly where they could be going…” Lin gasped, her head lifting up from the desk. “There’s one place we haven’t searched… at least… not in the last six months… of course the Lieutenant would go back there…”

“Where?” Saikhan asked, raising an eyebrow as he watched his boss’s eyes grow wide.

“The underground bunker… the Airship hanger… the one connected to… the Sato Estate.”

Chapter End Notes

CHAKRA NUMBER SIX: EVERYTHING'S CONNECTED

Lol don't you guys love me so much

Leave Comments
Chapter Summary

“I just want one person I can rescue and I want one person who needs me. Who can't live without me. I want to be a hero, but not just one time.”

— Chuck Palahniuk, Choke

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Korra twitched around as the Lieutenant sent another wave of shocks to the metal cage around her. This time, she didn’t even have a way to prevent herself from being electrocuted. Thank the Spirits that the voltage wasn’t high enough to kill— only to cause… a… great… deal… of… pain…

Was it like this for Baatar Sr. before he died? Can the Lieutenant go ahead and kill me, too?

She began screaming as he struck the cage again; pleading for it to end.

“Tell me what you know!!” he growled.

“Please!! I don’t know anything!! We were just trying to figure out where you Equalists were hiding out!! There isn’t a plan!! There isn’t anything to know!!” she cried.

Avatars weren’t meant to be weak like this… but the pain was so great…

“Liar!”

“Sir!” a girl’s voice called out, as a masked Equalist ran up to the cage, “Sir, there’s an army of Triad thugs at the mouth of the hanger!!”

“What?!”

Korra, slipping in and out of consciousness, let out a small sigh in relief. Even if it wasn’t her friends coming to get her… he would stop… hurting her…

“I want my best men at this cage, Ai,” the Lieutenant snarled, his kali sticks lighting up with electricity. “If anything happens to the Avatar, you’ll answer for it with your life.”

A final strike to the cage, lighting up the world around her and rattling her teeth as volts coursed through her skull— and then he was gone. The Avatar’s face was too numb from the shocks to feel involuntary tears drip down her face. The Equalist girl, Ai, took a long… sympathetic look at Korra and then turned with a sigh— calling for other lackeys to come and join her in guarding the platinum cage.
WHIZZ!!

“Ow…” Ai muttered, slumping to the floor in pain, an arrow sticking out of the back of her neck.

“What the fuck?!” one of the Equalist guards yelped, frantically lighting up a shock glove.

The rest of them dropped into a fighting stance, and Korra watched with bleary eyes as they were picked off one by one. Arrows flew through the underground bunker, and the Avatar thought it might be an illusion.

Thump!

Something had dropped down on the top of her cage. The vibrations of weight on the top of her lockup rang through her skull— she’d been leaning against the back of the enclosure. Korra looked up at a figure wearing a pitch black outfit as they tried to move the metal surrounding the Avatar.

“Fuck,” a familiar voice growled, “It’s platinum!!”

“Kuvira…” she faintly whimpered, “Kuv… is that you?”

Her best friend dropped down to the ground and stuck her fingers through; gripping onto Korra’s for a few seconds and squeezing her hand, “Shh, it’s alright… we’re going to get you out of here… just sit tight while I try to think of something…”

“Sure thing,” the Avatar murmured weakly.

“K-Korra?!” a voice hissed through the darkness.

“Asami…”

The engineer dropped down onto the ground in front of the cage, “Oh my gods, are you alright?! I… felt the shocks… Spirits… sweetie, I’m so, so sorry!!”

Korra scooted over so that her face was slightly poking through the metal. Her soulmate, with a whimper, gripped her cheek through the platinum bars and gave her a strong kiss— pouring out hundreds of feelings in a single gesture. Korra let out a low moan at the sensation of… safety? No… reunion. At least they were here for her.

“Where did you get that bow?” the Avatar murmured, slipping in and out of consciousness.

“This bunker is the same one we fled through… you know… back when my Estate burned down,” Asami whispered despontently, “Kuvira, Opal, and I used the workshop entrance to get down here — they didn’t see us coming. I had a few prototypes locked up in the garage.”

“That’s lucky of you,” Korra mumbled, her hand gripping onto Asami’s as exhaustion from the Lieutenant’s torture overcame her.

“KUVIRA!! I FOUND SOMETHING!!” another familiar voice hissed, and none other than Opal Beifong came into view.
“Hey! Look who it is,” the Avatar sighed deliriously.

Opal let out a huff and tossed a crowbar to Kuvira, planting another one at the bottom of the cage. Together, with Asami watching the entrance— an arrow knocked at the ready— they began to pry. Korra listened to the cage creak and groan, but nothing happened.

“Stand back,” the former Captain warned her sister.

The Airbender stood at Asami’s side, readying her hands for any impending attacks as Kuvira raised her arms, manipulating the steel crowbars to wrap around the door of the cage. More metal, from various pipes and such, flew onto the door and latched on, like a Kraken’s tentacles. With a growl, the Metalbender slung her arms around, and the cage began rattling.

CREAK! RIP!! CRASH!!

Korra’s eyes widened as the steel and iron managed to tear the platinum door off its, the unbendable metal flying to the other side of the room. Kuvira rushed into the cage, pulling the Avatar into a quick hug and lifting her arm over her shoulder. The embrace was a little awkward— due to Korra’s platinum handcuffs still donning her wrists.

“It’s alright,” the Metalbender whispered, “We’re getting you outta here.”

“You guys are so badass,” Korra mumbled with a smile on her face.

“Thank us later,” Opal hissed, “We’ve got incoming!”

“How can you be so sure?” Asami snapped.

“Airbending!! I can sense vibrations in the wind— WHY ARE WE EVEN ARGUING ABOUT THIS, WATCH OUT!!”

Crack! Crack!

The sounds of guns firing made Korra’s blood boil, but she could do little to help the girls, as Kuvira set her down and bent a protective wall of metal around her, helping the people Korra loved most take care of Equalist thugs.

Ricocheting bullets echoed in the Avatar’s ears as she slumped against the wall and watched Asami go hand-to-hand with Chi Blockers, Opal bend a vortex that prevented Shooters from being able to aim, and Kuvira send deadly strips of metal towards the oncoming Equalists.

Bodies fell. Last gasps of breath were uttered. Blood flecked against Korra’s cheeks.

Suddenly, there was water everywhere— spilling in a wave through the hallway, and yet somehow avoiding the four women. Instead, it swept away the small collection of Equalist that they’d been fighting.

“You alright, pretty girl?” Viper smirked, giving Asami a helping hand up.

“Thanks, you saved our necks,” Opal smiled.

Two Toed Ping readied a pair of fire daggers in his hands, “Much as I want to stick around and give those Equalists what they deserve… we’d better get outta here, Boss!”

“Let’s go,” Viper agreed, helping Kuvira guide an injured Korra through the hallways.
Korra was really fucking confused. Really. Fucking. Confused. Why was the Triad Mob Boss 
Asshole currently helping carry her? When did the Triple Threats suddenly care about Korra or her 
friends?! This was enough to make your head spin.

Bao and Shin were waiting for them at the end of the hallway, elements at the ready.

“You okay, doll?” the Waterbending gangster asked with a smirk.

“Never better,” the Avatar jeered. “Why the hell are you guys here? I don’t remember sending you a 
friend request on Facebook.”

This made the mobsters laugh more than she’d intended to make them. Two-Toed Ping gave her a 
hearty slap on the back and she looked towards her real friends for answered.

“We made a deal with them,” Asami explained, “You for a parade of Satomobiles.”

“Good to know I have a monetary value,” the Avatar sighed, leaning into Kuvira for support. “So 
what’s the plan—”

**BOOM!!**

She felt herself flying backwards into the wall, Kuvira slumping besides her as the room lit up in a 
bright orange and yellow. Her… face… oh gods… this pain was… worse than the torture. Korra’s 
ears were ringing as her fingers trailed up to her eyes— but nothing felt wrong. So why did her face 
hurt so much?

A scream a few feet away answered her greatest fear.

__________________________________________

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH, OH GODS!!” Asami cried, clutching at the ground in front of 
her.

“Oh fuck!” Bao screamed, pulling Shady Shin over to her side, “Heal her!!”

“What?! I don’t have Healing Powers!!” the mobster frantically yelped, bending a painful splash of 
water in Asami’s face. “Oh fuck, oh fuck!!”

Everything in front of the engineer was a blinding white light… her face hurt worse… than the day 
she met Korra…

Flash burns.

*I can’t see.*

She felt someone, presumably Bao, grab her by the arms and guide her over to Korra. Asami heard 
Kuvira take a deep breath and the sound of Unobtainium moving through Korra’s bloodstream. Ever 
second that passed, her eyes burned more and more. The white light began fading to a steady stream 
of darkness, and Asami began whimpering in distress.
Korra let out a retching sound and shouted at Viper to grab her some water.

“What the fuck was that explosion!?” Opal’s voice called through the chaos of the team running around.

“A stray bolt of Agni Kai lightning towards that fuel tank in the corner,” Ping answered, “We need to get out of here!!”

*I can’t see.*

“Shut up and hold the Equalists off!!” Korra griped.

Asami heard swirling as her soulmate moved water up towards her face. She instantly yelped at the cooling sensation against burnt skin.

“Ow, fuck! I’m so sorry, Sams… just… stay still,” the other girl hissed, no doubt experiencing whatever pain the engineer felt.

“Kor— Korra, I can’t see,” Asami cried, her hands searching through the darkness for her lover.

“Oh fuck, is the water doing anything?!”

“Korra… I… I can’t…”

“Kuvira!! You get Asami!!”

She heard footsteps approach, and familiar arms lifted her up, guiding her to her feet. Asami let out a shaky breath as she reached out and gripped the Metalbender’s arms.

*I can’t see.*

“NOT SO FUCKING FAST, AVATAR!!” a voice resonated off the walls.

The Lieutenant had arrived.

There was a yell, and Asami could’ve sworn she heard metal cracking, splitting in half. Footsteps raced past her as Korra repeatedly screamed. It sounded as though she was sending element after element towards him.

“Did she just—”

“She just ripped apart platinum shackles… with her bare hands!” Shady Shin exclaimed.

Asami’s fingers clawed against Kuvira’s jacket, “What happened?!”

*I can’t see.*

“She’s in the Avatar State!” the Metalbender exclaimed in awe, pulling Asami back over to the wall. “Fuck, stay here!!”

*Crack! Crack! Crack!*

“Korra! Get out of there!” Opal’s voice called through the darkness. “They’ve got shooters.”

Another bolt of pain shot through Asami’s face, and she resisted the urge to clutch at her useless eyes. Burnt. By an Agni Kai. Oh how history repeats itself. The sound of water rushed past her as
Viper and Shady Shin began sending ice strikes towards the Equalists. Asami tried to listen to the action, but she still couldn’t understand the world around her.

*Crack! Crack! Crack!*

There was a yelp, and Asami’s heart leapt. What was going on? Oh, fuck, fuck, fuck!!

“Ping’s been shot!” Viper growled. “In the leg!!”

*I can’t see.*

She heard the sound of ice freezing into a wall to protect them. Someone was tugging at her arm, and she followed whoever it was— even if it was an Equalist, she was helpless at this point. She let out a cry as sting after sting of pain flowed through her face.

“Stay with me, Sato,” Bao whispered, “We’re going to get out of here.”

“No… not without Korra…” the engineer muttered, trying to pull away from the Earthbender’s grasp. Her head was beginning to hurt too much to stand up straight.

*I can’t see.*

“She’ll be alright!” Bao argued, “Come on!”

*Crack! Crack! Crack!*

Asami trembled in fear at the sounds of Shooters on the other side of the bunker, the sounds of various Elements crashing against the walls… against flesh… the sounds of people dying. She felt tears dripping down her face and causing even more pain.

“Stay… with… me… Sato…”

The Earthbender’s voice was fading away, as rippling waves of pain coursed through Asami— so much that she couldn’t remain conscious. The ex-heiress fell until she collided against the ground, her fingers reaching out for something. Anything.

But the only thing that she was met with… was darkness.

*I can’t see.*

Chapter End Notes

Um... yeah... I understand if you hate me.

Leave comments...
If a coin comes down heads, that means that the possibility of its coming down tails has collapsed. Until that moment the two possibilities were equal. But on another world, it does come down tails. And when that happens, the two worlds split apart.”

— Philip Pullman, The Golden Compass

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“Korra!! Snap out of it!!” Kuvira screamed, sending strips of metal flying and pinning Equalists to the walls as she chased after both the Avatar and the Lieutenant.

But Korra had been forced into the Avatar State—from both shock and anger—and was destroying the hanger in her fury as she tried to find the Equalist bastard, who was clearly hiding among crates and underneath vehicles. Or maybe he’d already managed to flee into the mountains.

“Korra!” the Metalbender pleaded again, wrapping a cable around her best friend’s wrist and desperately trying to tug her back, “We need to focus on getting out of here!!"

In her anger, the Avatar let out a huge breath of fire, lighting up an Airship that’d been docked inside the bunker. Perhaps it was the one that’d attacked during the protest a few weeks ago. It became depressingly clear to Kuvira that she was not pleading with Korra… that it was a one-sided conversation… that those glowing white eyes weren’t going to respond.

A slash of metal from the pipes on the walls, and Kuvira’s metal cable limply fell to the ground. The Avatar sped away on a ball of air, continuing on her destructive rampage.

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

Triad gangsters and Coalition members were continuing to fight off the army of Chi Blockers and Mechatanks at the mouth of the hanger bay, a snowstorm flurrying in from the mountains.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Kuvira ducked out of the way as Shooters fired in random directions. The last thing she needed was to be punctured by a bullet. The Metalbender raced along the floor of the hanger bay, weaving around dueling Chi Blockers and Triads and Coalition members. Eventually she stuck out her good metal cable and pulled—flying up to the rafters.

There she was!!

She shot forwards, allowing the cable to swing her around like Spiderman. It reminded her of the fateful day when the Zaofu guards battled Zaheer and the Red Lotus—Kuvira catching Chief Tonraq. With a huff, Kuvira raced along the top of the burning Airship—praying to the Spirits that it wouldn’t blow up while she was racing atop it’s metal envelope.
Readying a long strip of metal, Kuvira jumped— soaring right over a rampaging Korra.

*Just enough to make her pass out, Metalgirl. Don’t kill her, or it’s over.*

The metal strip slung forwards, wrapping around Avatar Korra’s throat and tightening. At first, the other girl was too distracted in her riot to notice, but as Kuvira began constricting the strip and blocking her air passage— Kuvira was forced to encase Korra’s limbs in Earth; so that she wouldn’t… break… free…

Pain shot throughout her body, at each point that her Chakras were located.

*“Use whatever you want; all the Elements, the Avatar State, anything you need! I know you’re a little rusty!!”* the Great Uniter’s voice called out.

Kuvira took a deep breath, desperately trying to ignore the voices in the back of her head— reminding her of the phantom’s scenes in the Fog of Lost Souls. She tried to keep a balance between the pressure on Korra’s neck— too light and the Avatar would break free, too tight and she could kill Korra.

*“Looks like the Avatar is a little off her game!”* the Great Uniter’s voice chuckled.

*“Shut up,”* Kuvira growled through gritted teeth, trembling a little as she heard Korra choking. Only a few more seconds and—

*“Come on, Avatar! Get up! Show me what you’ve got!”*

Korra’s illuminated eyes turned to her. For a moment she was not the faceless warrior, destiny merged with Raava, but merely Kuvira’s best friend— just with a different eye color. The Metalbender could see pleading expression underneath her usual stoic face. As though Kuvira had betrayed her.

*Just a little longer… she’s going to pass out soon, Kuvira thought— tightening the metal strip ever so slightly. Please, Korra, don’t make this any worse than it already is…*

*“I knew you were weak,”* the Great Uniter snarled.

*“STOP IT!!”* Kuvira screamed, tightening the metal on Korra’s neck and, in her moment of suffering, slamming the Avatar against the wall. The Water Tribe girl’s eyes flickered for a few seconds and then turned back to blue— Korra’s head slowly drooping as she lost consciousness.

*At least I didn’t attempt… to kill… her…*

____________________________________________

Opal gingerly picked up the unconscious engineer, thankful that Asami wasn’t purely built of muscle like Korra.

*“We need to get out of here!”* she called to the rest of the team.
Viper and Shady Shin were supporting a limping Two Toed Ping, and Bao’s right hand was covering a gash on her left arm. Other Coalition members and Triad gangsters who’d stopped to help began forming a wall— in the hopes of flushing the Equalists out of the warehouse so that everyone could escape the burning wreckage. There had been enough death.

Opal looked over, where Kuvira was standing in front of a passed-out Korra… crying.

“Shin, carry Asami to a Satomobile— I’ll meet you outside!!”

The Airbender passed over the unconscious ex-heiress to the mobster, and shot towards her sister with a column of air. The Metalbender hardly noticed her, too lost in her own world to pay attention to the burning environment surrounding her.

“Kuv… Kuv… we need to go!” Opal hissed, shaking her sister’s shoulder.

“In another lifetime, you don’t love me,” Kuvira murmured, staring down at the Avatar and gesturing faintly, “You ask her to end my life. Mom asks her to kill me, too.”

“What?!” the Airbender scoffed, “That’s ridiculous— now isn’t the time, Kuvira!! If we don’t make it out of here, there won’t be another lifetime to talk about!!”

Kuvira looked at Opal with hollow green eyes, and it suddenly occurred to the Airbender that a great deal more had transpired in the many months that she’d been away then she’d initially realized. Kuvira was in pain. And it was catching up to her now, in the worst possible of times.

Opal pulled her sister into a quick hug, “It’s going to be okay. I love you— let’s work together, okay? Korra needs you right now.”

“Okay,” the Metalbender answered flatly.

Kuvira wrapped Korra into a cocoon of metal, delicately floating the Avatar along as though she were the most valuable thing the former Captain had ever laid her eyes upon.

Chaos. That’s the only word Opal could use to describe this mission. Fire was everywhere, the smell of burnt flesh filling the Airbender’s nostrils. Bodies of Coalition members, Triad racketeers, and Equalists thugs littered the floor— and it caused her heart to sink faster than an anchor. So much death. So much violence. And what had they gained?

Korra.

That’s what they gained.

But was it worth it?

Now wasn’t the time. Equalists were running towards the pair of sisters— and Opal was forced to whip up a cyclone, sending the criminals flying backwards against mechasuits and cars. She heard a crunch! and hoped to gods that she’d only broken their ribs… she couldn’t bear to think that she might’ve killed them.

“Come on, we need to go faster,” she snapped to Kuvira.

“Yeah, yeah. Sorry… my mind’s just a little preoccupied, that’s all…”

“Kuv, please— I need you to snap out of this funk and help me!” Opal pleaded.

The Metalbender took a deep sigh, “You’re right. I’m sorry. Let’s go.”
A faint purple strip began blemishing on Korra’s neck, and the Airbender felt horribly sorry for the necessary pain that Kuvira had caused her— but a demigod’s rampage was NOT what they needed right now. The sisters broke out into a run, scurrying out of the hangar bay and sprinting through the snow; a floating Avatar in tow behind them.

*Crack! Crack! Crack!*

“Watch out, Kuv!”

An earthen wall rose behind them— preventing any more Equalists bullets headed their way— as Terra Triad forces ushered them into an awaiting truck, filled with gangsters and teenagers. Once they were safely inside, the vehicle lurched forwards and Opal grabbed onto Kuvira’s stealth outfit.

“Are you alright?” a Fire Nation boy asked, pulling the unconscious Korra up into the seat next to him.

“Peachy,” Opal groaned, feeling her ribs on fire from the explosion.

*Take three deep breaths for me, okay?*

Listening to Jinora’s advice, Opal did so— feeling her chest loosen up as the truck drove down the rugged mountainside.

*Good… try and relax… it’ll be okay…*

“Sami…” Korra groaned.

“Shhh…” Kuvira cooed, cradling Korra to her shoulder, “It’s… it’s…”

“It’s going to be alright,” Opal finished, looking into her sister’s emerald eyes— speaking more to the Metalbender than the Avatar.

“GOD FUCKING DAMMIT!!” he shouted, slamming his kali stick into a corpse and lighting up the lifeless body. “WE HAD THEM ALL IN OUR GRASP!! WE COULD’VE ENDED THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL!!”

None of the survivors— surprisingly a lot of people— said anything, merely cowering in pain as they recovered from various burns and injuries. The one Equalist who stood was shaking in her boots as the Lieutenant walked around, kicking bodies in fury.

“YOU!!” he called, pointing at her with his kali sticks, “COME HERE YOU FUCKING BITCH!!”

Ai knelt, praying that it would be quick and painless.

“You had one job,” he snarled, so angry that his voice was terrifyingly quiet. “And you couldn’t even guard a cage from three pathetic Benders. Look around, you useless bitch. All of this is on you!!”
She felt a tear slipping down her cheek, but remained silent— hoping that he would just get it over with.

As he aimed a pistol at her forehead— the only thing she could think of was that Earthbender girl… what was her name? Bao. Yes… she was supposed to be Ai’s soulmate. She even remembered the day a few months ago when the Earthbender was shot, and she couldn’t walk for a week. Oh well.

His thumb clicked the hammer-spur on the revolver, and a finger rested for a second on the trigger.

Ai let out a sigh, closing her eyes.

_BANG!!_

_______________________________________

She felt like her heart was being ripped to shreds, gripping onto Viper’s Coat. Cardiac arrest?! No… you’re supposed to have chest pains before that happens… her soul felt like it was being torn apart.

_Ai. That Equalist girl._

The Earthbender leaned back in the car seat, the Waterbender next to her taking a flask out of his jacket and handing it to her.

_She died._

Bao took a long swig of the vile stuff and sighed, looking down at Asami. She hoped that all of this was worth it. Viper hesitantly patted her on the back in sympathy, but the Earthbender managed to hold in her screams.

“She gonna be alright, Boss?” Shady Shin asked as he drove down the highway towards downtown Republic City, passing some of his buddies in various Satomobiles.

“I don’t… I don’t knows,” Viper answered, looking a little sorrowful as he drew his tendril of water back into the skin on his hip, “I only know minimal healing. Let’s just get her and this one to the rendezvous. What a shitfest.”

“Y-You didn’t have to save our skin,” Bao muttered, “So thanks.”

“It’s alright, kid. Extorting is our life and all… but no one should have to be captured by those guys,” Viper shivered, thinking of how defeated Lightning Bolt Zolt had been after the rally all those years ago.

“If you ever needs a steady job…” Shin trailed off, swerving the car and cutting off a semi-truck.

_Honk!_

“— thanks, but I think I’m happy with the Coalition… actually… I think I need a break from violence for a while,” Bao admitted.

My Soulmate was just *killed*. Were we even destined to be together?!

“Well, if you ever change your mind, come by our restaurant for a free meal— our treat,” Viper
The Earthbender kindly returned the smile, looking down at Asami. The engineer’s face… at least the top half… was ruined. Already, the skin was reddened and swelling— but Bao had been next to her when the tank had exploded. Such exposure to that kind of light… no amount of healing could fix that. She reached down and gripped one of the ex-Equalist’s calloused hands, occasionally giving it a reassuring squeeze.

In the passenger seat, Two Toed Ping had his leg elevated on the dash— a makeshift bandage created from Asami’s smoldering scarf was fashioned around his calf. Bao only knew a little bit of Metalbending— but had still managed to pull the bullet out, allowing Viper to quickly stop the wound from bleeding.

Maybe they did make a good team, after all.

“Korra…” Asami moaned, her hands desperately searching for something to hold onto.

“Poor girl,” Viper muttered, tipping his hat back a little so that he could see better, “She don’t have it easy, do she?”

“No,” Bao murmured, giving Asami’s hands another squeeze.

The speedometer didn’t dip below eighty as Shady Shin steered them off the ramp and through downtown— miraculously they didn’t get pulled over as he sped to the rendezvous point.

“We’re going to scatter as soon as we drops you off,” Viper warned, “Can’t risk an… encounter with the Police.”

Bao nodded in understanding, “Thanks again.”

“Sure thing missy… just make sure that one gets some medicine or something soon… I don’t wants this to be all for nothing.”

Chapter End Notes

So, if you're at this chapter, you probs don't remember it... but way back when in chapter 24, Ai and Bao realize that they're soulmates and kept fighting each other. Not everyone gets a happy ending.

And poor Kuvira... she's still haunted by that gosh-diddly-darn phantom

Leave Comments!!
"Injury in general teaches you to appreciate every moment. I've had my share of injuries throughout my career. It's humbling. It gives you perspective. No matter how many times I've been hurt, I've learned from that injury and come back even more humble."

- Troy Polamalu
Whoever was in the room with her was as silent as a Cat-Owl. Asami let out a sigh, continuing to walk around the room. Her hands paused at the window sill… the panels were open— and she could feel the familiar warmth of the sun. The cold outdoor air. Snow on the sill, melting under the heat of her fingers.

“What the fuck?” she asked aloud.

She began to realize that there was something covering her eyes— how stupid of her!! Her fingertips trailed along the stiff fabric, determining that it was a bandage wrapped around her face; thank the gods for her short, windswept hairstyle, lest locks be tangled in the gauze.

Again, hands kept hers from undoing the dressing on her face.

Spinning around, her fingers struck out to catch the other person— but they were too quick. Instead, Asami walked forwards until her knee bumped against the bed. Sitting down and drawing her knees to her chest, the engineer bit her lip.

“Who are you?”

No answer, but Asami could hear the other person’s breathing hitch. Whoever it was… wasn’t ready to reveal themselves. Hmmm…

“Can you get me some water please?”

Footsteps could be heard walking around the wooden flooring as the door slid open, and then shut. Heavy footsteps… so that meant that they were a man? Oh, but the person’s hands were soft… like a woman’s? Perhaps a heavyset woman?

Asami didn’t know any zaftig acolytes.

Come to think of it, she didn’t really know any of the acolytes— unless you count that Earthbending boy she shot a year ago.

The door slid open again, and she heard a ceramic jug being set down on the table. Water poured into a glass. A cup being pressed into her hands, and all Asami could think to do… was surrender. She sat down on the bed and—

The memory of the explosion seared through her mind.

CRASH!!

Water sloshed against her bare feet and broken glass scratched her toes, threatening to lodge in her skin. Wordlessly, the other person began cleaning up the mess— letting out a grunt as they bent down low and wiped the water and glass up.

Asami’s hands wandered back up to the bandage, the tips of her fingers feeling the skin… underneath… the gauze...

Burnt skin, that seared when she touched it— her cheeks twitching in pain and her eyes threatening to spill with tears.

Her useless eyes.

The person who was tending to her was currently scooping broken glass into a trashcan— and Asami took this distraction to rip the tight bandage away from her skin; making an awful lot of noise.
A soft, indistinguishable “No!” could be heard, a woman’s voice indeed, as hands tried to stop her from taking away the gauze.

Too late.

Instead, Asami pushed the scrap of fabric into the woman’s hands—the smell of pus and medicine filling her nostrils. Another thin set of pads were resting over her eyelids, and the engineer slowly removed them. Again, the other person grabbed the trash she was making. The ex-Equalist opened her eyelids, wincing at the pain.

Nothing.

Not a scrap of light, not a blurry fog, nor a shred of color.

“I’m blind.”

The other person let out a small sigh through her nose and gripped Asami’s hands. They were warm, like a fire at midnight.

Fire.

“Hikaru,” Asami guessed.

The woman’s fingers brushed against her cheek, making the engineer’s face wince a little (though the wounds did not travel further, mostly just encompassing the forehead and the eyes). Tears dripped down from Asami’s lifeless eyes as she leaned into the pregnant woman’s bosom.

“I’m so, so sorry,” her cousin finally answered.

She began sobbing—they both did, as Hikaru pulled Asami back onto the bed and cradled her. More tears spilled down her face, stinging the burns and reminding the ex-heiress that she’d failed.

No.

She hadn’t.

They’d rescued Korra, right?

“What happened?” she asked to the darkness, her hands gripping onto her cousin’s shirt, feeling the tiny life in her belly.

“Flash burns…” Hikaru hesitated, “The White Lotus healers tried everything—even some of that spirit water they had left over from when Opal was in that coma a year ago. Gods, I’m so fucking sorry, Asami.”

“I would’ve died for her,” the engineer answered flatly. “I would’ve fucking died for Korra, I went into that hangar knowing that I might not make it.”

“I… I know. You were so brave,” Hikaru murmured, kissing the top of her head—where she was not burned.

“You remember… a few days ago in the Police Station… when I was really worried about Korra and… you were comforting me?” Asami asked quietly.

“Y-Yes?”
“I was going to say… that I love you.”

The pregnant woman let out a small sob, “I love you, too.”

“Should’ve told you then, in case something happened. ‘m such an idiot sometimes,” Asami mumbled.

“All the time,” Hikaru chuckled, though there was a sniffle in the back of her throat.

“Yeah… I love you,” the engineer repeated with a smile.

“I love you too. I’m sorry that it took us so long to say it,” the Firebender whispered, kissing Asami’s head again.

“H-Hello?” a boy’s voice called out.

The engineer sat up in her bed, “Yeah? How can I help?”

She had a new, clean bandage around her head, and took a second to itch a bit of fabric that was pinching her ear— following the sound of the person’s voice to the doorway.

Whoever it was nervously chuckled, “My name’s Rohan— I’m Jinora and Ikki and Meelo’s brother.”

“Hi there,” Asami said with a smile, patting the space next to her on the bed.

There was a small thump as the thirteen-year-old boy sat down, letting out a nervous breath. She could hear him fidgeting with his fingers. His shoes tapped the wooden floor.

“It’s okay, you know,” the ex-heiress giggled, “I don’t bite.”

Rohan sighed, “I, uh, carved you something. T-To help you get around. I mean, if you need assistance or anything.”

Small hands upturned her own, pressing a small wooden object. Her fingertips felt around, realizing that it was a whistle of some sort. Asami smiled and, with a playful giggle, put the little toy to her lips.

TOOT!!

“Oh my god, that was the funniest sound I’ve ever heard,” she laughed. “This is perfect!!”

Rohan sighed, “Thank Laghima!! I was worried that you wouldn’t like it!!”

“No, I really appreciate it.”

“Okay, well, if you need assistance with anything— just toot, and someone will come and help you! I’ve already told everyone to listen for it, so…”

Asami reached out, trying to guess where his shoulder was— and ending up ruffling his hair,
“Thanks, Rohan.”

He stood up, and the slight ruffle made Asami wonder if he bowed. Realizing that she couldn’t see such a gesture, he hastily muttered “have a good afternoon” and closed the door behind him. She smirked and laid back down in the bed.

At least she had painkillers and friends.

____________________________________________

Light footsteps. Familiar footsteps—which seems silly, really, but Asami sensed that there was something different about the knuckles that rapped against the thin wooden wall. She knew who this person was with a single breath.

“Hey there,” Korra’s voice called through the void.

Asami swung her legs off the bed and slowly stood, her hands reaching out. The Avatar’s fingertips found hers and suddenly all the engineer could think of was warmth. How human those hands felt. With a growl, she pulled her Avatar towards her body—engulfing Korra in a fierce hug.

Her soulmate began trembling.

“Oh, Gods, Sami… I’m so sorry,” Korra sobbed, stroking short black hair. “This is all my fault.”

In the darkness, Asami found the other woman’s lips, covering them with her own. Over and over, she kissed the Avatar furiously, dragging her down to the bed in anger.

“Don’t blame yourself,” the engineer murmured. “Just make love to me.”

Then other woman hesitantly sputtered, “A-are you s-sure?!”

“YES!!” Asami cried out, pulling their mouths together again—effectively preventing any more conversation.

Again and again, she’d been wrenched away from Korra. Tossed around like a ragdoll. This was no longer passionate sex, like teenagers can’t seem to get enough of. Nor was this a steady relationship’s love. This was Asami’s need to feel. To feel… Korra.

Hesitant fingertips pulled off clothes, and though the slowness irked the ex-heiress, she respected Korra’s need to take it one step at a time.

“I almost lost you,” Asami growled, kissing underneath the Water Tribe girl’s jaw.

Suddenly… Korra’s body was no longer in her clutches, reeling back and thumping against the paper-thin wall.

“I-I can’t do this,” the Avatar stammered.

“What? Why not?” the engineer scoffed.
“You just lost your sight. And you suddenly want to have sex?! I… I understand that you’re in shock… but you’re not handling this loss correctly.”

“I WENT INTO THAT FIGHT PREPARED TO DIE FOR YOU— I’VE BEEN SPENDING EVERY WAKING MINUTE TODAY THANKFUL THAT I’M STILL HERE!!” Asami argued deafeningly.

Korra was panting, clearly unsure of what to say. The ex-heiress could hear a sniffle from across the room and took a second to calm down. She swung her legs over the edge of the bed, again. Her fingertips gripped at the duvet and let out several breaths that she’d been holding in since she’d first woken up.

“You’re right. You’re right, Kor. I’m sorry… I’m really sorry… Can… can you come and hold me? Please?”

“Yeah… it’s okay,” the Avatar whispered, crossing the threshold and kneeling down in front of Asami. “Heh. Hold you? That’s something I can always do. I’m just… I don’t think we’re ready. For that. You know… just yet.”

Asami bit her lip, thinking only of the darkness in front of her— knowing that somewhere in that void, her soulmate was there. Her hands reached out and cupped Korra’s face, her thumbs accidentally bumping against the Avatar’s nose and earning her a small giggle. Her fingers threaded through Korra’s short hair and Asami had to take a moment to register that she might never see the color chestnut again— might never get the chance to gaze into cerulean for the rest of her life.

Pushing those thoughts aside, she dipped her lips down a little and kissed Korra on the forehead— her fingers grasping the back of Korra’s neck and pulling her closer.

The Avatar stood, sliding her hands up Asami’s body and rotating the two of them so that they were cuddling together on the mattress. Waves of safety rushed over Asami, despite what a horrible misfortune had struck her— she rested her injured head against Korra’s chest and closed her eyes.

“I love you.”

“I love you too, Asami. My little Widget.”

“Perhaps I should be called Bandit now, hmm?”

Tears dripped down Asami’s forehead, and she realized that she’d gone a little too far in her joke. She tried to move her face, as if she was looking at Korra, to indicate that she didn’t mean it. The Avatar stifled a snuffle and let out a long, shaky sigh instead, running her hands up and down Asami’s back.

“We’re going to get through this,” Asami whispered. “No matter what happens.”

“It’s been a bit of a bumpy ride, huh?”

“I’ve come to realize that life is one big bumpy ride,” the engineer admitted, pressing her lips against Korra’s. “But that’s why you design a car with capable shock-suspension and install durable tires and—”

“— what was that you said about lying down together and not talking?” the Avatar asked with a mockingly stern voice.

“I made no such promises,” Asami teased.
Korra let out another sigh—this one more playful—and reached up to ruffle her soulmate’s windswept hair. They laid together, kissing and cuddling and understanding that, all in all, their destinies were… like a bowl of water.

Yes—there are waves, crashing everywhere and causing a bit of a mess. But if you wait long enough, eventually the water levels out. And all will be calm.

Chapter End Notes

Make what you will of it.

Leave comments.
“I DON'T CARE!” Harry yelled at them, snatching up a lunascope and throwing it into the fireplace. "I'VE HAD ENOUGH, I'VE SEEN ENOUGH, I WANT OUT, I WANT IT TO END, I DON'T CARE ANYMORE!"

"You do care," said Dumbledore. He had not flinched or made a single move to stop Harry demolishing his office. His expression was calm, almost detached. "You care so much you feel as though you will bleed to death with the pain of it."

— J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

“There’s something different,” Opal shrugged, walking along the trail. Her feet stepped a few feet away from the edge of the cliff.

“What do you mean?” Jinora asked thoughtfully, keeping a distance from her former lover.

They were not back together. It would take weeks, months, perhaps even whole seasons before that trust could be built back up. Jinora loved Opal with all her heart— but she respected herself enough to realize that Opal had done her a great injustice. If they were to ever reunite romantically… it would be on the Airbending Master’s terms.

Of course, that didn’t mean they couldn’t still be friends. Best of friends, even.

“I don’t know… the energy on the Island… after the attack— I could feel something change… it’s silly, I haven’t even been here all that long.”

Jinora sat down on a boulder and watched the sun kiss the ocean horizon, “Well… what sort of change in the energy are you sensing?”

“You don’t seriously believe me?”

“But I do,” the younger girl chuckled. “You’re the first person to Energybend who isn’t an Avatar in… well… a very long time— if not the first person of all time.”

“Not that I can do much with it, what good is Energybending? Really? I used it to dissipate Samsara’s… you know… life. And then what? I don’t understand what I’m supposed to use this tool for,” Opal huffed, moving to kick a rock… and then thinking better of it.

Jinora bit her lip. It was evident that the older girl was desperately trying to let her negative emotions float away, rather than channel her actions through them.

“Why give me Energybending in the first place?! If Korra already has it, isn’t that enough?”

Opal’s back was turned to Jinora, and the younger girl couldn’t help but stare. Months of surviving
out in the wilderness had given her a very fit body— her back rippling with muscles from climbing trees and hiking over mountains. Her hair was slightly longer than before the attack on Zaofu, but she’d obviously cut it after leaving the Lion Turtle’s island. Small scars littered her arms, though her Air Nomad robes covered whatever other injuries she’d accumulated.

Not that Jinora had a claim to see them. Not that she had the right to imagine what was underneath Opal’s clothes— she already knew, but it was not in her place to picture Opal’s body… beneath… hers… her ebony chest rising and falling… Jinora kissing every imperfection that she’d collected… mmm… perfection…

No!! Stop that!!

She stood abruptly, walking up next to Opal and hesitantly putting a hand on her shoulder, “We’ll figure this one out. The Lion Turtle saw something in you. He saw your energy, your soul. Whether or not you see it… you are worthy, Opal.”

There were tears in those olive eyes that once belonged to her, but they continued gazing out over the sea.

“I’m so sorry.”

The younger girl’s heart fell. No matter what happened— the older girl was going to be in pain for a long, long time over what had happened between her and Samsara.

Jinora had already forgiven her.

Because she loved her.

So much.

Instead of telling Opal this, she took a deep breath and stared at the darkening sky, “I know. We’ll figure it out.”

“W-We will?”

“ Somehow. Someday.”

They were silent for a few moments, standing a few feet apart and contemplating what these words meant. Did Jinora want to give Opal a second chance? Of course… but she needed the older girl to earn that chance. That didn’t mean she couldn’t help her—

“Do you hear something?” Opal asked, peering down the cliff and widening her eyes in shock.

Kuvira was walking along the beach when someone slammed her into the ground. She took a quick breath and bent the sand around her into a gimbal— baring her teeth at whatever intruder had attacked her.

None other than Korra was staring at her with angry blue eyes.
“What the hell!?”

“What did you stop me?!” the Avatar spat, her eyes stained with furious, frustrated tears.

“What are you from?!”

“They hurt her!!” Korra screamed, “AND YOU JUST TOOK ME OUT WHEN I COULDN’T END IT!!”

“Korra! Snap out of it!! This isn’t who you’re supposed to be! The Avatar is a bringer of balance, not a warrior of chaos! You were destroying a building chock full of people!!”

“She’s blind, Kuvira!!” the Avatar sobbed, and with a snarl whipping the water next to the beach straight into the Metalbender’s stomach. “AND YOU LET THE LIEUTENANT GET AWAY FROM ME!!”

“Oof!” she grunted, slamming into a pile of driftwood.

Fine. If that’s how it’s going to be.

Kuvira preferred to fight with metal, but was more than competent with earth—ripping chunks out of the cliff next to them (fortunately she’d decided to take a walk on the other side of the island) and hurling them towards her best friend. She winced when a lump of clay caught Korra by surprise and slammed into her head—bursting into dust upon contact.

The Avatar flew back a few feet, into the cold water. Unfortunately, it didn’t seem to clear her head at all.

Korra readied two spheres of fire, one in each hand, and charged forwards—for a moment Kuvira’s heart stopped in fear. Was the younger girl really trying to kill her?!

“STOP IT!!” a high pitched voice screamed.

A powerful vortex of air slammed into the Avatar, sending her flying back into the bay. Opal and Jinora landed on either side of Kuvira with their hands raised in defense. At least now they were on equal footing.

She could hear panting as Korra treaded water about fifty feet away, the Water Tribe girl’s eyes slowly widening as she understood what she’d done. Slowly, she swam back to the beach, dragging herself onto the sand and looking up at the three girls with bloodshot eyes.

Kuvira kneeled down, “Kor— are you okay?”

There was a pout on the Avatar’s face, like when a little kid has a stomach ache. Korra began sobbing, crawling up against the Metalbender and clutching onto her jeans.

“Oh gods, I’m so sorry Kuvira!!” she bawled. “I’m so sorry!!”

Jinora and Opal knelt down, using Airbending to dry Korra off—and then pulling her up so that they were all sitting in the sand. A makeshift group hug.

“It’s okay, Korra. It’s okay… I forgive… you…” the Metalbender cooed.

“He hurt her,” the Avatar wailed, “HE HURT MY SAMI!!”
I’m going to end his life myself if I ever see him again, Kuvira thought— cradling Korra’s head underneath her chin as Opal leaned against her and wrapped her arms around the two girls.

I wish there was a way to fix all of this. Go back in time and stop all of this, Opal sighed to herself, running her hands through Korra’s short chestnut hair.

So much pain… Korra’s chi must be devastated… what good is being an Airbending Master if I can’t help her heal herself? All of them? Have I failed? Jinora asked silently. She ran her hands up and down Kuvira’s back to comfort the both of them.

“I love all of you,” Korra whispered in a broken voice, “I’m so, so sorry.”

“Ssshhh… nobody got hurt… that’s what’s important,” Jinora sighed, pressing her lips to the Avatar’s forehead.

“What are you doing?” Hikaru asked, walking into the room.

“Shh! One… two… three… four…” Asami whispered to her cousin, pacing her steps as she mapped out the room in her head.

“I’ll just leave this here then— on the table.”

The pregnant strode across the room and set a plate of dinner down on the surface, laying down some chopsticks and a cup of tea. While Asami walked around, muttering to herself, the Firebender heated the brew back up and sat down on the bed— a hand protectively resting on her stomach.

Asami tripped a little on a rug, “Oops! I forgot that was there.”

“You’ll get the hang of it.”

The ex-heiress smiled, “It's nice.”

“What is?”

“The moment I realized I was blind… I expected everyone to pity me… instead… everybody’s just encouraging me to keep going. People never really believed in me; in my old life.”

A sarcastic comment managed to leap out of Hikaru’s lips on accident;

“To be fair— half the people here are family friends of Toph Beifong… you’re going to have to try pretty hard to get them to pity you.”
“Oh shut up,” the ex-Equalist snapped playfully.

They began laughing, shaking the paper thin walls as their chuckles resonated through the hallways. Asami sat down on the bed, curling up against Hikaru and threading their fingers together. The Firebender wondered if she did this because her sense of touch would begin to amplify…

“How far along are you?” Asami asked curiously, running her other hand over the pregnant woman’s enlarged abdomen.

“About six months,” Hikaru admitted.

“Wow… wait… so before the… Estate?”

“Yes— I think so… looking back on it, I know which night, too. I wasn’t being careful and I missed one or two of my pills… we were drunk and not thinking clearly.”

“At least he’s staying by your side,” Asami smiled, giving Hikaru’s fingers a sympathetic squeeze.

“Yeah… I don’t think I could’ve picked a better person to have that kind of accident with— uh, not that I think this little one is unwanted!!”

“Of course… we all love him, Hikaru,” her cousin said sincerely. “He’ll always have a family.”

The Firebender bit her lip, and then kissed the top of Asami’s head, “Thank you.”

The weight of her snoozing cousin had caused her arm to fall asleep (in that tingling, painful way that reminds you of a fuzzy, black and white TV screen), and the Firebender had to squirm around slowly to slide out from underneath. She carefully wrapped the blanket around Asami’s shoulders to protect her from the cold winter air and slipped out of the room.

“How is she doing?” a voice called out quietly.

Hikaru jumped a foot in the air in surprise.

“Spirits!!” she hissed, startled out of her wits.

“Sorry! Sorry!” Korra stammered apologetically, walking up to Hikaru and putting a hand on her shoulder. “Didn’t mean to scare you!!”

“It’s alright… I haven’t been getting enough sleep and I’m a little jumpy, I guess.”

“That makes two of us,” the Avatar admitted.

“You okay?”

“No.”

“Yeah… I understand.”

It was obvious that Korra had been crying recently, and Hikaru grabbed her hand— leading her down the garden and sitting them both down at a stone bench. Silence filled the air for a few minutes, Korra merely leaned against the Firebender, pondering a great deal.

“What am I going to do?”
“You’re asking me?” Hikaru chuckled a little, “I’m like… The Queen of Bad Decisions.”

Korra leaned forwards, letting her face fall into her hands as her dexterous fingers ran through her short hair, “I just… part of me wants to go after him… part of me says don’t do it…”

The pregnant woman put a hand on her friend’s shoulder, “You’re going to have to face him sooner or later… he needs to be captured or… removed.”

Cerulean eyes looked pleadingly into amber, “Kill him?”

“I know you want to try and take a passive approach— but remember who it is we’re talking about; he’s killed hundreds of people, and has ruined thousands of Bender’s lives. This isn’t some threat at the border of the country— he’s a murderer, and… he’s only going to try and kill more people if you don’t stop him.”

“You’re saying we need to take the fight to him?”

“I’m saying you need to take the fight to him. People get killed when all of us try to take him on. You’re the Avatar— you have this cosmic power on your side. The things you’ve done… you can do anything, Korra!” Hikaru exclaimed in awe.

The older girl took a deep sigh, staring up at the moon.

“You know,” the Firebender continued with a smirk, “I remember Bolin trying to convince me that you’re related to the moon.”

“Yeah… Water Tribe royalty.”

“Princess Korra, I’m honored by your presence!”

“Oh shush… you really think I ought to take him on alone?”

“You’ll never be alone,” Hikaru said, pointing a finger at Korra’s chest, “You have her. That blue spirit— Raava?”

“I suppose you’re right…”

“I don’t want to be,” the Firebender said carefully, “I only know that if you don’t do something… it’s only going to get worse.”
The Love/Hate Relationship Between Baatar Jr. and Family Meals

Chapter Summary

“Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot. Take thou what course thou wilt.”

— William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Footsteps.

Knuckles knocking on the door.

“Come in!” she called, sitting up and throwing the blanket off her legs.

The wooden panel sliding open.


Warm fingers grasping hers and clenching down tightly.

Lips tangled in her hair.

A soft sigh emitted from a throat that belonged to only one person.

“Hey there,” Asami smiled, leaning into Korra’s body— her own lips pressing against the Avatar’s neck.

Silence.

Well… not quite.

The sounds of the lemurs nesting on the branches outside. An exciting game of Airball about seventy feet away, if her math was right. Tenzin having an argument with Bumi about drinking on the island (never deny an old commander his pleasures).

But still silence from Korra.

“Shall we go for a walk?” Asami asked, trying to elicit a response from her girl. “Yes— I think a walk would do me good.”

Korra sighed softly and lifted the engineer up, cradling her close and pressing another kiss to her lips. The Avatar’s hand slid down and tangled with Asami’s fingertips— the ex-Equalist tracing her thumb over the fingerless gloves that the Avatar was so fond of.
She felt the warmth of the sun on her skin, but still no sight. Though her burns were still prevalent—they no longer needed bandaging. Not a very Sato-like fashion statement… she wanted to keep working on her appearance… makeup was a part of her, and she wouldn’t let something like this get in the way. Maybe Hikaru could help her out.

“I’m going to go after him,” Korra finally spoke, breaking the ex-heiress’s train of thought.

“Who? The Lieutenant? But we just got you back!!”

“I know!! I… I know…”

Waves crashing against the cliffs—a sound that she was slowly growing fond of. Seagulls shrieking and swarming around in a cluster… if Asami recalled correctly, Kya liked to walk down and feed them. Yeah, the strong smell of lillyweed wafting through the air confirmed that. Asami resisted the urge to cough.

“Though it would be best to tell you… in case…”

“Fuck, Korra… I just got you back— and now you want to put yourself back in his grip again?!”

“ASAMI!! YOU KNOW WHAT HE DID TO YOU!!”

The blind woman reeled back at the shout, biting her lip and stifling a shout of her own. Instantly, she could hear Korra kneeling before her.

“I’m sorry… I’m so sorry… I shouldn’t have yelled. I’ve been fucking up so much… I just… I can’t let him hurt anyone else…”

Asami took her soulmate’s hands and kneeled down in the dirt, joining Korra and bringing their lips together, accidentally clicking her teeth against the younger woman’s—but caring little. She needed her lover right now, in front of her.

“Are you sure about this?” the engineer asked quietly, pressing her burnt forehead against Korra’s, and ignoring the searing pain.

“Y-Yes. How many more people am I going to let him kill?”

Fair point.

That didn’t make it any easier.

“I love you. Be careful.”

“I love you, too,” Korra whimpered, cupping Asami’s cheek and bringing their lips together again—albeit this exchange was smoother, more passionate.

“HEY!!” Meelo’s voice called across the courtyard, “GET A ROOM!!”

They broke apart laughing—and Asami made sure to store the memory away for safekeeping.

_____________________________________________
Opal was walking past the dormitories when something caused her to abruptly stop. Energy. Swinging back and forth.

This was usually normal…

But the passion of this person’s energy…

Wow!

She leaned against the wall and closed her eyes, taking a deep breath and trying to sense the source. Just like the Lion Turtle taught her— Opal let her own energy swing back and forth first… it was easier to sense what might be out of balance if she first made sure to maintain equilibrium within herself.

Except whatever it was… was not out of balance… merely… prevalent…

Further so than the dynamisms of others on the island.

Most curious, she thought, taking another deep breath and exhaling through her nose.

The Airbender followed the source, picking it apart from the other vitalities on the island and slowly walking down the hallway. Others weaved around her— making little comment of her strange behavior. Whoever this dynamism belonged to… it was as if their vivacity was beckoning to Opal. A leaf in the wind, swirling around other, more common energies.

Of course… this was all well and Guru-like of her, until she blundered into a door.

"Ow!" she yelped, rubbing her nose.

Instantly, the wooden panel slid open, "Who’s there?"

Asami was nose-to-nose with her, and Opal had never sensed a brighter energy than this. Even the Lion Turtle, the largest and oldest living animal on the planet, didn’t feel as… resilient… as the blind woman did now.

"Woah!" Opal muttered in awe.

The ex-heiress giggled, "I thought I was the one who’s supposed to be bumping into things, Beifong."

"Sorry… I was distracted… are you like… high?"

"What?"

Opal didn’t understand it… why was Asami’s energy calling out to her?!

She let out a small huff, "You heard me, did you sneak some of Aunt Kya’s lillyweed?"

Despite her burnt features, the engineer had both an amused and confused expression on her face. She began laughing, doubling over and cackling like a hyena.

"No! No, I’m not high! Good one, Opal!"

"I’m serious… what meds are they putting you on?!"
“Topical Anesthetic? I dunno, they said it helps numb the eyes so I don’t have to lay around in massive amounts of pain. And Korra has a healing session with me every day… but I mean… I don’t really think it’s doing anything…”

Okay, this really didn’t explain why Asami’s energy was lighting up like a Spirit Portal… Opal was absolutely befuddled. She muttered some excuse about needing to go talk to Tenzin and left the recovering Asami standing in the doorway with a puzzled face.

“Hey there!” Baatar said cheerfully, stepping off the boat and greeting his fiancée with a long kiss.

“Mmmm… I missed you so much,” Kuvira grinned into the kiss, pulling him closer and letting out a sigh as their foreheads rested against one another.

They hadn’t seen each other since little Suki had been abducted. So much had happened.

“Well… since you asked, the house is fine,” he sarcastically chuckled.

“It’s covered in blueprints, isn’t it?”

Junior rolled his eyes and took the Metalbender’s hand. They walked along the docks, watching the Airbenders fly to and fro—racing among the clouds with joyful whoops. He couldn’t help but admire how much love the people of this culture reserved for one another.

She was waiting at the top of the stairs, her eyes beginning to tear up when she saw her big brother.

Though Junior was not the most athletic member of the circle of friends… he bolted up the steps and encased his sister in a long, loving hug.

“Hey there,” he murmured, pressing a kiss to her forehead.

Opal trembled a little—sinking into his arms and crying softly. Kuvira joined them, and together the family of three collectively let out a breath that they’d been holding in for many long months.

“I love you so much, Opal,” Baatar murmured.

“I love you, too,” his baby sister whispered. The Airbender’s face was pressed into his hoodie, muffling her voice.

The three of them had dinner outside, at a table that Tenzin had set up for them. Though Baatar did not usually eat vegetarian, he was seriously enjoying Aunt Pema’s cooking—she made a terrific Tofu Curry, combined with hot Naan bread and a steaming bowl of rice. He poured Opal some more tea as she told him about her adventures.

Although she told daring and audacious stories… there was also a sorrowful undertone in her voice as she spoke, and Baatar resolved himself to spend more time with his sister.
Kuvira’s hand slithered under the table and rested on his thigh as Opal continued being a raconteur, making Baatar choke on a piece of tofu. Ever so slowly, his fiancé’s hand slithered down to his—**OH JEEZ!!** Thank goodness that the Airbender was too engrossed in her tale (something or other about a Lion Turtle) to notice.

The Metalbender’s fingers lightly rested against his crotch, making his hips buck up in excitement.

“How’s the curry?” he asked, nervously trying to distract himself from how good her fingers felt on his member.

“Mmmm! I gotta admit, after three months of whatever I could forage—”

Kuvira squeezed down, and he had to stifle a loud moan at the contact.

“— mostly just nuts and fruits, I was so excited to be reunited with Pema’s cooking!!”

_Zzzziipp_.

Oh no.

“I’ve always loved the Airbender dishes, myself,” Kuvira agreed, pretending that nothing was going on underneath.

There was only one layer between his fiancé’s long and nimble fingers and his pulsing manhood. His eyes widened, and he looked over at Kuvira, who was pleasantly listening along to Opal’s story with no indication whatsoever that she was fucking sinning underneath the table!!!

Fine.

If that’s how it’s going to be…

His right hand traveled down to meet her own thigh, slowly running his hands up and down her legs, occasionally pressing right into her crotch. Enough pressure… and… Kuvira’s hips bucked forwards a little and her breath grew a little shallow.

Takes one to know one.

“— so Jinora told me that you designed that Glider?” Opal asked with beaming olive eyes.

_“Imag...
He hated Soulmate Messaging™ sometimes.

“No! Yeah, gotta love that… mph… architecture!!” Baatar chuckled nervously.

Opal scoffed, standing and brushing her robes off, “You’re such a nerd. Thanks for having dinner with me.”

His sister bent over the table and kissed them both on the forehead— Baatar sucked in a breath and desperately hoped that she wouldn’t notice that both of their pants were halfway off and Baatar’s prevalent erection that Kuvira was toying with. But it seemed that Opal was oblivious to their erotic mischief, skipping up to the Gazebo to watch Ikki and Meelo work on a mandala.

“I hate you so much,” Baatar muttered under his breath, turning and glaring at his lover.

He felt Kuvira zip up his pants and tightly grip his knee. Her lips played a little with his earlobe, and he had to tug on his collar to cool down. He was going to die of either amatory distress or embarrassment if they didn’t leave the courtyard soon.

To be fair, it’d been a few weeks since they’d last… you know…

“Walls are too thin here, and I don’t think we can keep quiet, now can we?” Kuvira smirked.

Baatar let out a soft groan as she squeezed down through his jeans, and his lips desperately found hers. Gods, she could turn him into putty just like that.

“… but… hmmm… there’s a hidden cave on the southern side of the island— you can take the beach to get down there. Meet me in fifteen minutes and I’ll be more than happy to… continue…” she whispered with a wink.

Quickly but punitively nipping just underneath his jaw (where his weak spot was) before anyone could look over, Kuvira stood and walked away with a suggestive swing in her hips. Baatar bit his lip and swatted his hand away from his bulging zipper as he stared at her ass leave the courtyard and dance down the marble stairs.

Needless to say, he arrived at the cave several minutes ahead of schedule.
Korra took a deep breath, adjusting the bulletproof vest that Lin had loaned her a while back— her nails dug into her palms as she climbed along the rafters.

The Equalists were still using this hangar, connected to the ruined Sato Estate, for some reason.

Perhaps it was the Lieutenant’s need for poetic irony— though that was a little too Zaheer-ish for someone like him. No, it was simply a convenient base for goods and services; a place to dock Airships and store captured Avatars.

Bloodstains littered the ground, and Korra stomached her guilt and anguish. There would only be more blood to be spilled.

“Listen up, maggots!” a familiar, heart-wrenching voice called out. “We have one more week to move all of our gear away from this piece of trash and to our new facility— I don't want to see any of you slacking on the job. No. Correction. You don’t want me to see you slacking around. Got it?!”

His kali sticks crackled, teeming with life as he casually swung one around, pacing back and forth in front of about two hundred Equalists.

Others, presumably lesser grunts on the food chain, were running amok— moving crates and stocking weapons in containers. Korra flinched at the guns being carefully sealed into cases and boxes of bullets transferring hands.

Oh, Baatar… if only I could have gone back in time and stopped you from designing this…

Now was the time to strike. She wouldn’t get a second chance.

Korra took a deep breath, jumping down in front of the crowd of Equalists and slowing her descent with a swirl of air. There was a snarl on her face, and when she opened her eyes— they were a glowing white.

Be careful, Korra, Raava whispered from in her heart, If you get shot…

I know. It’s going to be okay, the Avatar responded with a deep sigh.

“Look who it is,” the Lieutenant said, his thumbs running over the buttons on his kali sticks.
“You’ve gone too far,” Korra spoke— Raava’s voice echoing alongside her own.

“Really? I don’t think we’ve done enough. Benders are still running around, getting away with whatever they want, scot-free. And you. You’re still standing there, all smug and confident. When are you going to wake up and realize that the Equalists own the place?!” the Lieutenant snarled.

“Enough!”

“I agree!!”

The Lieutenant surged forwards with his electrified weapons, wildly yet proficiently swinging the glowing blue death sticks like lightsabers. Korra sent walls of Earth up around her, pushing the Lieutenant one direction and slamming the Equalists towards the other side of the hangar.

Now she had her back covered.

Korra jumped up with a jet propulsion of fire— searching around with her illuminated eyes and letting out a puff of flame in anger. He was nowhere to be found. So instead, Korra decided to take matters into her own hands.

She looked up, sensing the water in the emergency sprinkler system and pulling apart the pipes with a snarl. The water fell to the ground with a splash and she let it rotate around her in a gimbal.

**SIZZLE!! CRACKLE!!**

Quicker than a bolt of lightning (pun intended), Korra whipped around and jumped back— sending the water flying forwards and conducting against the Lieutenant’s kali sticks.

“Argh!!!” he yelled in pain, as water surrounded him.

It was not enough. Korra had made the mistake of stepping back against a metal crate— he surged forwards, still smoking from the shock, and slamming a kali stick against the container.

“FUCK!!” the Avatar yelped, slamming dirt towards him and trying to ignore the searing, familiar pain of electrocution.

_**Be careful, Korra!**_

_I know, Raava_, she thought.

Now was not the time to play diplomat— to be a neutral force. He’d murdered innocent people. Willingly killed Baatar Sr. with the very weapons that he was attempting to kill Korra with now.

Asami was blind because of him.

She felt a newfound energy— anger— surging through her as she whipped up a cyclone of air, adding fire to it and creating a vortex inferno; allowing it to burn anything in her sight. Wooden crates went up in flames and vehicles caught fire. Good.

_Crack! Crack! Crack!_

Somehow, the Equalists had broken through the barrier that she’d set up. A team of them began aiming their guns at her, and Korra was forced to duck behind protective shelter.

A strong force upended her, striking her out from under her feet. The Lieutenant stood over her, his green goggles smashed, as he raised his electrified weapons and let out a yell. Korra quickly shot her
feet towards his stomach— sending him flying to the other side of the hangar with an air kick.

No more Mrs. Nice Girl.

Korra scrambled away, letting a thick sheet of metal wrap around her as she ran, protecting her from impending bullets. She flinched at the sharp PING!!s that the projectiles made as they ricocheted everywhere.

She jumped up off the wall and send a large fireball towards the Equalist squad— making them scatter as she looked around her environment. What could she use to her advantage?

Bingo.

With a gust of air, she flew over to two large petroleum tanks that’d managed to survive the recent Coalition/Triad battle. She ripped the metal open and let the oil spill out.

*This is stupid. I’m going to get myself killed doing this.*

Sensing the earth within the petroleum, she used both Earthbending and Waterbending techniques to slosh the fuel towards the Equalists in a large wave. She took a deep breath— reminding herself that these people were murderers, sadists. They’d been willing to bomb people, assassinate. They’d killed people that Korra cared about.

They hurt Asami.

Fire easily erupted from her fingers in great, searing blasts. Korra closed her eyes and tried to ignore the screams of people burning; instead turning to search for the Lieutenant.

“I’m sorry,” she whispered to them as she flew through the hangar.

The bastard was clever at hiding from her, as she looked desperately for him with all four elements at the ready. Heat from the flames was distracting her, and she forced herself to ignore the flames licking up the walls— Korra needed to kill him and get out of here.

*Crack!*

“Argh!!” she cried, dropping a few feet in the air and her eyes returning to blue. He’d managed to shoot her in the back of the thigh. Korra bent a piece of metal towards her leg as soon as she found cover, making sure that it put enough pressure on the wound to prevent blood from escaping— if she pulled the bullet out she might also bleed out.

“Look at you,” he called out, slowly walking towards her with the gun at the ready. “For all your heavenly, divine, and chosen power… my technology still exceeds you, rendering you ever so mortal.”

“You stole that technology,” Korra muttered, grunting as she put more pressure on her thigh and sneering at him.

“It was still devised by a Nonbender, was it not? Face it, Avatar, you’re outdated.”

Korra took a deep breath and flashed him a grin, falling into the earth below and tunneling around beneath the hangar floor— through the vibrations, she could hear him yelling in anger, shooting his pistol in random directions. Tunneling behind him, she jumped out of the ground and send a brick of earth slamming into his back.
“Korra, are you okay?! What happened to your leg?!” Asami’s voice asked with a panicking tone.

“Just ignore that, I’ll be alright,” Korra yelled aloud.

She reentered the Avatar state, instantly feeling the pain numbing. At least she could continue fighting.

The Lieutenant resurfaced, his stamina was pretty damn impressive. His kali sticks were back in his hands, slamming into the objects around Korra. The problem was that the electricity was too scattered to redirect, which meant she would have to fight fire with fire.

She countered his strikes with fire kicks and punches, he managed to dodge her flying chunks of Earth and water whips.

Come on, Korra, you’re stronger than this, she thought to herself.

Use his energy against him, that’s what she needed to do. He was charging at her again, his kali sticks crackling with voltage. With a gust of air, she shot above him— sucking in a breath and allowing the weapons to graze her abs a little. Landing behind him, she caught the Lieutenant off guard.

A powerful vortex of air, crafted by her fingers, slammed into him from behind and sent him slamming into the wall. But Korra didn’t relent. She sent a large brick into his back…

CRASH!!

Glass and electric parts fell from the generator on his back, rendering it useless. He no longer had his glowsticks.

The Lieutenant realized this with a snarl, kicking open a crate and fetching a spare pistol. He aimed it at her and pulled the trigger.

Click.

He’d forgotten to load it. Korra laughed and stomped, allowing spilled water to encase him in ice up to his neck. Taking a long, deep breath— she walked up to him and snarled.

“It’s over!” her voice echoed through the hangar.

“NOT QUITE!!”

Three surviving, burnt Equalists began firing bullets at her, and Korra was forced to abandon her target, who was broken free by more grunts running up to him— smashing the ice with metal scraps.

Fuck.

I’m stronger than this.

Metal strips peeled off the walls and countered the bullets as she weaved through the rafters, taking a deep breath. She still had a trick up her sleeve. Korra let out a yell, opening her eyes back into the Avatar State for a third time and dropping to the ground on the other side of the hangar, her hands pulling in a downwards motion.

CCCCCCCCRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAASSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH.
The ceiling let out a groan for half a second, and then crashed down on top of everywhere. Korra bent a protective dome of earth around herself as metal and rock smashed on top of murderers and sadists. Korra kept sensing the mountain above as she pulled down minerals and crushed as much of the hangar as she could. The weaker parts of the structure collapsed under the weight and pressure, rendering the hangar absolutely destroyed.

Nobody could survive that.

The Avatar tunneled out of the dome she’d been hiding in, pushing buried metal and earth to the side — until she finally broke free, clutching grass and snow and tree roots; pulling herself out of the crumbling earth.

She turned away and headed back towards Republic City— hopefully she could flag down a cab and find a healer for her leg. Walking through the snow, she let out a weary sigh.

It was over.

Not while he was still breathing.

The Lieutenant was trapped between a steel beam that was holding up a few scraps of metal, and the platinum walls that the fucking Avatar hadn’t been able to destroy in her rampage. A steel rod was lodged in his stomach, and he kept desperately applying pressure… that he might make it out of this alive. He was close to the tunnel that led to the Sato workshop, if he could just… crawl through the scraps… if he didn’t bleed out…

The Lieutenant heard muffled voices;

“Come on! We gotta dig them out!!”

“Nobody could’ve survived that!!”

He pushed his way through loose dirt, scooping it with his arms and pushing it behind him as he slowly dug in the direction of the workshop tunnel. If the steel rod in his abdomen didn’t kill him, the dirt that the wound was accumulating would.

His hand pushed through the scraps, his final shred of strength showing unwavering loyalty.

“Oh my gods, no fucking way!”

Arms grabbed onto him and pulled— the Lieutenant let out a cry of pain as they dragged him through the dirt and carried him back through the tunnel.
“Come on!! Stay with us, Sir! We’ll get you patched up!!” a lackey grunted as the cart rolled along the rail. Pressure pressed onto his stomach, and the Lieutenant let out a small laugh as darkness overtook him.

Avatar Korra may have won this round, but it would take more than simple bending to defeat him.

He’d let her have this small victory… take his time healing up… and then when he was ready… retaliation.
The Fault in Our Avatars

Chapter Summary

“Even if things don’t unfold the way you expected, don’t be disheartened or give up. One who continues to advance will win in the end.”

— Daisaku Ikeda

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“Shut up,” the Avatar grumbled, her face pressed into the pillow as Kya healed her wound. “The bullet entered the back of the thigh… just very high up!!”

“Korra got shot in the butt! Korra got shot in the butt!!” Kuvira laughed in a harmonious sing-song voice.

“In this life, and the next, and the one after that— the Avatar incarnation will haunt you, you little twerp,” Korra warned.

“I guess you could say that she… made an ass of herself?” Baatar chuckled, nudging Bolin in the ribs.

“A curse on all the Beifongs,” the Avatar murmured.

“Alright… I think you’re going to need three more healing sessions, we’ll be able to wrap up around tomorrow night and you should be good as new— you’ll be sleeping on your stomach for the next few nights,” Kya said gently, leaning back and blowing a puff on her joint.

“Do you have to smoke that in here?” Hikaru coughed, waving the smoke around. “It’s probably not good for us.”

“Don’t deny an old woman her pleasures,” the Waterbender grinned, blowing another puff. “Besides, if I recall correctly, your mother Shun had a terrific lillyweed collection.”

Opal took a deep breath and let out a puff of air and the hazy, foul smelling smoke blew out the window. All of the teenagers coughed a little but Kya merely continued blowing rings of the stuff as her other hand lazily healed Korra’s rear end thigh.

“Now, it’s none of my business what you get up to in your off time,” Kya commented nonchalantly, “But I’d suggest that you refrain from any… activities that might tear open the wound.”

“So don’t be kinky!” Jinora giggled.

“May I remind you, Master Jinora, that Korra is technically your grandfather,” Asami defended with a smirk, leaning back in her chair and running her fingers through her soulmate’s hair.

“Ew!! OH EEEEWWWW!!! I TAKE THAT BACK!!”
The room broke out into laughter and Kya shook her head, walking out with her joint in-between her fingers. She gave her brothers a thump on the back each and walked over to where Saikhan and Lin were standing, interviewing Mako about Korra’s injuries— he’d gone in earlier when she’d first arrived; now they were all catching up.

She walked up to the Chief of Police with a smirk, “Hey there, champ.”

Lin stiffened and turned to her childhood friend, “You’re interrupting official Police business.”

“Mmmmhmnnm… Saikhan, I’m sure you and Mako can catch up about Korra over a few beers. Bumi has a cabinet in Tenzin’s office, the key’s behind the potted plant.”

“You two, don’t you dare drink on the job!”

“Come on, Lin— Korra’s fine! When was the last time we took a walk together?” Kya pouted, looking up at Lin with big blue eyes.

She knew that her Bambi impression deserved Academy Awards, and Lin Beifong’s stoic face faltered for a second.

“In front of the boys? Really?” Lin’s gruff voice penetrated her thoughts.

Kya smirked, “Come on, you can’t handle a little bit of teasing? You’re not going to enjoy tonight then—”

“We can… uh… handle it, Chief,” Mako stammered awkwardly.

Lin rolled her eyes and let out a sigh, letting the Waterbender tug her along as they walked away from the two confused men. The Earthbender’s metal boots clicked along the marble steps, and Kya’s dark-skinned hand mischievously slipped into her pale one.

“Thanks, Chief. I missed you.”

“I missed you too, Kya. But maybe not order around my officers in front of me?”

“Someone’s ego is a little touchy.” Kya giggled, standing on her tippy toes and giving her soulmate a kiss. “Don’t worry, I’ve got other ways to be bossy around you…”

“Take a deep breath and clear your mind,” Jinora whispered calmly, facing Opal and closing her eyes.

“I know how to meditate, love. You don’t have to baby me.”

The nickname made Jinora snap an eye open inquisitively, and she looked into the older girl’s rapidly widening eyes.
“Sorry! It was reflexive!! S-sorry.”

“It’s alright— let’s just take out time and… uh… Spirit World?”

Opal nodded with an embarrassed pink tinge in her cheeks, “Spirit World.”

“Maybe Spirit World will be our always,” the younger girl snickered.

The two girls began laughing out loud, and Jinora slumped back against the wooden support column of the gazebo in a fit of giggles. Opal’s face was bright red from laughter and she ran a hand through her choppy black hair.

It felt good to laugh together.

“Alright… Xai Bao’s Grove?” the younger girl asked, wiping away a stray tear that’d slipped out from sniggering too hard.

“Sure. See you there.”

Jinora sat up straight and closed her eyes again, and for a moment— all was blank… and then she saw a person in front of her. Opal, in the darkness, floating towards the Spirit World with her. The Beifong’s olive eyes were up close— they were nose to nose.

Close enough to kiss.

Grassy and sky formed around them, albeit the odd colors of the magical realm, and Jinora blinked her wide brown eyes— taking a step back and letting out a few coughs. Opal shyly turned, her cheeks tinging pink, as she looked around.

“It’s still ever so beautiful,” the Beifong smiled.

Nothing compares to you, the younger girl thought sadly.

“Where are we headed?”

“I don’t know… I just always feel more at ease here— you know? There’s something so calming… er… when you’re in the Spirit World voluntarily.”

Opal smiled, “You’ve gone on some grand adventures in your lifetime, no?”

Jinora bit her lip and looked away. Why was this so easy? It shouldn’t be. Her heart shouldn’t belong to the older girl, not after what Opal had done. And yet she needed her back. Like water to a dying plant. The Beifong sensed this, grabbing the younger girl’s hand and kneeling down in the color changing grass, her choppy hair blowing around in the wind and her olive eyes as wide as golf balls;

“How do I fix us?”

Gods, that was the sincerest tone Jinora had ever heard. Her breath felt caught up in her throat and a lone tear slid down from her brown eyes.

“I don’t know, Opal… I just…”

“I love you, Jinora. If you want space, I can give you space. If you want to never see me again… I would do that. If you… want to give us a chance… I’ll work my ass off for you, anything you need. I am at your command.”
“What do you want, Opal?”

“For you to be happy,” the older girl stated clearly, enunciating every syllable and meaning every word.

Her heart felt as though it were quaking and trembling in her chest.

“You hurt me,” Jinora whispered.

Opal began crying, that soft and silent sob that you do when you’re reading a sad book, or watching Jack sink away from Rose… her head was nodding up and down and she looked at the tattooed hand that she still had a grip on.

“I did,” she managed to choke out. “I hurt so many people by leaving, by striking out at you… by using a suffering girl for my own selfishness… the hatred I feel for myself—”

“You were hurting too,” the younger girl interrupted.

Opal held up a tired hand, “That’s not an excuse. Not anymore.”

Jinora swallowed her fears and knelt down in the grass, a hand on Opal’s shoulder… and another… on her side… as though they were dancing a waltz, but sitting down. Gradually, she leaned forwards and slid her hands up so that she’d engulfed Opal in a warm, tight embrace.

“Hatred does not run through your blood, Opal. You are a free spirited girl, and you’ve steered yourself down some harsh paths… but that doesn’t mean you’ve been swept too far off course. You can fix this broken part of you—I promise.”

“How?” Opal whispered, her chin resting on her soulmate’s shoulder.

“Balance within yourself, whether or not the world outside yourself is balanced. You can do with your own energy something that takes gurus a hundred years to accomplish.”

“I don’t feel like a spiritual leader,” the Beifong girl chuckled bitterly.

“You don’t have to be. Your soul… is powerful in a way that differs from most. You can do anything you want—you just have to navigate yourself so that you don’t steer off the map again. Literally.”

This earned her another chuckle, and Jinora drew back to look at her; Opal’s eyes were bloodshot and still a little teary. She wiped her nose with the hem of her Airbending Robes and scooted a little bit away from Jinora. The loss of body heat and contact made Jinora shiver a tad… or perhaps it was something else altogether.

Should’ve just told her to get her shit together… but I suppose that’s not very spiritual, is it?

The Beifong girl stood up after a few moments, taking a deep breath and offering a hand to Jinora. She took it, feeling how rough and calloused Opal’s fingers had become—when she left Zaofu they were soft and smooth. A reminder of how she’d changed.

“How did you grow up to be so wise?”

“As Korra says… practice makes perfect,” Jinora smiled, allowing her former lover to pull her up.

Much like her hands and her scars… Opal Beifong was no longer soft and easy to push around… but despite how hardened and tough she had become… perhaps she might still move like a leaf in the
“How are you feeling?” Asami asked, searching through the darkness and gripping onto Korra’s warm hand.

“Besides the endless taunts from Kuvira? Cheery. I wish you didn’t have to see my butt like that. I mean… uh… sorry. My bad.”

Asami let out a soft sigh, “You know it’s okay to make a mistake— I’m not going to get offended.”

“I’m just still upset about it,” Korra admitted.

“Love… I don’t know what the future holds for us… but if I’m going to live like this for the rest of my life— I need you to work on accepting what has happened.”

“How can you be so calm about it, though?” her lover asked pleadingly, squeezing onto her hand tightly and not letting go.

Asami chewed the inside of her cheek in thought. To be perfectly frank… she deserved this. She’d been living such a horrible and misguided life— ready to hurt innocent people just because her father had raised her in such a manner. And though her Chakras had been opened and she’d learned to let go of the guilt and shame… she had a funny feeling that this was her big karma. That she would learn to live with this the way some of those poor kids out on the streets had to live with the loss of Bending. The way some of the Equalists would be rotting in jail for the rest of their lives. What goes around comes around— and karma had literally hit Asami smack dab in the face.

So she took her grief, and just like *Kya the Lillyweed-Smoking-Hippie* had taught her… she let it go.

“It is what it is,” Asami finally whispered, bending down and attempting to kiss Korra on the forehead.

Instead, the Avatar caught her by surprise— merging their lips together and pouring all of her emotions, her joys and frustrations, into the kiss.

“I love you so much.”

“I love you, too,” Asami giggled. “I’ve never felt this way about another human being, you know that? You’re the first and only person I ever have and ever will love this way.”

Korra pressed their mouths together with a pleased hum, running her fingers through Asami’s short hair. She had to admit, not having her sight amplified everything else, and the mere touch elected a wonderful sensation, making her gasp a little into Korra’s mouth.

She lightly tapped on her soulmate’s hip, and the Avatar slowly scooted over with a grunt— her thigh still sore from the confrontation. Asami crawled into the bed, slowly feeling her way around for the sheets and pulling them up to their shoulders. Intertwining their legs and lacing her fingers with Korra’s, Asami Sato fell asleep listening to her soulmate’s smooth, toned back rise and fall… like an
When Hikaru came in with dinner, she set the covered-plates down with a smirk and closed the windows— lest the room catch a draft. The pregnant woman pressed a kiss to both of their heads and whispered good night.

Air Temple Island was at peace once again.

Chapter End Notes

For lexitania... elderly gays. The next few chapters are nice and happy. I think.

Leave Comments!!
Tulips

Chapter Summary

“It takes as much energy to wish as it does to plan.”

— Eleanor Roosevelt

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Opal sat up with a gasp, pulling the covers off her legs and scurrying out of the room. Her heart was pounding and with a quick check she realized that her energy was doing leaps and circles rather than swinging back and forth like the Lion Turtle had taught her.

She walked out into the moonlight and sighed, listening for the other energies on the island.

There it was again.

Asami Sato had a bright, unwavering energy that the Beifong could sense all the way from over here. It didn’t make any damn sense.

She sat on the edge of the cliff and stared up at the moon.

“You always made good decisions, Yue,” she whispered. “You were so selfless in your sacrifice… what should I do?”

But a moon does as a moon is, she remained silent and continuing in her vigilance over Republic City. Opal let out a sigh and laid back on the ground, staring up at the stars and attempting to sense each of their energies— light years away from her.

Yes… like the little dots they were to her, she could feel a light energy swirling around the universe. It was truly beautiful.

But what good is the superpower to sense the poetic side of things?

Footsteps wandered up.

“One-thirty-seven… one-thirty-eight,” a female voice muttered somewhere behind her.

Opal turned and her eyes widened as she scrambled to pull none other than Asami away from the cliff. The ex-heiress let out a yelp but leaned into the Airbender’s touch as together they calmly walked away from the edge.

“You do realize you almost fell, right?”

“Who is that? Opal?”

“Yeah,” she answered with a nod— and then chiding herself for the gesture.
“Oh… I thought it was two-hundred steps to the cliff.”

“Have you been counting?” Opal asked curiously.

“Yes. I’m trying to map out the island… while Korra and I are staying here,” Asami admitted.

“Come here, let’s sit.”

Opal guided the blind woman to a grassy spot overlooking the Probending Arena— not that Asami could see anything, but at least the area was comfortable to sit at. Opal let out a sigh and turned to her.

“Can’t sleep, either?”

“Something woke me up… and I didn’t want to disturb Korra— she needs her rest. I dunno… I just felt… a person calling out to me.”

“So you decided to walk straight off a cliff,” Opal teased her.

“I mean— you were there to catch me… maybe my unconscious ears heard you.”

The Airbender stiffened. Sitting next to Asami… the engineer radiated her energy for some reason— it didn’t make any sense. Nobody else had this same effect. It wasn’t an emotional connection or anything, though Opal supposed that after everything that had transpired that they were good friends. No, this was something different; like if Asami was wearing strong perfume— only with her energy. Her soul. How strange.

“Earth to Beifong?”

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to daydream.”

“Not that I can tell, but I thought it was nighttime,” Asami joked.

“Erm… yeah… just got a lot on my mind.”

“Do you… do you want to talk about it?” the engineer asked, searching out and managing to put her hand on Opal’s knee.

Puff!

“I… uh… sorry… I was distracted… again…”

Asami bit her lip, “It’s alright if you don’t want to talk about it.”

Puff!

“You didn’t… you didn’t happen to feel that, did you?” Opal asked, looking around for a hidden Ikki or Meelo.

It was just like her first night on the Lion Turtle island, or the time that Hikaru thought Suki was Airbending… something was afoot, and Opal couldn’t understand it.

“Feel what?”

Puff!
“That!”

“No,” Asami shrugged, “You sure are a strange girl, Opal Beifong. First knocking on my door with the whole ‘energy’ thing, and now you’re feeling things that aren’t there? I mean… they could be there, and I wouldn’t know… but still. Sorry…I don’t really have a way with words at one in the morning.”

“It’s okay… I was just certain that— nevermind. I’ll guide you back to your room?” the Airbender offered.

Not that the blind girl had any choice.

“Thanks.”

Along the way, Opal had her hand lightly resting on Asami’s elbow as they walked down the trail. Opal silently sent out gusts of air, detecting the vibrations in the environment surrounding them—the way her grandmother did with her feet. She frowned when she felt an unstable portion of the cliff ahead.

“Here… I can feel something up ahead, walk to my right,” she warned Asami.

Sure enough, the rocks crumbled into Yue Bay when they walked past, disturbed by their footprints—and the hundreds of others that preceded them.

“How did you do that?” Asami asked curiously.

“I use Airbending at night to detect vibrations—a tactic I borrowed from my grandma,” the younger girl explained.

“You just send out puffs, and you feel the air around you?”

“Yes! Yes, exactly!! You’re the first person to understand what I’m doing. Nobody else wants to try it.”

The engineer’s energy was glowing insanely bright, to the point that Opal was getting a headache as they stopped in the courtyard. She rubbed her temple and let out a huff.

“You’re driving me crazy, you know that?”

“I beg your pardon?” Asami scoffed.

“Like I told you, your energy is something out of this world!! I can’t understand it!! Maybe…”

“What?”

“Can I tap into your energy? To see what’s going on?”

Asami raised one of her damaged eyebrows, but the expression in the moonlight did not go unnoticed by Opal, “Uh… no?”

Puff!

“I’m not going to do anything bad! Sorry, I know it sounds really weird, but I learned Energybending a while back— and ever since we got back from the… hangar attack… your vitality has been really vibrant.”
“Usually people take you to dinner first before asking you if they can ‘tap into your energies’,”
Asami smirked.

“No! Not like that! I didn’t mean… Spiritual stuff, Sato!!”

A hand reached out and fumbled until it managed to squeeze her shoulder, “Maybe some other
time… I’m just too tired right now.”

Opal let out a sigh and guided the ex-heiress to her room, making sure she’d situated herself in with
Korra before walking back to her room. Five steps away from the doorway to the couple’s room, it
happened again.

Puff!

The Beifong shook her head, deciding that she was indeed slightly delirious from a lack of sleep—
opening the door to her bedroom and stumbling down into the uncomfortable, but familiar mattress.
A mystery for another day, perhaps.

It’s strange what things have lost their allure to her— when she first learned how to use a glider she
couldn’t imagine wanting anything more in life. What more is there to do when you can fly? And
then when they were in the Earth Kingdom she felt as though she’d found a purpose— what better to
do than help those in need? And when she’d finally become lovers, it was as if she’d become
complete— what more is there to search for when your other half has been your best friend for six
years?

Not that Opal had lost an allure for Jinora… but it’s as though a fog had been cleared.

She’d been handed her soulmate on a silver platter— just as she’d grown up in a palace, she didn’t
think twice of it. And when she finally had to work to win her back… she was absolutely stumped.

How do you win back a Spiritual Leader? One of only two living Airbending Masters? A person
who can turn herself into a turquoise projection and visit any place in the world without leaving her
bedroom?

“You know… I’ve always thought of you as my equal.”

Opal jumped in the air, startling the Lemur that she’d been giving a scratch behind the ear.

“Sorry— I suppose I was thinking… loudly?”

“It’s alright… do you need someone to talk to?” Jinora asked, looking over from the gazebo.

“Yeah. I think so.”

The Airbending Master walked over with a curious gaze, “So um… well, I was going to say ‘what’s
on your mind?’, but that’s kind of redundant.”

Opal smiled, looking up at the clouds, “Yeah.”

“You don’t think well of yourself? You’re the only member of your family that can Airbend… you’re the only non-Avatar Energybender! That’s pretty impressive.”

They were walking along the beach, but Opal had to turn and give her former lover a sharp gaze.

“Those were given to me, though. What you’ve accomplished… how important you are to the world… to all of us on this island… to me… you’re practically as powerful as Korra! I don’t think anyone can equate… to… you…”

She trailed off as Jinora’s brown eyes gazed at her in wonder.

“You really think that?” the Airbending Master whispered, her warm breath mixing with Opal’s in the winter air.

“Of course. I always have. And I always shall.”

Soft lips pressed against her own, and for a moment Opal didn’t know how to respond. But before she could reciprocate the gesture, or grip onto what once belonged to her… Jinora had turned, walking up the marble steps and noticeably wiping a tear away.

It was obvious, to the Beifong at least, that a simple kiss had not changed anything between them, and somehow Opal’s heart was heavier now that it was before.

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She didn’t have a good idea of how to fix the situation until Baatar asked her when the last time was that they saw the city sights together. She didn’t want to admit it out loud, but she was super relieved that it’s just some alone time between the two of them— she totally knew what the lovebirds were doing under the table the other day and genuinely ran to throw up after they’d left.

At any rate, they’d rented some bicycles from a shop at the pier and were riding past Harmony Tower when she saw the cute stand, filled to the brim with flower arrangements.

“Do you have any money on you?”

“Huh?” Baatar asked, looking up from the map of the city, “Oh, um… I think Kuvira has my card right now… I only brought cash for the bikes.”

“Shame,” she frowned, looking at the stand. “I wanted to grab some flowers to bring to Jinora.”

“Hey sis?”

“Yeah?”

“In my experience— you’ll want to hand-pick them.”
Opal rolled her eyes until she realized that Baatar’s finger was resting on the words “Republic City Park”.

“Baatar, no.”

“Baatar, yes.”

“That’s theft, technically.”

“Opal, our Aunt is the Chief— we’re not going to get arrested.”

“Baatar, that’s the EXACT SAME mentality that kicked Mom out of Republic City!!”

“Mom was robbing banks; we’re just picking flowers— it’ll be fine!!”

Somehow, not thirty minutes later, Opal Beifong was biking out of a park as fast as her feet could carry her— with a huge pile of tulips resting on her handlebars and a great big goofball grin on her brother’s face.

“You are a devilish bastard!” she called behind her.

“I got it from Grandma!!”

Their snickers echoed off of the alleys and buildings as they zoomed back to Air Temple Island, and Opal can’t help but feel a little giddy and careless— Kai would be proud.


“Coming!” the voice on the other side of the paper thin wall called.

Opal stifled a nervous gulp (like the kind that cartoon characters always do) and straightened her posture. A groggy smile met her, eyes widening at the realization that Opal has brought her a rather large arrangement. And the Beifong knows that Jinora knows that… it’s handpicked.

“Thank you,” Jinora whispered, taking the homemade bouquet and setting in a clay vase on the shelf. “They’re beautiful. I’ve always loved the colors of tulips.”

Opal smiled— feeling as though the small victory might be a small step as well, “Would you like to meditate?”

Jinora reciprocated the smile, nodding and grabbing a hoodie, “I’d love to.”

And suddenly the small victory seemed a little bigger, and the small step seemed like a tentative leap, like a child skipping on stepping stones. She followed Jinora not to the gazebo, but the cliffs that have a perfect view of the sunset (not that the gazebo lacked this, but it was away from the temple that you began to realize that such a thing as silence exists).

They sat down on the sunbaked ground that’s still a little warm, and just before Opal closed her eyes… she realized that Jinora’s holding her hands with a small smile. The tattooed girl’s eyelids were closed but some part of Opal knew that she was still very present in the mortal world… perhaps waiting for the Beifong’s reaction.
She could count twenty different times during their hour of meditation in which Jinora stealthily squeezed her hands.

And she’d never felt more love for the world than during that hour.

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“One-twenty-five… one-twenty-six…”

“You’re doing it again!” a soft voice called out.

Asami didn’t know what time it was, but she assumed that it was late enough in the night that the person could be none other than Opal. She didn’t want to address the issue out loud, but every single night for the past week… she’d been waking up at a certain time, listening to Opal wander through the hallways and then wrapping Korra’s arm back around her stomach.

Tonight, though, she’s tired and wants to end this strange schedule.

“Well, I only do it because I know that I have you to catch me,” Asami teased. “I mean… actually… I came up here for a different reason.”

“Oh?”

“What you said the other night… about tapping into my energy? I thought about it and I realized that I’m okay with it— if you think it would make you feel better.”

“It’s not that I feel bad or anything,” Opal explained sheepishly. “I’m just… really confused about… well… everything. But the energy inside you? It baffles me.”

“Well— go ahead and do what it is you’re going to do,” Asami said, a hand on her hip. She really wanted to get some sleep— and being awoken every single night at the same time was beginning to piss her off.

She heard Opal take a deep breath and ask her to kneel on the ground. The engineer made a confused face but knelt before the younger girl, feeling as though she were a beggar kneeling before a king.

“I’m just going to see what’s going on inside… okay?”

“Yeah, sounds good.”

Opal’s thumb rested on her scarred and ruined forehead, and for a moment ex-heiress felt nothing. Then, all of a sudden— it’s as though they’re floating through space together! Opal and Asami weaving around past stars and yet never even leaving the ground!!

Not quite as though she had her sight back, and yet Asami felt as though she could sense everything in the known universe.

“We are all connected, all of our energies are one, Asami,” Opal’s voice called out.
It was as if the two girls were one dynamism, fused together as the Beifong continued Energybending her.

“So what makes me so special?” Asami retorted.

“Can you feel your energy inside yourself? Swinging back and forth?”

The ex-heiress tried to listen for her own life force within herself, and don’t get me wrong… she believed in reincarnation and souls and Chakras and cosmic power… but this was different. Asami listened for who she was within herself, and how she connected to the furthest reaches of space and to the tiniest bacteria on the ground next to her.

Her own energy was not swinging back and forth as Opal suggested… but resting still. Waiting.

“Most curious.”

“What?” Asami asked.

“I think… that your energy and mine… are tethered somehow… let’s return to the real world.”

Not that it mattered, but Asami opened her eyes and once again felt the cold winter air surrounding her. The chittering of Lemurs waking everybody up and Sky Bison snoring in the stables. She heard Opal walk around, muttering to herself and lost in thought.

“Can I Energybend now or something?” the engineer asked skeptically.

Opal laughed, “Oh no, I don’t think I’m that powerful— you’ll have to catch the Lion Turtle for that one. But… I think I have an idea of what I’m supposed to do now.”

“What do you mean?”

She felt the Beifong’s thumb press against her forehead again, and a hand resting on her shoulder. All of a sudden… she felt something swirling around inside. Dancing around.

Like a leaf in the wind.

Fire
Air
Water
Earth
Light
Dark
Spirits
Energy

Though Asami couldn’t see it— she felt as though the two girls were glowing in the midnight-ridden
courtyard as Opal continued focusing on Bending her energy. After a few seconds, Asami felt Opal’s thumb leave her forehead. She heard the younger girl take a few steps back and sigh.

“I think… I just…”

There was only one way to tell.

Using a martial arts move that she’d mastered when she was nine— Asami twirled and kicked Opal in the direction of her shins. Except her feet didn’t collide with the Beifong’s legs.

The Air shooting out from Asami’s toes did.

A surprise attack that certainly knocked the younger girl off her balance— suddenly the courtyard was filled with laughter as Opal engulfed Asami into a hug.

“Can you feel that?! Your energy…”

“It’s swinging back and forth like it’s supposed to, yeah. I can feel it, like you showed me… so that means…”

“Asami Sato… you’re an Airbender now. We start training tomorrow.”

End of Part Four

Chapter End Notes

whoop.

Leave Comments!!
Ikki’s Anointment

Chapter Summary

“My body is my journal, and my tattoos are my story.”

— Johnny Depp

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Ten Weeks Later:

Not quite an ancient tradition, Jinora had asked her father if she could be the one to do Ikki’s tattoos. She’d come up with the idea that each new Master could be initiated by the previous one, and Dad had given her an amused approval. With a sister’s love, she ran her fingers through hair that soon wouldn’t be there anymore.

“It’s okay to be nervous,” Jinora said calmly.

Ikki blinked and then words shot out of her mouth at one-hundred miles per hour;

“Oh thank goodness I wasn’t sure if I’m allowed to say anything but did we have to do the ceremony in the winter my hair keeps me so warm and now you’re going to shave it off and speaking of which I don’t trust you one bit with that razor if you leave a patch on my head or make a funny pattern I will break the oath I swear to god but in all seriousness do the tattoo’s hurt for very long because I totally want to get them and all but I feel like it’s going to hurt a lot are you supposed to put cream on them or something how do you keep yours so blue I swear Dad’s tattoos are fading—”

“Ikki?”

“Yeah?”

“Shut up,” the older girl mused.

Her sister stuck out her tongue, but nevertheless sat still while Jinora calmly cut her hair— it was easier to shave when it was only an inch long or so. Her sister was all but naked, save for her bra and underwear; though admittedly much to the acolyte’s dismay, the three of them did used to run around the island in their birthday suits when they were toddlers.

Soon, she’d be wearing the same golden robe that Dad and Jinora wore for their ceremonies, and the older sister couldn’t help but feel excited at the prospect of their culture beginning to grow and thrive again. She only wished that Aang could see it happen; perhaps she would take Ikki and introduce the two of them. She had a funny feeling that her younger sister got her ludicrous-speed talking from their grandfather.
“Oh, it’s already so cold,” Ikki complained, shivering a little.

“Winter’s almost over, quit your bellyaching.”

Not that they were on a tight schedule, she had a few hours to finish the whole process, but Jinora couldn’t wait to get to the tattoos— which meant that she was hurrying through the trimming of her sister’s precious hair.

“Here we go!” Jinora said in a sing-song voice.

“If you cut me I will end you,” Ikki threatened.

The Airbending Master smiled and began carefully shaving Ikki’s head bald. It wasn’t too slow of a process, but she was sure to respect her sister’s wishes and be careful. Besides, the ceremony wasn’t as cool if you had shaving cuts all over your head.

“It’s a good thing that Dad let me do this. He has really shaky hands— he must’ve nicked me three or four times during my session.”

“What didn’t you let Mom do it then?”

“Hmmm… there’s something about a Master giving you the tattoos that makes it more… spiritual.”

“Cool.”

Jinora stifled a laughter— for though Ikki had gone through every single set and mastered them with care, she was still a little carefree when it came to spiritual matters. At least she could actually meditate— ten years later and Meelo still fell asleep during sessions.

“So how’s your girlfriend?” Ikki asked nonchalantly.

“We’re not back together.”

“Sure, sure— you two just make those sad, lingering puppy eyes whenever you see each other. I’ve got a bet going with Ryu; he says you guys won’t get together for another six months. I say that you’ve only got one more month before your willpower crumbles!”

“Ikki!!”

“What? I’m just saying.”

“Don’t tell me you’re actually putting money into this,” Jinora groaned. “I can’t exactly take your tattoos away, and you know that betting is frowned upon!”

“Hey, lighten up!” her sister smirked, “We’re betting chores.”

“Well for the sake of your precious responsibilities, Opal and I are not back together!”

“Sure, she just brings you flowers every day,” Ikki teased.

“What if I tattooed ‘kiss my ass’ on your forehead, hmm?” Jinora asked with a slightly serious tone.

That effectively ended all conversation surrounding her love life. That being said, her sister’s comments stuck around in her head for the rest of the session.
“All done,” Jinora whispered in a happy tone.

Ikki looked at herself in the mirror and smiled, turning and giving her sister a long, loving hug. The blue tattoos went really well with her sister’s silver eyes—and Jinora stifled a smirk at the prospect that some of the younger Airbenders might start courting her.

“They look beautiful,” her younger sister murmured softly.

And for once, she’d said her words slowly and carefully.

“Come on… it’s time for the ceremony. I’ll go get Mom, stay here.”

“Sure thing,” Ikki said, distractedly looking at her new azure covered hands.

Jinora walked down the hallway, weaving past Airbenders and Acolytes who all gave her excited thumbs up. Her heart fluttered a little in excitement as she entered the courtyard, giving her mother and father a kiss on the cheek.

“All done? You’re a lot faster than when I did your ink,” Tenzin chuckled.

He stood and led Pema into the dormitories, to the special room reserved for tattooing. Jinora sat down at the tea table with her aunt and uncle, who each gave her a wide smile and ruffled her short, brown hair.

“Did you tattoo ‘kick me’ on her back?” Bumi snickered mischievously.

“Bumi!!” her aunt Kya chided. “Have some respect for our culture!!”

Though her uncle is an Airbender now, it still catches Jinora a little off guard when she reminds herself that she’s part Water Tribe through her grandmother, and part Earth Kingdom through her mother. It catches her more off guard when she reminds herself that her aunt and uncle are half Air Nomad.

Bumi looks the most like a mixture, fitting right in with the rest of Republic City. He also took to wearing his old uniform again, not being one for the yellow and orange robes—though it did stretch tightly around his middle, his combat and athletic years were far gone.

“Were you nervous?” Kya asked, an arm draped around Jinora’s shoulders.

“Not so much nervous as annoyed. My sister never shuts up.”

This earned her roaring laughter from the two of them.

Though she didn’t care what color they were, people often complemented her on the way her Glider Suit matched her hair. With Baatar’s help, they’d designed suits for the rest of the Air Nomads to be able to fly around like Jinora could, without a bulky staff. That, and the strip of cloth that lightly covered her eyes to let others know of her disability, and Asami Sato looked like a completely different person.
She felt like a different person, too.

The small puffs of air that left her fingertips felt more and more natural with each passing day. Though she supposed that her newfound method of getting around wasn’t nearly as accurate as Toph Beifong’s seismic sense, the fact that she can walk around and identify who she was speaking to made her content enough.

Korra’s hand slipped into her own, “I’m so excited. The ceremonies are beautiful.”

Asami knew that the Avatar wasn’t only speaking about the sight of the ritual in question, but also of the sounds—all of the Acolytes and Airbenders that were chittering excitedly about seeing Ikki with her tattoos, the smell of the incense during the ceremony, and the songs played on chimes and other Air Nomad instruments.

“Will you be participating?” Asami asked.

“I could, since I’m technically an Airbender… but I think I just want to watch you up there.”

It’s been quite the big leap—going from one of the leaders of the largest corporations in the world to a humble monk. And Asami couldn’t feel happier. She missed designing, but Baatar always let her sit with him and run her hands over whatever he was tinkering on. And she didn’t miss the boring executive meetings, either.

Still… she missed being able to drive.

But being able to fly made up for it tenfold.

“Yes ready?”

“Of course, love,” she answered with a huge grin.

Korra tugged her along, and Asami’s heart plummeted for a few seconds as they too did. The ground was no longer beneath her feet as they fell, but when she grabbed at the straps at her thighs, everything leveled out.

She followed the sound of Korra’s voice up through the air, basking in the pressure of the wind against her face as she twirled around, loop-de-loops and all.

“Show off!” her soulmate laughed.

“Oh shush!!” she called back, taking a swift dive towards the water—following the feel of the mist on her face and sending out several puffs of air to “see” where the bay was (lest she actually plunge into the drink).

Korra’s hand laced with hers as they flew along the horizon of the water, small waves occasionally splashing up against Asami’s feet.

“I never get tired of this!” the ex-heiress called out with a laugh.

“Just you wait, one of these days we’ll fly across the Earth Kingdom!! All the way to Ba Sing Sei!!” Korra shouted, her voice slowly ascending back up into the clouds.

Asami followed, allowing the air around her to push her up, up, and away.

She thanked Opal every single day for this new gift.
“You need anything? A hot pad? Some water? I can grab some music if you want!!” Bolin whispered nervously.

“Love, he’s not due for another two weeks— calm down,” Hikaru murmured, pressing her lips to her fiancé’s forehead.

The Earthbender weaved his fingers through hers, “Sorry… I’m just really excited, and I wanna make sure that you’re comfortable. I mean, I know that birth is really painful and all, but you’re the strongest girl I’ve ever met— maybe even more than Korra.”

“Oh I doubt that,” the Firebender laughed, reaching out and slowly pulling Bolin onto the couch with her.

“Huka!! I’m home!!” her sister called out, opening the door and slamming it shut.

They’d moved back into their old apartment, now that the Equalists had all but scattered. All of the Triads were currently in a truce— after realizing that they, as well as the citizens, needed to recuperate from the years of Equalist attacks. It wasn’t really peace, more of a cease-fire. Which meant that Hikaru could relax somewhat.

“Hey there!” Kuvira called out, walking through the kitchen and setting Suki’s backpack in the hallway. Baatar also walked in, with a case of beer in one hand and a latte for Hikaru in the other.

“Thanks for picking her up from school,” the pregnant woman smiled.

Baatar sat on the arm chair next to them and popped his beer open, “No problem— is the game on yet?”

“Naw, still just commercials,” Bolin said, shaking his head. “Hey, I’ve been meaning to ask… when is the wedding for you two?”

Kuvira, embarrassed, rubbed the back of her neck, “We’re… uh… still planning the date…”

“I swear to Gods… Bo and I are going to be married before you two… Opal and Jinora are going to be married before you two!!”

“They’re not back together!” Baatar defended.

“Yeah— the sexual tension between them is so thick you could cut it with a knife,” Hikaru laughed.

“Let’s not talk about my sister sinning while I’m in the room,” Kuvira groaned, sitting down at the base of the couch and leaning up where the Firebender could redo her braid.

Bolin grabbed the remote with a chuckle and switched the channel back to Probending. The Fire Ferret’s match was tonight.

“I gotta admit, it’s a good way to make money,” Kuvira smirked, clearly amused at Kanji, Rune, and Akara beating the shit out of a rookie team during their match.

“Maybe I’ll call up Eun and we can reform the Ba Sing Sei Badgermoles,” Hikaru chuckled.
“Oooooohhh no. I am not in the mood to feel this one get bruised over and over again,” Baatar groaned.

“Man, looking back on it— it’s no wonder the two of us were always in pain,” Bolin chuckled, looking at his fiancé and giving her a quick kiss. “Can you imagine the matches way back when… us pitted against one another?!”

“Oh… that means you must’ve felt the time I broke my leg during a really nasty match against the Tigerdillos…” Hikaru trailed off, her cheeks turning red.

Bolin ignored the retching sounds that Baatar and Kuvira were making as he gave the Firebender a lingering, passionate kiss.

“I don’t mind it in the slightest, my dear.”

“You guys shush! We’ve got two hours till the ceremony, and I’ve got thirty bucks against Korra on the Fire Ferrets!” Kuvira smirked.

Overall, the anointment was rather pleasant and undoubtedly beautiful. Ikki was nervously shaking the whole time, but when Jinora pulled back the hood and the crowd respectfully clapped, her sister let out a big sigh, turned, and engulfed her family in a strong hug. The rest of the Airbenders, including Asami, swirled the incense around in a beautiful pattern above their heads.

After the ceremony came a wonderful feast, in Ikki’s honor— along with dancing and games. The floor was filled with couples, Bolin carefully swaying a heavily pregnant Hikaru around, Korra and Asami moving so quickly around the floor that it looked as though they were sparring, her own parents having a tender moment in the corner, Ikki pulling Kai around in circles. Jinora couldn’t stop laughing at professional dancer Kuvira trying to get her bumbling and gumbling fiancé out onto the floor.

“I’m too clumsy, Kuv!” Baatar argued.

The Metalbender relentlessly tried to pull him out of his wooden chair, “Come on, sweetie— one dance won’t hurt you!!”

Eventually, the music slowed down from the quick traditional Air Nomad music to the slow, harmonic Water Tribe melodies that Ikki had requested. Jinora’s feet tapped on the floor as the couples thinned out on the dance floor and those who remained danced in close proximity.

“M-may I have this dance?” someone behind her asked, putting a hesitant hand on her shoulder.

Jinora turned, suddenly facing Opal Beifong. Her olive eyes were wide and nervously flashing back and forth between the Airbending Master and the dance floor.

The younger girl smiled, “Of course.”

Opal let out a small sigh in relief and hesitantly took Jinora’s hands, walking backwards as she led
her soulmate onto the floor. For a few moments, the two of them didn’t know how to hold themselves, merely swaying around on the spot.

Someone bumped into her from behind, pushing Jinora up against Opal.

“Ummm… sorry…”

“Don’t be. Asami doesn’t really know where she’s going. And Korra can’t dance.”

“I heard that!!” the blind woman called out as the Avatar twirled her around.

Opal and Jinora chuckled for a moment, and then turned back to face each other. Wordlessly, the ex-couple began moving around the room, in a traditional Water Tribe waltz (Aunt Kya loved to hold workshops on the Island, but that was probably because she was too high for Tenzin to stop her).

“Did your mother ever teach you dancing?” Jinora whispered.

Opal’s lips were next to her ear, “No, but Kuvira quickly remedied that before I left to join the Air Nomads.”

“You’re really good at it,” Jinora commented with a blush.

She heard her former girlfriend smirk, “Thank you.”

It felt so natural to be in each other’s arms again, and though the dance was purely platonic… Jinora couldn’t help but hope that it wasn’t. Opal had been working so hard on reinstating herself in the passive Air Nomad culture. And Ikki hadn’t been lying— the older girl did go out and handpick Jinora flowers once every two or three days. It was more of a gesture of apology than any attempt to woo the Airbending Master again, and yet the younger girl undoubtedly fell in love with Opal each time a new bouquet was presented to her. Her grip on the Beifong’s shoulders tightened.

“I was wondering if…”

“Yes?”

“Would you like to go out for dinner tomorrow? My treat?” Opal asked, drawing back and looking into Jinora’s wide brown eyes.

Another blush crept up on the younger girl’s cheeks, “Of course.”

The song chose a perfect moment to end, and as people around them were clapping at the band for their spectacular talent at music, Jinora realized that their lips were inching closer and closer by the second…

“— pardon me, Miss Beifong? I was wondering if I might have a dance with my lovely niece?” Uncle Bumi asked, gently pushing them apart.

Opal’s face looked a little downtrodden, but instead of protesting, she merely clapped Bumi on the back with a merry smile, “Of course, Commander. Give her a few dizzying twirls for me.”

Needless to say, Jinora took great care to step on his toes all throughout the dance.
Chapter End Notes

Yay!! Fluff!!
Cheesy Pickup Lines at Harmony Tower

Chapter Summary

"Incredibile! The more we learn about the world, the less we seem to know!!"

- Sofia Sartor, AC Revelations

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Wow…” Opal murmured, “You look gorgeous.”

Jinora blushed, running her hands through her styled hair, “Um… thanks. You’re looking wonderful too.”

The Beifong had opted to wear a tuxedo, a dark green suit that Kuvira had loaned her, complete with one of Baatar’s bowties and a hydrangea in her lapel. Her hair was pulled back into a small bun, save for a few loose strands that fell loose in front—but it made her look even sexier. She could tell by the way Jinora kept stealing glances as the waiter took them to table.

On the other hand, Jinora was currently wearing a beautiful sunset-colored dress complemented with blue and purple Water Tribe jewelry. With her sandals on and her dress stopping just above her knees, Opal could see the blue arrows on her feet, the stipes running up her legs and winding around her thighs. Jinora’s short brown hair obviously had product in it, slicked back slightly and making the breath in Opal’s throat hitch.

They slid into the booth, and Opal made a reminder to herself to profusely thank Kuvira for loaning her some money for dinner—along with the suit.

“How was your day?” the older girl asked with a nervous smile.

“It was alright, I suppose. I think it’s quickly getting better though,” Jinora murmured, taking a sip of water to hide her blush.

“You charmer.”

She couldn’t believe how natural it was to do this—in fact the more she thought about it, she’d never gone on a real fancy date like this when she was actually with Jinora…

“How’s training Asami going?”

“Really well!” Opal beamed, “She’s mastered the Air Scooter, and I’m going to try to teach her how to play Air Ball tomorrow.”

Jinora gave her a wide smile, “I can’t think of a better teacher for the job.”

Now it was the Beifong’s turn to blush. Her eyes wandered down to the table, where Jinora’s pale and blue fingers were resting. Her own ebony digits slowly inched closer, threatening to intertwine. She realized with a smile that the younger girl’s hand was slowly moving towards her own—
“Here you are, ladies!”

The two ex-lovers broke apart, startled. A waiter set down two vegetarian dishes in front of them and gave a low bow. Opal flashed him a dirty look for interrupting their moment, but his back was already turned—off to serve another couple.

“This looks delicious,” Jinora commented, taking a bite and letting out a moan.

It took everything in Opal’s willpower not to kiss her on the spot. Her soulmate looked so beautiful and was acting so cute and uuuuuuugghhhhhhh!!!

“How’s your meal?”

“It’s great!” Opal said, taking a searing bite of eggplant to show off her enthusiasm. “Just great!”

This made Jinora laugh, and the younger girl put her hand on top of Opal’s to keep herself from falling over as her she continued cackling like a hyena. The contact of Jinora’s hand against hers felt like pure bliss, and Opal did the stupid brave thing by intertwining their fingers.

“Thanks for coming out on a date with me,” the Beifong whispered.

Soft brown eyes looked into hers with a mixture of longing and sadness, “It’s been a tough six or seven months… you know?”

“Yeah… I know.”

Jinora looked down at their tangled fingers, running her thumb over Opal’s knuckles. The older girl’s heart jumped up several feet in the air and she scooted closer to the Airbending Master.

“Jinora?”

“Y-Yeah?” the younger girl stammered, looking up.

“I love you.”

“I… I love you, too, Opal.”

Ever so faintly, the older girl cupped the back of Jinora’s head, her other hand threading through product-laced hair and gently pulling the younger girl closer. Scratch that, the Airbending Master was leaning closer to Opal.

Their lips met softly and briefly, before the Beifong pulled away. She didn’t deserve to kiss Jinora for any longer than a few seconds. Plus, she wasn’t one much for PDA. One forehead pressed against another and Jinora’s hands meticulously slithered around the older girl’s stomach.

“Opal…”

“Jinora.”

“I… What does this mean?”

“Sweetie… if you’re not ready for us to be together again, I can wait. I’ll wait as long as you want,” Opal whispered.

“No. No, I want us to be back together. I’ve gone without you for too long.”
“As you wish, my love.”

The younger girl giggled a little— Opal let out a happy sigh through her nose and kissed Jinora on the forehead, and then very chastely on the lips. With a small smirk, she gestured that they return to their meals.

“You wanna know something?”

“What?” the younger girl asked, looking up from her dinner.

“I’m still going to work so hard to keep you, Jinora. I’m never letting you go.”

The blush that met her was worth it, and Jinora’s hand never left Opal’s thigh all throughout the meal.

_____________________________________________

“She’s asleep?” Kuvira asked, walking up to the couch.

Asami smiled and ran her fingers through Korra’s hair, “Yeah. I was just about to take her to bed.”

“I can carry her if you want.”

“Thank you.”

The Metalbender playfully let out a grunt as she picked the Avatar up and cradled her bridal style—walking from the large lounging room of Air Temple Island towards the dormitories. The blind woman kept a light hand on Kuvira’s shoulder as they walked down the hallways.

“How are you doing?” Asami asked curiously.

“Good! Baatar’s latest software program got noticed by Varrick Global, and he has an interview in a week to see if they’d like to buy it.”

“That’s terrific!” the ex-heiress whispered.

Kuvira shifted the weight of a slumbering Korra in her arms, who let out a few groggy sentences as Asami opened the bedroom door. The Metalbender set the snoozing Avatar down on the bed and pulled the covers over her best friend. Asami grabbed Kuvira’s hand and led her back towards the lounging room.

“When was the last time we had drinks together?” Asami mused, headed towards Bumi’s liquor cabinet.

“I thought that Air Nomads didn’t approve of alcohol,” Kuvira teased.

“Korra told me that Tenzin gave up enforcing that rule as soon as Kya and Bumi came to live on the island. Just a quick nightcap,” the former engineer laughed.

Kuvira couldn’t help but smile at the sound of the old Asami Sato slipping through the sentence. She
playfully slapped the blind woman’s hand aside before she could accidentally choose something a little too strong for the Metalbender’s taste. Settling on a bottle of Bacardi and fetching some of Hikaru’s Coca Cola’s from the fridge, she sat down at the table and mixed together a pair of drinks.

“Sounds tasty!”

“Wait ‘till you try it,” Kuvira smirked.

When she handed the glass over to Asami, the ex-heiress leaned up against the Metalbender, intertwining their legs and letting out a content sigh.

“It’s funny, you know,” she smiled.

“What?” Kuvira asked, taking a sip of her drink.

“I never thought that this would be the outcome when I first became friends with you and Korra and the others.”

Kuvira quickly took another sip. She was not discussing tragic backstories while sober. Asami’s head quickly leaned against her shoulder and Kuvira squeezed her other best friend’s hand.

“What… what was your first plan?”

“To get close to Korra and find out how to take her down. It was so easy at first—the amount of hatred I felt for everyone made it easy to forget that you all were actual people.”

“What changed?” Kuvira asked softly, putting her arm around Asami’s shoulder.

“I think I started feeling something other than animosity when Jinora was shot… I was so upset that a young girl was mercilessly attacked for no reason. I made her that Glider Suit because I felt so sorry. And then… I learned that my mother was the one who helped create the Art Museum. I felt so much pain and confusion over my feelings for Korra that… I went… I went and…”

“You don’t have to finish,” Kuvira whispered solemnly.

Asami shook her head, “No, I need to get it out. I shot Hikaru— and I instantly regretted it. And I was growing so close to Korra… I felt trapped between two worlds. I didn’t want to outright betray my father and at the same time I was falling in love with the Avatar. The Bendiest Bender to Ever Bend!”

This earned the former engineer a string of laughs from Kuvira, who’s belly was shaking so hard from giggling that it began to hurt.

“Sorry… sorry, please continue.”

Asami flashed a smile, “Yeah, looking back on it… I was pretty silly, wasn’t I? Anyways— I think it was the day that I watched Ikki and Meelo build a mandala, seeing them wipe it away after so hard on it. I began to wonder if I could just wipe my past away. Eventually I contacted Hikaru and met her in an alley… I revealed my true identity to her… and she got so mad with me at first.”

“What happened?”

“She ended up calling me one night— asking for locations. I would occasionally send her positions of Equalist activity, and the Coalition would take out the bastards. Everything was running smoothly until Korra was blown up by that rouge asshole in front of City Hall.”
Kuvira shuddered at the memory.

“I realized that she was my Soulmate. My mother-fucking Soulmate. And before I could do anything about it…”

“… it was too late,” The Metalbender nodded, “The Estate was attacked and you had to escape with us.”

Asami took a long sip from her rum and coke, nodding and pursing her lips at the bitterness of the alcohol on her tongue.

“And now I’m here,” she smiled sadly. “Both of my eyes are useless, I’m a bender— the very thing I used to loathe— my father’s in Zaofu jail, and Korra is my lover again. And I have a real family.”

“Do you regret any of it?”

“Of course! I regret every single thing. I mean… maybe not having people who actually care about me. Hurting people? I really regret that. Lying to all of you? I regret that. Being responsible for so much mess? All of these things hurt me so much to reflect on… but that doesn’t mean I’m not going to keep walking forwards,” Asami chuckled, nuzzling up against the Metalbender. “Be the best person I can be… help others.”

Kuvira kissed Asami’s forehead, “If it makes you feel better, I think everyone forgave you a long time ago.”

“You were the first.”

Kuvira pressed her forehead against Asami’s temple and closed her eyes, “I love you.”

“I love you, too. Thank you so much.”

“For what?”

“For being here,” Asami smiled. “Everything you’ve done for me… when you didn’t have to… you’re amazing.”

Kuvira took another sip and snuggled back against her best friend, “Anytime.”

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Harmony Tower looked absolutely beautiful when it was lit up at night— but nothing looked as beautiful as Jinora’s excited face as she leaned over the rail and gazed at the city horizon…

Okay. That was really fucking cheesy.

“I had a… magnificent time tonight,” Opal said, slithering a hand around Jinora’s waist.

The younger girl leaned into the embrace with a chuckle, “So did I.”

Their hands tangled around each other’s hips as the two bodies pressed against one another. Opal
closed her eyes and gave her renewed lover a lingering kiss, her heart melting at the feeling of Jinora biting softly down on her bottom lip.

“I love you so much,” the younger girl whispered, her grip tightening around Opal.

The Beifong smirked, “I love you too. I’m the luckiest girl in the world.”

Atta girl. Roll ‘em in the isles.

Jinora laughed and gave Opal a long hug, standing up on her tippy toes and resting her chin on the older girl’s shoulders. The Beifong tightened her grip, feeling as though she were a Boa Constrictor as she promised herself not to let go. Jinora sank her weight into the taller girl’s, letting out a content hum as they swayed a little on the spot.

“Never leave me again, Opal Beifong,” she whispered, “Or else I’ll send Meelo after you.”

Opal faked a gulp, “Now you’re just bullying me.”

Jinora drew back with a smile, her arms still wrapped around the Beifong’s shoulders, and again they kissed. Over and over, until Opal felt her lips growing numb and her stomach stirring in excitement.

Best date ever.

“Come on, let’s see if we can climb the tower to the tippy top!”

“Opal, I’m in a dress, and Kuvira’ll murder you if you tear that suit. Plus, we don’t have our Glider stuff,” Jinora reasoned.

“Okay, but logic aside… how fun would it be?”

“Opal Beifong!!”

“Kidding! Just kidding… or was I?”

Jinora playfully shook her head, pressing a few more kisses to Opal’s lips and whispering something about her “little rascal with a death wish.”

“Do you hear that?”

“What?” Jinora asked, backing away from the embrace and looking around.

“It sounds like a… whistling sound?”

The younger girl’s eyes narrowed in confusion, and then widened very suddenly; A missile of some sort headed to the base of the tower.

“LOOK OUT!!”

Opal felt herself being pulled away from the edge and tightly held onto as a large BOOM!! echoed through her ears. All at once, they were falling— the other innocent civilians around them screaming
as Harmony Tower began to collapse.

**CREEK!!!**

She felt herself tumbling away from Jinora’s grasp, and let air kick out from her feet as she desperately tried to hang on to her lover.

*No, no, no! Not when I just got her back!!*

Opal was suddenly engulfed in a protective sphere of air as Jinora grabbed onto her with a determined look on her face. They shot away from the crumbling structure, and Opal had to close her eyes to get the sight of falling humans out of her brain. But the memory was imprinted as Jinora’s Air Sphere crash landed them into the lake next to the tower.

**SPLASH!!**

In the darkness of the freshwater, Opal began to panic— her suit growing too heavy as it filled with liquid. She felt someone try to pull her up by the shoulders and air shot out from her thrashing legs, propelling her up as they shot to the surface. Jinora dragged her over to the grass, both of their lungs panting for air and their veins pumping with adrenaline.

Another large **CRACK!!** as they watched the rest of Harmony Tower collapse to the ground, crushing the spirit vines beneath— whatever had destroyed the tower, whatever explosion, had set the massive vegetation on fire.

“And you hurt?!” Jinora’s voice asked, her soulmate shaking her shoulder.

Opal turned and blinked in disbelief, “You saved me.”

The younger girl began sobbing, bringing Opal in for a tight embrace and refusing to let go, even as the sounds of sirens filled the air. The older woman buried her head into Jinora’s shoulder as the couple sank to the ground, dripping all over the pavement.

It was more than obvious. The Equalists were back.

Chapter End Notes

WOOOOOOOOOOOO! JINOPAL IS BACK, BABY!! (about damn time, it's been 37 chapters)
Sidenote; everything is going to shit again and I don't owe you anything. 3/4 of the way through... I can't believe it!!

Leave comments!!
Nightmares and Alliances

Chapter Summary

“I believe in everything until it's disproved. So I believe in fairies, the myths, dragons. It all exists, even if it's in your mind. Who's to say that dreams and nightmares aren't as real as the here and now?”

— John Lennon

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The guards didn’t mind that he used his soup spoon to scratch the day into the wall— about two-hundred tick marks littered his cell. After he was done carving, he would happily return to his bowl of stew— at least they fed him pretty well. And they played a radio right outside his cell.

Not that any of it mattered… Hiroshi had long lost count of the days he’d spent in Zaofu.

Today was different; he could tell by the way the guards held themselves walking to and fro past his cell. Captain Fai had given him a friendly nod during his rounds, but the rest of the guards were tense — Hiroshi wanted to ask what was wrong but he wasn’t too sure that they would tell him upfront. So instead, he calmly went back to reading the latest edition of Popular Mechanics that Suyin had given him.

Overall, it was a comfy setup, but he could tell something was about to change.

Sure enough, a barrage of guards walked into the hallways, encompassing none other than the Matriarch herself.

“I need your help,” Suyin Beifong said grimly.

“With what?” Hiroshi asked, sitting upright and setting the magazine to the side.

“The Equalists are back. They attacked my daughter and brought down Harmony Tower last night.”

“I thought that the Ava— Korra had managed to kill the Lieutenant.”

“Evidently not… or if she did, they’ve managed to reorganize themselves,” Suyin pondered, leaning up against the metal door of his cell.

Hiroshi stood, shaking his head, “Impossible. There was no one else as good at leading as him. He survived somehow.”

Su sighed, glancing back and forth between her trusted Captain Fai and Hiroshi Sato. Biting her lip, she had a guard unlock the cell and walked in. There were dark circles under her eyes, and the former CEO felt immensely sorry for her.
“I need your help,” she repeated softly, “I’m going to Republic City. I need your knowledge and skills in order to take them down.”

Hiroshi turned away, looking at the tick marks on the wall. How long had it been since he’d seen his beautiful daughter? The guards… there had been whispers… that she’d been hurt… something permanent… what kind of father could he call himself if he didn’t try his hardest to protect her? After everything that had transpired— he’d given up hating Benders. Despite being in prison things had been, for lack of a better word, comfortable. Su had been nothing but, well, sympathetic to him since the Attack on Zaofu. Even when he was responsible for her husband’s death.

He would do it.

For Baatar Sr.

For Asami.

For Yasuko.

“All right. What’s the plan?” the old man asked, turning back to Suyin with a determined fire in his eyes.

“You and I, along with an escort of Zaofu guards, are going to fly to Republic City and assist Avatar Korra in whatever way she needs it. I don’t care if she needs us to fight or defend— I’m not letting those bastards hurt our families.”

Hiroshi nodded, “I’ll have to collaborate with your sister… I think I know of some remaining bunkers that Asami probably didn’t think to check.”

Matriarch Suyin Beifong held out her hand. Hiroshi looked into her soft green eyes and felt tears threatening to escape his own amber ones. He clasped her hand and shook it firmly, as though he were making a business arrangement.

“Come on, I’ll get you into some civilian clothes— we’re leaving in a few hours,” the Metalbender smiled.

“Thank you, Matriarch. It’ll be a blessing to get to see Asami again.”

Su gave him a lingering, sad gaze— as though she knew something that he didn’t. Nevertheless, she had Captain Fai remove the platinum cuffs and the tracker band on his anklet. Hiroshi gave the Firebender a smile and followed him out of the cell.

He no longer hated Benders. He no longer tolerated them, either. The hatred had withered him down… he was thin and frail, and his hair had gone from salt-and-pepper to white in only a few short months. He could feel it killing him inside to feel hatred to guards that’d treated him with forgiveness and kindness, he’d made friends with them— playing Pai Sho and discussing the local news. They were human beings.

More importantly, the CEO no longer felt animosity at the mere thought of Avatar Korra loving his daughter. In fact, he was a little happy… happy that someone so powerful could protect his only remaining family.

Hiroshi Sato couldn’t wait to apologize to them both.

To see his daughter again.
Flying.

Clouds.

Blue sky.

On the way to a coffee date with Opal Beifong.

You’re a little excited and a little nervous.

WHIZZZ!!

“Aaarrggghhh!!” you cry.

You're falling.

Falling.

You’re an Airbender.

You’re not supposed to fall.

You manage to crash onto the top of a building.

There’s a steel bolt

in your stomach.

Someone is calling out to you.

Or maybe you’re calling out to them.

You’ve been stuck here.

In the Spirit World.

This is growing old—first Unalaq and now this?

That same person is calling out to you again.

You’ve never felt more relief.

And when you realize just who it is…

She gives you a huge hug and you sink into her arms.

“Jinora? Sweetie? Wake up… you’re having a nightmare!”
Your first time together.

Admitting that you love each other.

Kuvira and Baatar’s apartment being demolished.

Korra being blown up in front of Town Hall.

The Estate.

Gods… the Estate…

Everything burning and the only thing you can think to do

Is save the one you love most.

And then she has to leave

Has to help Kuvira and Korra reach Zaofu.

You fly all the way to the Metal Clan

On Juicy.

You find her in the darkness.

Basking in her warmth.

Making love every single night.

And then being forced to flee.

Feeling so fucking guilty.

“Jinora? Wake up love, you’re shaking!! Should I go get Kya?!”

How horrible it felt when she began yelling at you.

The pain of your very element ripping through your rib cage.

Being forced to kick at her

Hurt her

To escape.

Flying away with tears blotting your vision.
Watching her stumble through the forests.

Lost.

Hurt.

It tears you apart.

She doesn’t want you.

Did she ever?

She’s on an island?

The Lion Turtle’s Island.

Same one your Grandpa Aang met.

The only one left.

Opal’s perfectly content making a hut and a fire.

Perfectly.

Content.

In.

Pain.

“Jinora, sweetie! It’s me, Opal! Wake up— you’re having a nightmare!!”

She’s fucking Samsara.

Kissing her and touching her.

Tears drip down your eyes as you hide in the trees.

A spiritual projection that can’t tear away from

The sickening scene before you.

It’s not Samsara’s fault.

She’s being manipulated.

By.

Opal.

Doing things that you reserved the right to do.
You can’t watch any more.

“I’m so, so sorry, Jinora,” she sobs.

The dead Avatar falls to the ground

In the Spirit World.

“What makes you think you have the right to talk to me?”

You spit out.

“Please… I’m cursed… I don’t know what to do!! I love her and I love you, too.”

“If you have any love for me… if you care one bit… you need to help her stop this,”

You whisper.

You kneel down in the grass next to her.

She desperately leans against you.

“What’s the matter with her?”

“I don’t know, Kya. She won’t wake up!”

You see her again,

Watch her kill Samsara.

A girl that loved her.

Maybe she loved Samsara back.

A part of you really hopes not.

She’s looking at you for the first time

In months.

With big, tear stained

Olive eyes.

You ask her to come home.

And then you fade back into Republic City

Where you cry for a whole week.
You've forgiven her.
You forgave her
A long time ago.
You just want her back.

She's broken in the Spirit World.
And then when you're talking to her
On the beach.
You kiss her.
Reflexes.
Or desire.
Both.
But does it matter?
She's still not yours.
And you're not hers.

Tulips.
You never thought about how pretty
Tulips could be.
She pushes them into your hands
You set them in the vase.
And when you're both done meditating.
You fall asleep with them in your hands.

She's dancing with you.
Twirling around and bumbling into
Other couples.
She asks you out on a date
Her lips lightly brushing your ear
You were *that* close to kissing her

“Jinora, baby. Wake up. It’s me. It’s your Opal!”

*Kissing her.*

*Having her kiss back.*

*She’s yours.*

*Nobody else’s.*

*You couldn’t have picked a better date.*

**BOOM!!**

*The tower is collapsing*

*You should’ve tried to save the other people.*

*The only person you can think about is her.*

*You don’t think.*

*You act.*

*A sphere of air surrounds you both as you fly.*

*You fly.*

*Earthly tethers, my ass.*

*Crashing into the lake.*

*Swimming to the surface.*

“*You saved me,*” Opal chokes out.

“*You saved me, too,*” Jinora murmured.

“Are you okay?!” Opal all but screamed, cradling the younger girl against her chest.

Jinora opened her eyes and shivered, clutching the fabric of Opal’s hoodie and drawing her soulmate closer— basking in her warmth.

“I love you.”

“I love you too, Jinora. Are you sure you’re okay?”
“Mmmmm… just need you to hold me.”

Opal chuckled, “Okay, sweetheart… anything for you.”

Kya muttered something about “kids these days” and walked out of their bedroom. Opal softly kissed Jinora’s forehead— whispering sweet nothings as Jinora snuggled into a familiar body; a body that belonged to her. Perhaps a warm heart like the Beifong’s… could keep away the nightmares. They shared a few soft, long kisses, tongues dancing together and teeth biting down on lips.

“I missed this,” Jinora admitted in the darkness, her fingers gripping the older girl’s arms.

“I missed this too. I’m never letting anyone hurt you again.”

“Promise?”

“Pinky promise,” Opal murmured against her lips.

Curling up against the woman she loved most, Jinora slept soundly for the rest of the night.

“Scotch?” Su asked, standing at the mini bar with a bottle in her hands.

Hiroshi took the glass and sat down in the lounge room aboard the airship, “Thank you. It’s been a while since I’ve had something to drink.”

“Since the Estate?”

“Actually… your husband had brought me Sake once or twice before he…”

Suyin sat down in the couch opposite and looked at him with sorrowful green eyes, “I’ve been wanting to do something about those fuckers. They killed my… my Baatar. But every time I tried to muster the courage to do something… I see his face. And I realize that he wouldn’t want me to kill people in his name.”

“What has changed?” Hiroshi asked softly.

“Did you want to kill people when Yasuko first died?”

Hiroshi let out a small sigh through his nose;

“No. I couldn’t think straight for a whole year. And then it was about protecting Asami. I never wanted to kill anyone— it sort of just… began happening… Amon and the Lieutenant had no problem killing Triads and I began to realize that if I wanted to make sure Asami never died at the hands of a Bender… I had to kill too.”

Suyin didn’t say anything for a while, only taking a sip of her scotch and looking across the room at the old, defeated man. Eventually she stood and crossed the threshold, sitting down next to him and
looking at the glass of alcohol in his hands.

“I don’t want to kill anyone, either,” she whispered softly, “But they killed my soulmate. They hurt my Junior and my Kuvira. My Opal. My Korra. I don’t want to get carried away… but I want to make sure that they get what they deserve. That he gets what he deserves.”

“The Lieutenant has to die,” Hiroshi muttered. “Korra was too sloppy— she should’ve made sure.”

The rest of the ride was silent, and yet the two middle-aged parents spoke thousands of words with a mere glance. They would do anything for their children.

They would kill.

Chapter End Notes

And now he's back! From outer space! And I can't wait to read your comments and see that shocked look upon your face.
A Ragtag Family Indeed

Chapter Summary

"Every new beginning comes from some other beginning’s end."
-Seneca

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Asami jumped up, startling the herd of lemurs gathering around the feeder, when she heard the scream. Dropping the bag of seeds, she raced into the courtyard and blasted light puffs in every direction to try and detect where the person was. Someone was bent over in pain, at the veranda.

“Arrrggghhh!! Fuck!!” Hikaru screamed.

The former engineer raced up and clutched at her cousin’s arms, “What’s wrong!”

“The BABY’S COMING!!” she groaned.

“Fuck— he’s a week early!” Asami mumbled, putting one of the Firebender’s arms over her shoulders and leading her back through the hallway.

Several acolytes jogged up and took the pregnant woman away into a bedroom, Asami trailing behind. One of them offered her a seat next to the bed and she gripped Hikaru’s hand.

“It’s going to be okay, it’s going to be okay.” Asami murmured.

The blind Airbender remembered what her cousin had said. About Shun dying while giving birth. Her heart skipped a few beats, and her fingers grasped tighter onto Hikaru’s.

She’s going to be alright.

“I need you to go find Bolin!” Pema said to an acolyte.

“I’ll go!” Asami said.

She gave her struggling cousin a kiss on the forehead, and Hikaru let out a whimper as she tried to hold onto the blind woman’s Air Nomad robes. Pema took her seat and gripped onto Hikaru’s hand, whispering assurances that everything was going to be fine. Asami stumbled into the hallway, trying to deduce where Bolin might be…

She sprinted down towards the dining hall. If he wasn’t fucking there, he wasn’t on the Island.

Sure enough, she sensed him making Suki a sandwich. Her younger cousin was perched on the counter, and by the sound of it— she was playing Pokémon X.

“Bolin; Hikaru’s in labor!” she panted, clutching onto the Earthbender’s arms.

“What?! OH WATERMELONS, WHERE IS SHE!?” he yelped into her ear, forgetting for a
moment that her listening skills were heightened and startling her.

“Down the hallway and to the left, you can’t miss the screams,” Asami wheezed, leaning up against the counter.

Thunderously loud footsteps echoed through the kitchen, dining hall, and corridors as Bolin shouted something along the lines of “DON’T GIVE BIRTH WITHOUT ME, SWEETIE!!”

Asami let out a sigh and slumped against the wall. She heard the sound of the video game stopping and felt Suki crawl into her lap. The eleven-year-old nestled up against her and Asami wrapped her arms around the girl.

“Hey there, Kiki.”

“Cousin Asami, is Huka having her baby right now?”

“Yes. It’s really exciting,” the blind woman said with a smile.

“I’m really glad. I can’t wait to be a big sister.”

“Technically, you’ll be Dequan’s auntie.”

“Wow… can I still act like a big sister around him?” Suki asked, curling into Asami’s shoulder. “Pretty please?”

The blind woman picked her up and walked into the lounge room, sitting the two of them down on the couch. She could hear Hikaru screaming at Bolin to “get a grip on yourself!!” and smirked, stroking her little cousin’s soft, long brown hair.

“Oh, I’m sure that Hikaru’ll let you take over once in a while and boss him around,” she chuckled, pressing a kiss to the top of Suki’s head.

Eventually, her cousin went back to playing Pokémon X while sitting in her lap, and Asami listened to the sounds of creatures fighting and fainting— the soundtrack itself was pretty damn pleasant. She could her Hikaru groaning and grunting in pain and could only hope that it would be a smooth birth; right now she had to take care of Suki.

“What’s your favorite Pokémon?” Asami asked.

Not that she knew what the hell a Pokémon even was.

“Chespin,” Suki answered, without skipping a beat.

“Oh cool… what kind of Poké—”

“Grass-Fighting,” Suki blurted, snuggling further into the blind woman’s lap and turning up the volume so that the former engineer could listen to the game.

Asami didn’t know what the hell any of that meant, but so long as the two of them were distracted—she was doing her job. She wrapped her arms around Suki’s waist and listened to her video game for the rest of the afternoon.
A Few Hours Later:

“Where’s Asami?” Hikaru whimpered, her hands tracing over the face of her baby boy.

“She’s taking care of Suki— do you want me to go get her?” Pema asked.

“No… no… I just wanted to know.”

Bolin pressed a kiss to the top of her head, and then one to little Dequan’s nose. Despite being a little early, his loud wails indicated that he was as fit as a fiddle and ready to face the world head on.

“How are you feeling?” Bolin asked sincerely, as all the acolytes but Pema left the room.

“Um… let’s see… kinda like I just shoved a bowling ball out of my—”

“Yeah, that was a stupid question,” Bolin murmured with a chuckle.

With a wince, she scooched over and made room for him on the bed. The Earthbender’s forehead pressed into her neck and he cradled her new son in his arms.

“I love you,” Bolin whispered to Dequan.

All of a sudden, the baby stopped crying, reduced to babbles and gurgles as Bolin cradled his son against his face.

“You’re a wonder boy, you know that?” Hikaru murmured, pressing a kiss to his head.

“I don’t mean to rush you… but do you have a God Parent for your child?” Pema asked, a hand over theirs.

The Firebender looked at her fiancé for a few seconds; he raised an eyebrow but gestured with a hand that she should be the one to decide. Hikaru took a deep breath— knowing that in the end there was only one person she could trust with her baby boy.

“Asami Sato,” she smiled softly.

Pema squeezed her hand and left them alone in the room, stating that she’d heat them both some calming Jasmine tea.

“You sure? It’s not that I don’t love Asami like the rest of our friends… but…”

“Bolin… I trust her with my life… and I think if the worst happened… I’d trust her with his life, too. Plus, let’s face it— Mako’s a wonderful person but he knows like three emotions.”

“Hey! He raised me!”
“He’d probably put a crib in the office at Police Headquarters. Have Lin take shifts changing his diaper.”

“Make Dequan a detective at age twelve,” Bolin chuckled. “I see your point. You want me to go get Asami?”

“Maybe in a little while. Right now… I just want to enjoy my two boys,” Hikaru whispered, pressing a weary kiss to Bolin’s lips.

____________________________________________________

“Can I… can I hold him?” Asami whispered.

“Sure… here— just like that, yeah. Careful, don’t drop him,” Hikaru instructed.

Asami sat on the edge of the bed and held the little baby, listening to it cry and beginning to sing softly. Her fingers wandered up and traced his face. His tiny button nose. His mouth that instantly tried to suck on her finger. His lumpy head. His little fingertips; the size of marbles. She brought one of his hands up and kissed it, continuing to murmur a song.

Dequan began to calm down again, wrapped up in a blanket and pressed against a warm body.

“Wise men say only fools rush in
But I can’t help falling in love with you
Shall I stay— would it be a sin
If I can’t help falling in love with you”

Hikaru reached out and pulled Asami back up against her, cradling the baby between the two women and pressing a long kiss to the top of the blind woman’s head.

“He looks a little like you,” the Firebender murmured.

“I doubt it.”

“No— I’m serious. Let him grow out his hair when he gets older, put purple eyeshadow on, a little mascara, some cherry lipstick…”

“And a shock glove,” Asami whispered bitterly.

Hikaru looked at her cousin, who had her lips pursed as her fingers traced over and over Dequan’s face.

“He doesn’t have to know about your past… if you don’t want him to…” the Firebender whispered.

The blind woman took a deep sigh, sitting up and running her hands over the blanket that Pema had given Hikaru. The ex-Equalist bit her lip in thought and lowered her head in shame.
“He needs to. People have to know history so that it isn’t repeated. And I promised that I would never lie to myself or my family. Ever. Again.”

With a soft exhale, Hikaru sat up a little— ignoring the stab of pain in her recently stretched abdomen— and lightly pushed Dequan into Asami’s hands. She cupped the blind woman’s cheek and pressed a kiss to her burnt and scarred forehead.

Hikaru slowly grabbed Asami’s free fingers, raising them up to her lips to let her cousin know that she was smiling;

“It’s going to be okay. We’re together. And happy. I’m not giving that up. We’ll always be family.”

And for a few seconds, Asami smiled back.

___________________________________________________

“Wow.”

“Yeah.”

“I’m an uncle!”

“Yeah!” Korra laughed, clinking her beer against Mako’s as Bolin wandered into the lounge with a small bundle in his arms.

“Speak of the devil!” the detective chuckled, setting down his drink and giving Korra a helping hand.

“Be gentle with him, don’t go into the Avatar State or anything— it might upset him,” Bolin warned sincerely.

This earned him laughter from the other two members of Team Avatar, who merely took turns cradling the newest addition to the ragtag family. Korra’s fingers played with the small scraps of brown hair that Dequan had on his head.

“He’s going to look like her.”

“Who?” Mako and Bolin asked, looking up.

“Suki. The Kyoshi Warrior.”

“How do you know?” the Lavabender asked curiously.

Korra shook her head and shrugged, “I just do.”

Perhaps she no longer was able to ask Aang about his life… but that didn’t mean she couldn’t feel a connection to Fire Lord Zuko, to Master Katara, to Tenzin and the Air Babies— a small connection to Suki’s family. Perhaps that’s why she was Asami’s soulmate. And this little boy? She couldn’t help at smile at the prospect at being the wacky lesbian aunt.

“Hey there,” she murmured to Dequan. “I don’t care what your father says, you’re going to love seeing the Avatar State when you’re older.”

“I hate you,” Bolin huffed, as Mako playfully ruffled his hair.
A ragtag family indeed.

Eventually, Bolin collected the adorable little bundle and waddled off to go show the rest of the island his teeny pride and joy of a son.

Mako pulled Korra back against the couch and let out a sigh.

“So… Equalists…” he asked, taking a sip from his beer.

“I’ve gotten word from Zaofu that Suyin is flying out to assist us… I can ask Lin to round up the Task Force/Coalition team she has… should we include the Triads again?”

Mako sighed, “I really don’t like dealing with those guys… but if you think we need the numbers…”

“I don’t think it’s my call this time— Su’s bringing in the ultimate strategist for this one.”

“Who are you talking about?”

“THE Equalist.”

“You mean…”

“Asami’s dad… Hiroshi Sato.”

There were two gasps, one from Mako on the couch— and one from Asami at the doorway. Korra looked up with wide eyes.

“Oh shit… Sami!”

The blind woman’s mouth was gaping open, tears were streaking down her face and she was furiously shaking her head as she turned and fled down the corridor, bumping into the wall a little as she ran.

“Shit!”

“You didn’t tell her!?!” Mako yelped angrily.

Ignoring him, the Avatar leapt over the couch— spilling her beer as she sprinted down the hallways and into the courtyard. A few taps of seismic sense and she realized that Asami had flown off the island. Which mean she might accidentally hurt herself.

“FUCK!!” Korra yelled, grabbing a glider staff and entering the Avatar State.

Korra found her within ten minutes.

Somehow… by sheer luck or her girlfriend’s cleverness, Asami had managed to land on the top of a skyscraper— and when Korra dropped down, she realized that the Airbender’s chin was scraped a little.

“Did you crash land?!?” the Avatar cried, running up to the blind woman and trying to coddle her.
The former engineer pushed her away;

“WHY DIDN’T YOU TELL ME!?”

_Fuck. Fuck. Fuck._

“It wasn’t my decision. Su thought that it would be best to bring him back here—”

“Maybe I’m not ready!!” Asami shouted, a puff of air escaping her lungs and nearly knocking Korra off the edge.

“Asami! Please!! Suyin says he’s changed!” Korra pleaded.

“And I have too! Maybe I don’t want him… to… see me… like this…”

Instantly, Korra engulfed her soulmate in a strong hug— Asami broke down and cried into her lover’s shoulder. She grasped at the Avatar’s hoodie and her body trembled with sobs.

“It’s okay… Widget… you’re beautiful.”

“You think so?” the blind woman whimpered.

“Of course,” Korra murmured, kissing her forehead, her scarred eyelids, and the bridge of her nose. “You’re the most beautiful woman in the world. No matter what. And your Dad will always love you… now more than ever.”

Asami didn’t say anything, only whimpering a little as she cried into Korra’s shoulder.

“Come on… let’s go home… you have a family that needs you and loves you. I love you.”

“I love you too, Bandit.”

Korra smirked— leading her Glider-Suit-clad Soulmate up to the edge. Together, they leapt. And together, they soared over the horizon. She always loved the way the ex-heiress looked when they flew at sunset. Today, she wasn’t twirling or doing too many tricks— too upset to do anything other than follow Korra’s voice through the sky.

When they finally landed, Korra swooping, catching her lover, and using a blast of air to lower them to the ground— Asami stood and embraced her Avatar in a strong hug.

“Thank you,” the blind woman whispered. “I probably wouldn’t have had the strength to meet him again if it weren’t for you.”

Korra’s grip tightened and she kissed Asami’s cheek, “Of course. We’ll get through anything together.”

Hand in hand, they walked back into the dormitories.

Chapter End Notes
OBSIDIAN BUN!!!
Korra: Gay Aunt Barbara

Leave comments!!
Parents - Part 1

Chapter Summary

"It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength."

-Maya Angelou

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“You okay?” Su asked, briefly touching Hiroshi’s arm.

The old man was panting, an anxiety attack coursing through his veins. He sat down at the couch and ran his fingers through his white hair. Suyin felt his heart racing and sat down next to him—a hand on his shoulder. Republic City’s horizon could be seen out the cockpit windows, sprawling beneath them. Captain Fai shot her a glance at the helm, but she ignored him—turning back to the former CEO.

“Last time I was here… everything was on fire… being blown up… and now… seeing Asami again…”

She squeezed his shoulder in reassurance, “It’s going to be okay. If the rest of Team Avatar could forgive her for being an Equalist… I think that she can forgive you too.”

One of the Zaofu Metalbending guards handed Hiroshi a glass of a water with a bow. He took a long sip and stared at the liquid, clearly pondering a great deal. Suyin looked out the window at the large copper statue of Avatar Aang—watching over the city with a slight smirk. Finally, Hiroshi spoke up again;

“I was more than just an Equalist, Matriarch… I led them.”

“Please, call me Su. And… after spending so much time in reflection—you’ve changed. You’re a different person now.”

“How do you know?” Hiroshi whispered through his calloused fingers.

Suyin laughed, her gray hair bouncing up and down, “I just do, Mr. Sato.”

He looked up at her with a small smile, “Please… call me Hiroshi.”

With a creak and a groan, the Airship docked down on Air Temple Island—a ramp extending directly out to the courtyard. Su straightened her headpiece and put a hand on the railing as she walked down with a soft smile.
“That wasn’t a fair move!!” a voice laughed.

Across the yard, she saw two of her children (and some of her adoptive rascals), Opal and Baatar, currently surrounding two people in a group. With a smirk, Suyin could sense that there was a Metalbending sparring match occurring— hoots and cheers as the two people went head on with playful snarls.

Tenzin walked up to her, rubbing his temples in annoyance, “I don’t let the acolytes watch Probending, so everyone got excited when I said the two girls could spar.”

Su laughed and gave him a hug. “It’s good to see you too, Tenzy.”

The leader of the Air Nomads gave Hiroshi a deep, respectful bow— which obviously startled and surprised the former Equalist, who bowed back with his jaw dropped. The Matriarch laughed and looked over at the group— tapping her foot to see just who was fighting whom. With another giggle, she realized that Korra and Kuvira were the two Benders sparring; metal strips flying back and forth as the crowd of friends surrounding them egged them on.

_Oh my Gods, their forms and stances are horrible. It must be a match for fun._

Hiroshi walked up to the nearest Airbender in the crowd, a girl with… short black hair… and a gray strip of cloth… covering her eyes…

He put a hand on her shoulder, “Excuse me… do you know where I can find Asami Sato?”

_______________________________________________

Asami heard his voice.

_**His** voice._

There was a hand on her shoulder and she turned.

“Dad?” she asked.

Silence.

Agonizing silence.

“A-Asami?”

“Yes,” she nodded with a sigh.

“W-What happened to your eyes?” Hiroshi stammered, terror in his voice.
“They didn’t tell you, did they? I’m… I’m blind, Dad.”

“What? N-No! No, no, no, no! OH GODS, NO!!”

She could hear him dropping to the ground and sobbing, and knelt down in the dirt next to him—a hand covering his. He clutched it like a lifeline. The sparring behind her instantly stopped, and Su and Tenzin dispersed the crowd. Korra walked up behind Asami and put a hand on her shoulder as Hiroshi wailed.

“Dad… it’s okay…”

“No, it’s not! My baby…”

She felt his old calloused fingers trace the ruined skin under the cloth covering, his fingertips feeling ever little burn and scar. She sighed and leaned into his touch; knowing that this was to be expected.

“Dad.”

“Y-Yes, Asami?”

“That’s not all… I’m also a Bender now.”

More silence.

More agonizing silence.

The ex-heiress could hear him taking a few deep breaths and clutching her hand so tightly that a part of her worried her fingers might break. Eventually, she could feel him running his other hand through her short black hair.

“Asami… Asami… I’m so, so sorry for what I’ve done,” her dad whispered. “I was such a fucking idiot… misdirecting my love for you and your mother… turning it into hatred and anger… I’m so, so sorry.”

She could feel tears escaping from her lifeless, broken eyes. Asami leaned forwards— so that their foreheads were pressing together.

“I can’t forgive you yet, Dad… but… I love you.”

That was all he needed to hear. She knew it, deep down, that he would be able to function— to help combat the Equalists so long as he knew that Asami loved him. And for once; she wasn’t lying to her father. It sounded as though he was in too much shock to reciprocate the words, and fortunately her soulmate saved the day;

“Mr. Sato… how about we get you settled into your quarters?” Korra’s voice whispered softly.

Asami could hear his breathing hitch, and she tensed up in case Hiroshi began yelling at Korra. She prayed to every one of the Gods that she believed in (and some of the ones that she didn’t believe in) that his shouting would be quick. That he would get it out of his system and—
“Thank you… Korra… that would be lovely. I have a lot of catching up to do. W-With both of you.”

Her heart felt like it was leaping over the Great Divide. She leaned forwards and engulfed her father in a brief, but strong hug.

A lot better of an outcome than she was expecting. Perhaps… perhaps everything could be okay.

_________________________________________________________

While the Satos were having their reunion… Suyin walked up to her three children. Baatar and Kuvira she’d seen not too long ago… but…

Opal slammed into her and instantly began sobbing.

“I’M SO SORRY, MOM!!”

She tangled her fingers in her daughter’s scraggly hair and lifted her up, so that Opal was cradled in her arms as she swiftly carried her baby to a wooden bench— sitting down and embracing her little girl. It’d been a year. A year of not knowing where her daughter was— if she was even alive. A year of perceiving that Opal was in pain, out in the wilderness.

Suyin broke down and began crying, too. She was flanked on either side by Kuvira and Baatar, who wrapped their arms around the pair of women until they all were in a giant family hug.

For the first time in a long time, it felt like a piece of the Matriarch had returned.

“I missed you so much, all of you,” Su whispered to her children.

Kuvira’s cheek was pressed against her back, and Baatar had his arms wrapped around Opal’s middle as she leaned against his chest. Their mother pressed a kiss to each of their foreheads and stared into three different pairs of green eyes.

Sometimes it was difficult to remember who she was… an ex-criminal, a master Metalbender— the daughter of the (self-proclaimed) ‘Greatest Earthbender in the World’. The leader of a city. A widow. A collector of meteorites. An ally to Tenzin’s Airbenders and Avatar Korra.

A mother.

Suyin cradled all three of her children; leaning against Kuvira a little as she wrapped her arms around Opal— who continued crying as she exhaled thousands of emotions.

Lin walked up and sat with them, an arm slung around Baatar Jr. as she smiled at her half-sister.

“It’s good to see you, champ,” her older kin chuckled.

“Hey Chief,” Su smiled broadly, leaning over and pressing a kiss to Lin’s cheek.
The others went to go help the acolytes prepare a large meal for all of the Zaofu guards and others who were temporarily staying on the island— Suiyn and Opal walked down the dirt trails, the mother clasping onto her daughter’s hand and refusing to let go as they hiked down the sides of the cliffs. The misty ocean spray hit Su’s gray hair and more than once she ran her fingers through her short locks in anticipation.

“Mother…”

“Yes, Opal?”

Her daughter, her baby, sat down on a washed up log and kicked some driftwood to the side. Su took her shoes off and let the sand sift in between her toes before sitting down next to her little girl.

“I’m sorry I was gone for so long. I—I’m sorry that I left when you needed me most,” Opal apologized, her head bowing low; her shoulders trembling in shame.

“You don’t have to apologize for anything. I’m just so happy that you’re here now,” Suyin said, cradling her daughter and kissing her on the top of her head.

“Was D-Dad… in a lot of pain?”

“They told me that it was quick,” Su sighed.

Hugging her baby tighter, the Matriarch looked out over the sunset. They said that Soulmates were permanently intertwined, in every lifetime together. She would meet him again.

But that didn’t make it hurt any less.

“Part of me was so angry… for so long,” Opal whispered. “That you sent me away. I blamed myself for Dad’s… death.”

“But—”

“I hurt Jinora, Mom. Because I was so angry. Because I felt useless. And I just left and stayed on an island… cheating on her… with someone else.”

Su’s eyes widened, but she didn’t say anything— she’d made mistakes at that age, too. It was not in her place to judge her daughter. Opal looked out at the sunset, the oranges and greens and purples and blues and reds. The heat of the sun was slowly fading, and Suyin shivered a little at the impending cold of nightfall.

“Somehow… she decided to forgive me. I don’t forgive myself. I hate myself,” Opal spat, looking down at the beach beneath their feet and kicking a gust of air in anger. Sand flew everywhere.

“Opal, do you want to forgive yourself?”

“What?”

“I don’t think the question is whether or not you can forgive yourself… but whether or not you want to. When I was expelled from Republic City… I felt the same way as you. I’d hurt my sister— put my mother in a horrible condition… I didn’t ever think it could get better.

“Eventually… I wandered onto Kyoshi Island— and someone was there who forgave me. Not because the situation didn’t impact her… Suki was great friends with your Grandmother, and cared deeply for us. She advised that I forgive myself… because I wasn’t able to become a better person
unless I let go of the baggage that held me down.”

“But you had to beat the shit out of Aunt Lin before she forgave you,” Opal pointed out.

Su laughed, “Yes I did… I think Jinora forgave you because she wants to help you let go of that luggage—and because she loves you, Opal.”

Her daughter sighed and leaned against her, their dark-skinned hands intertwined as they watched the final scraps of the sun disappear below the horizon, and the dinner bell ringing up in the courtyard. Some small stars were poking out of the purple-black sky, looking like little diamonds.

“Come on, now,” the Matriarch said, standing up and brushing her green robes off, “I promised Lin that I’d sit next to her at dinner—and you know how I always have to fight Kuvira for the spot.”

“She’s a total kiss-ass,” Opal giggled.

“Be nice to your sister… don’t tell her I told you so, but you’re totally right,” Su whispered with a giggle—looping an arm through her little Airbender’s.

The rest of the walk was silent, and yet Su wouldn’t have it any other way.

After dinner, Hiroshi awkwardly sat down at the couch—unsure of what to do with himself. Most of the island inhabitants were participating in evening meditation, or perhaps doing Air Nomad chores. The Beifongs were all catching up; and the Zaofu Guards were either on the air ship or organizing a patrol routine with the White Lotus.

He was all alone in the lounge until he heard the sound of a videogame start up.

Hiroshi looked over and blinked—a little girl was sitting on the other end of the couch; ignoring him as she smirked at her videogame console. The sounds of pixels beating each other up made him chuckle a little.

“Hello there,” he smiled.

The girl, eleven or twelve, looked up with curious blue eyes and smiled shyly, “Hi.”

“My name is Hiroshi… what’s your name?”

She returned to the console’s screen, “Suki.”

He stiffened a little—though it didn’t show. This little girl, who of all people on the island had decided to sit next to him, was his niece. Yes… he could see some of Yasuko in her—mostly his late wife’s mother. The former CEO kept stealing looks at her as he pretended to read a magazine.

Suki had long brown hair and blue eyes, her face was set in a smirk that her namesake had certainly possessed. There was a kindness—a kindness that he knew this little girl shared with Asami.

It was so strange to think that she was a living member of his in-law family. And she was just sitting
next to him; ignoring him as she played a pointless video game. He wondered if she was a Bender or a Nonbender—

*No! Stop that! You’ve changed! Think of Asami!*

He let out a small sigh and stood, letting his back creak and pop. It’d been so long since he’d had the freedom to wander (he wasn’t allowed to leave the island without Korra’s permission, and he had to be supervised… but he didn’t care). Hiroshi walked over to a cabinet, filled with various alcohols…

“Would you mind if I had something to drink?” he asked the girl.

“Why would I mind?” Suki asked, looking up from her game.

“I didn’t want to make you uncomfortable,” Hiroshi explained with soft amber eyes.

“Oh— don’t worry about it. My sister used to drink and party with her friends before her pregnancy.”

“Your sister’s pregnant?” Hiroshi asked with wide eyes.

There was another addition to his family?! Just how much had he missed in that devastatingly long year he’d been locked up?!

“I was pregnant, yes,” a voice called across the room, as a woman entered— carrying a small bundle.

The girl. The F-Firebender from the funeral. All those years ago, and she still looked the same— a black bun atop her head and fierce amber eyes that looked ready to defend herself from anything that came her way.

Hiroshi set down the bottle that he was about to pour out, “Are… are you Hikaru?”

The woman gave him a stern, no-nonsense look for a few moments— looking as though she might be contemplating whether or not to shoot him with a ball of fire. Fear stirred around in his heart, and his hand twitched to reach for a shock glove that was not there.

“Yes. I am your niece.”

Suki looked up from her game, between her older sister and the former CEO. She quickly excused herself— something about going to show her ‘Pokedex’ to an acolyte named Mula. Suddenly, the two adults were left alone in the room— and Hiroshi was really wishing that he had poured that drink after all.

Instead of launching a vortex of flames at him, Hikaru shifted the little bundle in her arms and walked forwards. The two adults were now practically nose-to-nose as the Firebender stared down the Ex-Equalist. And then she did something that surprised Hiroshi more than finding out that his own daughter was a Bender.

She pushed the little bundle into his hands.

“Be gentle,” Hikaru smiled.
Peeking out of a little hole in the blanket, a tiny face stared up at Hiroshi. A baby’s little fingers reached up and held onto Hiroshi’s mustache—tugging a little and giggling the way an infant will. Beginning to understand, the former Equalist chuckled a little and let tears slip down his face as he cradled the little boy.

“What’s his name?”

“Dequan.”

“Springtime?”

Hikaru shrugged, leaning forwards and playing with the baby boy’s stubby hands, “It sounded too beautiful to consider anything else.”

“Not Yat-Sen?” Hiroshi asked, remembering his father-in-law and wondering if the man was still alive.

The Firebender shook her head, “He asked me not to.”

“Your family has always been… humble.”

Two pairs of amber eyes solemnly looked at each other. Uncomfortable with her sharp, piercing gaze that he no longer held the strength to match—Hiroshi passed the little bundle to his mother.

“He’s going to be beautiful. And strong.”

“Bolin, his father, hopes that he’ll be an Earthbender— I’m hoping that he’s a Nonbender.”

“Why’s that?” Hiroshi asked with a raised eyebrow.

“The little one you just met— Suki. She’s a handful as it is… I can’t imagine her being able to Firebend and blow up the house. Gods forbid this one discovers that he’s a little Lavabender.”

Hiroshi smiled a little, and then frowned, “I didn’t know that your sister was a Nonbender.”

“None of my family can bend but me— and I suppose my father can… but I haven’t seen him in over a decade.”

And to think... I could’ve accidentally ended this girl in my old life. My family.

“Is seventeen years too late to apologize?” Hiroshi asked.

Hikaru bit her lip, nodding.

Hiroshi sighed and turned back to the liquor cabinet, pouring himself a strong drink. There was instantly a hand on his shoulder and he turned back towards his niece.

“That doesn’t mean we can’t still be family, Uncle. It doesn’t mean we can’t try.”
Chapter End Notes

oh fraggle rock hip hop don't stop that do wop do wop Hikaru bonding with Sato Pops.
Leave comments!!
A Few Days Later:


“Come in,” Asami said, her hand trailing away from the little musical gizmo that Baatar Jr. had given her to play with.

There was a hesitant shudder from the doorway, and Asami realized that her father was having second thoughts about talking to her. Korra rolled over in the bed, absolutely down for the count after an evening of chasing Equalists across the city, and wrapped herself around Asami’s stomach. She giggled and motioned for Hiroshi to come in.

“It’s okay, Dad. I don’t bite.”

She felt the bed sag a little as her father sat at the foot.

“A-Are you two still together?” he asked.

“Korra and I? Yes… Is that a problem, Dad?”

“No. Not… not anymore. I just want you to be happy, Asami. And I know that she makes you that,” the old man said.

Asami heard his shoulders slump a little in defeat, and scooched closer to him, threading her hands into his.

“Dad… I’m not expecting you to be perfect… but… thank you for trying.”

“Of course. Anything for my girl.”

Korra began to groggily sit up, mumbling something about playing Metaldisc with Deska and Esna. The Avatar jumped back a little against Asami, realizing that none other than Hiroshi Sato was sitting at the foot of her bed. The blind woman reached out and put a hand on Korra’s knee to reassure her.
that the former CEO was not, in fact, going to murder them both.

They were working on it. They’ll get there.

“Morning, sir,” Korra said, unsuccessfully trying to stifle a yawn.

“It’s three in the afternoon, Korra,” Hiroshi mused.

Father and daughter began laughing aloud as the Water Tribe girl muttered something about needing to use the toilet and slipped out of the bed— sneaking off to the bathroom adjacent to their bedroom.

“She’s… a nice girl…” Hiroshi sighed.

“It’s hard, Dad. I know it’s so hard— thinking of Benders as humans… as people… but you get there, eventually,” Asami whispered, clutching his hands. “And then you begin to see them as friends and family and people you trust.”

“Do you trust me, Asami?”

The ex-heiress bit her lip, and let out a sigh through her nose, “No.”

She could hear Hiroshi nodding, “Good to see your still as smart as your mother.”

“You’re the one that taught me everything I know,” she whispered.

Whoop, there it is.

“A-Asami… I’m so sorry… If I’d known that this was the pain that I was going to cause you. Cause myself… of course I wouldn’t have done all those horrible things!!” Hiroshi sobbed.

“Dad, it’s… well… I was going to say that it’s okay,” Asami began, “but obviously it’s not. You have to change. You have to grow— and I did those things too. I hurt people, too. I wanted to eradicate Benders, too. We both forgot to live.”

“But I was the one responsible!! You were… brainwashed by me! I’m the worst father in existence!!”

“Fire Lord Ozai can one up you.”

She heard Hiroshi sigh through his nose— the way you do when you’re trying not to laugh or smile. He gripped her hands tightly and ran his thumbs over her knuckles soothingly.

Korra walked out of the restroom, “I’m going to go get a beer— would you two like anything?”

“I’ll take scotch if there’s any,” Hiroshi asked.

“Of course, Old Man.”

“Hey!” Hiroshi chuckled playfully, “Just you wait till you have kids!”

Asami smiled and asked for a beer as well, listening for her soulmate’s footsteps becoming more and more muffled before turning back to her father.

“Sweetie…”
“Yes, Dad?”

“I was wondering if… you could tell me… what it’s like?”

Asami raised an eyebrow, the gesture a little hidden underneath the gray band that covered part of the top half of her face, “Bending or being blind?”

Hiroshi sighed a little in sorrow, “Not having your sight.”

Asami leaned back against the pillow in thought, letting go of his hands and biting her lip as she pondered. Perhaps a few seconds had passed, perhaps a few minutes— but when she was ready to answer, the Airbender sat back up.

“It’s difficult,” she admitted. “I wake up every single day in the darkness, expecting to see Korra’s blue eyes— or the sun in the sky. Expecting to see Kuvira and Baatar and Opal and Jinora and Bolin and Mako. I feel helpless every single time I need a favor and I have to toot this little whistle.”

Asami held up the little musical toy that Rohan had carved for her in case of emergencies before continuing.

“I know that it’s useless to hope that my eyesight comes back… and I’ve been able to get around without it. But there’s something about knowing that I’ll never get to draw again… that I can’t drive a car… that when I blunder into an object everybody gives me this look of pity— even when they think I don’t know that they’re there.”

Hiroshi sighed, taking her hand once again. He opened his mouth to say something, but she beat him to it.

“But Dad… last week… there was this thunderstorm— you remember how I used to be afraid of them because of the lightening? Well… now that I can’t see the flashes. There was nothing to be scared of… and the whole time I was sitting on the windowsill, dangling my legs on the edges and listening. Listening to the thunder. The way all the furniture jumped at a single CLAP! The pitter patter of the rain on the roof. Gods, I listened to it all day. And you wouldn’t believe how comical it sounds when you hear someone slip and fall in the mud— it had to be Kuvira!!”

She heard Hiroshi stifle a chuckle.

“Or when I sat down at the table for the first time with my new Air Nomad family, and we had Rogan-Josh— remember how we used to cook it with Mom?”

“I do,” Hiroshi sighed with a smile.

“Well, Pema makes it vegetarian here, but it’s still just as good— and the first thing that hit me, when Korra slid the plate in front of me, was the smell. Gods, Dad, warm has a smell! The way the spices mixed with the coconut sauce and the rice… the peppers… the tofu… the naan. The tea that hadn’t even left the counter, Commander Bumi’s bourbon and ice. I even managed to warn Rohan that Meelo was pouring hot sauce into his Mountain Dew because I could smell it underneath the table!

“And… there’s touch. Textures and feeling other people’s hands,” Asami whispered— her own fingertips playing with the little nicks and scars on Hiroshi’s hands. “How much you can learn about a person by their hands. Baatar has a scar right here, where you have one— from being left-handed and writing with a pencil for so long that it leaves a little callous on your middle-finger’s knuckle; yeah, like that. Or how Jinora’s hands are soft but nimble. And Opal’s hands are rough from living in
the wilderness for a long time.

“Mako and Hikaru have really hot hands— Firebenders, the both of them. There’s a bit more to it than that… her hands also feel like Mom’s used to; so I like to hold hers a lot. And Bolin’s hands are stocky and small, like an Earthbender, but strong. Like, really strong— I’m slightly worried he might break my hand sometimes, I don’t know how he’s trusted with a baby. But Kuvira’s also an Earthbender… and hands are long and nimble, like a Waterbender, because that’s how she uses her Metalbending. But she has a scar running across her palm from… her parents. They used to hit her and burn her before she ran away. Tenzin’s hands are old and wrinkly, but understanding. You wouldn’t think that hands have emotions, would you?

“Dequan’s hands are so small. Like little berries, or jelly beans. So much fun to play with. And… well… to me, at least, the most important hands are my soulmate’s. Korra’s hands have seen a lot of fighting— but they’re soft. Not a lot of hours of working like you and I, because she manipulates elements, but she doesn’t touch them. I spend an hour a day just running my fingers over her hands. Knowing that they once had mercury running through them. Knowing that Raava lives inside them— but she was once ripped away from Korra… like Mom was from us. Knowing that those fingers have been Bloodbent. Hands that have been through so much and yet are as smooth as glass.”

Hiroshi didn’t say anything, only letting his daughter run her fingertips over his hands.

“I suppose… I should be sad… but Dad… this is like nothing I’ve ever experienced. Part of me wishes I could have my sight back— but part of me is so glad that this happened. Yes, this is a challenge, but that’s why I can overcome it. Because I’m your daughter.”

She could hear him struggling to hold back tears and leaned forwards, letting him capture her in a big, loving hug.

“Excuse me, am I interrupting anything?” Korra asked, from the doorway.

“No! Come on in, Korra,” Hiroshi sniffled, wiping away a tear.

“I’ll hand this to you… Hikaru said that she was looking for you?” her soulmate said, kissing her on the forehead (she didn’t even hear her father squirm in discomfort. Huh).

“Alright, thanks for the beer.”

She could hear Korra sit down next to her father and wondered what they were going to possible talk about, but shook it off— closing the bedroom door as she wandered down to Hikaru’s room. The Firebender was nowhere to be found; but Bolin, who was cradling and shushing a wailing Dequan, suggested that she might be out in the courtyard. Still no cousin; Kuvira told her to check the kitchen. Nope. Pema advised her to try the communal garden, which seemed a little strange for a Firebender to be around, but she walked out there anyways. The vibrations in the air told her that the tomatoes were going to bloom very well this year, but also that Hikaru was nowhere to be found.

It was only with a defeated shrug that she realized Korra told her a dirty white lie in order to talk to Hiroshi in private.
“Are… are you sure you’re okay with this?”

Hiroshi laughed, “You’d do it with or without my permission, Korra. I… I know that we’re not on the best terms…but I want you to know that I truly am grateful when you saved my life— in the Estate. You have… you have it.”

Korra threw her arms around his shoulders and pulled him into a Platypus-Bear hug, “Thank you!”

Surprisingly, he reciprocated the hug; letting out a long sigh and leaning a little into her shoulders. It occurred to Korra that he’d gone a whole year with minimal physical contact. Sometimes you just really fucking need a hug.

“Besides, I was roughly your age when it happened to me,” the former CEO chuckled, his chin still resting on her shoulder.

“Sir, this means a lot.”

“Call me Hiroshi, Korra. Please. I don’t want to be Sir or Mr. Sato anymore… that man, who I used to be, was filled with hatred. I’m changing… no, I’m trying to change. And that means accepting you wholly… and e-equally.”

“Thank you, Hiroshi,” Korra whispered sincerely.

With a long smile, she stood up and gave him a formal bow. He even bowed back, from where he was sitting. She turned to walk out the door and collided with her soulmate— both of them feeling the pain when Korra’s nose knocked against Asami’s chin (damn height differences).

“So what did Hikaru want to talk to me about?” her soulmate said skeptically, both of them rubbing the bridges of their noses.

“Uhm… I might have been mistaken…” Korra admitted sheepishly.

“Oh really? You know, if you wanted to speak with my Dad alone, you could’ve just asked,” the ex-heiress snickered sassily, her hands on her hips.

“That’s fair. How bout I make it up to you? Let’s go out tonight!”

Asami gave Korra a look— and when someone who can’t see gives you a look, you know shit’s real — and rolled her useless eyes, “Alright. You’re paying.”

“Alright!! Come on, I’ve got just the place.”

She flashed Hiroshi a mischievous smirk, and he shook his head with a chuckle— whispering to Asami that he loved her and giving Korra a long, proud stare. She had his approval, and Korra reminded herself to buy him a new, deluxe tool set for his birthday.
“Wow… this place smells amazing— is it Kwongs?”

“Not quite, I think you’ve eaten enough of that Pretentious Fire Nation Cuisine to last yourself a lifetime,” Korra laughed, steering her lover through the tables and following the waiter.

“Well where is it, then?”

“Akhila’s.”

“No way,” Asami murmured in shock.

“Yes way.”

“There is no way that we’re in the fanciest restaurant in all of Republic City. Korra— you didn’t! You planned this, didn’t you?” the blind woman whispered, taking a whiff of a passing platter of food and almost fainting at how good it smelled.

“Maybe,” Korra said smugly, as she helped her soulmate into a booth.

“I can’t believe this. You’ve never been this classy before,” Asami teased, feeling the fine fabric that she was sitting on.

“Asami Sato!” Korra whispered, taking great care that no one else could hear the name, “I am the classiest woman in the entire world! I’m sitting on ten-thousand years’ worth of class!”

“Mmhmm,” the blind woman hummed, taking a sip of the glass of wine that a waiter had carefully set into her hand. “This is good. Oh Korra… this is really good.”

The Avatar chuckled, taking a sip. Whoo! That was not wine, that was liquid velvet! Not enough O’s in smooth to describe that taste!! She took another sip and reached across the table, slowly running her fingers over Asami’s until their hands were laced together. Somehow, it’s as though the ex-heiress had known that Korra was going to take her out somewhere fancy— she’d had Hikaru help her with her makeup and had chosen a fine Air Nomad dress to wear. Her usual gray band was off, and though most of the scarring on her face had healed— an abundance of sessions with Kya— there was a slight difference in color on her forehead. Not that it mattered; Asami Sato was the most beautiful woman in the world.

“I love you,” Korra sighed happily.

Asami squeezed her hand, “I love you too. You’re the most fantastic person in the world.”

“I think you have me confused for a mirror.”

“Korra.”

“Right, sorry,” the Avatar mumbled sheepishly.

“I’m just kidding, love. But you are wonderful… so wonderful… kind, funny, smart, fierce, determined to succeed… sometimes without thinking things through,” Asami mused.

“Hey!”

This earned the Avatar lots of laughter from her lover, and her heart swelled.

Dinner came and went— the finest food in all of Republic City, a mix of all the cultures of the world, and Korra and Asami found themselves walking along the piers of Yue Bay. Though busier in the
summer, the Waterfront was lit up at night with vendor stands and performers; and Korra knew that Asami’s attention was absolutely enraptured by the bands playing on the stages. Someone pressed a flyer into her hand, something or other about a discount on photographs, and Korra felt a little guilty when she Firebent the paper to shreds (when the person wasn’t looking, of course). Asami gripped on her elbow as they walked through the bustling crowd; the heiress no doubt listening to every single word around her, sensing every single life force with her ears alone.

Jugglers weaved through the crowds, and various Bending tricks wooed and awed the crowds— coins were tossed into hats, and Korra couldn’t help but wonder if the Spirits could set something up like this, so that the Spirit World never had to worry about bad weather. After all, not a soul in this crowd was upset.

Least of all, Asami Sato.

The ex-heiress listened to an indie band of college students cover “Secret Tunnel” and sang along with the crowd. Korra could feel Asami’s heart beating through the vibrations in the ground and her own raced to meet it. The two of them walked up to a small clearing made by the crowd— where people were dancing. Korra felt her heart skip three-thousand times in the fifteen minutes that they danced to various traditional songs… finally, with a tender and loving, slow dance to “Little Soldier Boy”, Korra knew;

Tonight was perfect. It had to be tonight.

And so, she led her lover through the crowd and strolled along the dock. She knew that the former engineer also loved listening to the waves splash up against the wooden wharf.

Their hands were clasped together until they reached the edge, where Korra’s dark-skinned hands slithered their way around Asami’s waist, resting on her stomach. The Airbender chuckled a little, letting out a content hum as she leaned back against her soulmate.

“I love you.”

“You’ve already said that one,” Asami pointed out playfully, “Approximately thirteen times today.”

“Are you saying that it’s growing old?” Korra inquired.

“Oh, no, not at all. But I can’t help but wonder what else you might have hidden up your sleeve, Avatar.”

"You got me, I guess I'll have to step up my game then," Korra thought mischievously.

With that, Korra reached into her pocket and pulled out the carving that she’d been working on, pressing it into Asami’s hands and kneeling down to the ground. The roar of the ocean in her ears. The sounds of seagulls shrieking overhead. Thousands of stars twinkling overhead— and yet the woman standing above her outshone them all.

There was a dawning look of realization on Asami’s face as she felt the little carving— the strips of fabric attached on either side. The tiny metal clasp at the end. But Korra beat her to it, taking a deep breath and feeling her heart stop;

“Asami Sato. Will you marry me?”
Chapter End Notes

In all seriousness, I really loved writing being blind from Asami's PoV.
In all not seriousness; AND NOW THE MOMENT YOU'VE ALL BEEN FUCKING WAITING FOR!!!

Do I even have to ask you guys to leave comments on this chapter?
Chapter Summary

“It is such a happiness when good people get together -- and they always do.”

— Jane Austen

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Next Day:

*She said yes*, Korra thought with a goofy smile.

“Are you sure?”

“Hmm? Yeah— the Chief told me they got enough bodies in case something goes haywire. We can have ourselves a merry little wedding.”

“Korra, you haven’t even introduced me to your parents. This is going to be awkward.”

“Nonsense, they love you. I tell them all about you once in a while.”

*She said yes.*

“Really?”

“Oh yeah— my mom is knitting you a sweater, actually. Should be in the mail in a month.”

“You’re joking.”

“No! I’m serious! Here’s your plane ticket; don’t lose it!”

*She said yes.*

“Why did you just hand the blind person a piece of paper?”

“Because I’m an idiot, Asami.”
“Ah, but you’re my idiot.”

“Yes I am.”

_She said yes._

With that, Korra had the taxi driver pull over to let them out— grabbing her suitcase and excitedly tugging her fiancé along through the terminal.

Fiancé.

She’d never get tired of that sound.

Being the Avatar, and having a disabled person in your posse of two, has its serious perks when it comes to Security Checkpoints. Holding up two passports— the security quickly ushered the two in through the terminal. Korra gave the White Lotus a friendly bow and gently guided Asami by the elbow towards their gate.

_She said yes._

Occasionally, while Korra was talking to the clerk or checking the flight times on the big blue screen — she’d look over and see Asami smiling as she touched the blue pendant on her neck. The blind woman ran her fingers across the deeply etched swirling and whirling patterns on the stone; tracing the decorations over and over again. It filled the Avatar with pride.

_She fucking said yes._

They were sitting at the little black seats that are everywhere in every airport, when Asami slithered onto Korra’s lap and cuddled her forehead into her neck. The Avatar wrapped her arms around her little Airbender and let out a content chuckle. Nothing. Nothing could make Korra happier than this. She pressed a small kiss to Asami’s lips and smiled into the gesture a little.

“I’m so happy right now,” Korra murmured.

“Me too. I’ve been waiting for this day for so long.”

“Yeah?”

“Ever since I… I kissed you for the first time after our Art Museum date— when you were asleep. Subconsciously, I wanted a future with you. I just didn’t understand it… because of all the conflict I was feeling inside.”

“Sweetie, I was not asleep when you kissed me. I remember that morning quite clearly.”
Asami blushed and let out an “oops!”, burying her face into Korra’s shoulder. The Avatar laughed and cradled her soon-to-be wife’s short black hair and pressed a kiss to her forehead.

“I love you.”

“And I love you,” Asami murmured, her face still buried in Korra’s hoodie.

They boarded the plane and Korra was about to call window seat when she remembered that it wouldn’t really matter to Asami. Sheepishly, she helped her fiancé load her carry-on into the upper storage container. The blind woman playfully swatted her hands away when she tried to buckle her too, claiming that Korra probably needed more help using a seat-belt than she did.

“Hey! I’ve ridden in a plane once!”

“Really?” Asami asked with a raised eyebrow.

“Um… I was… okay, so maybe this is my first time— worst case scenario we’ll just open the door and fly the rest of the way, right?” the Avatar shrugged, looking curiously out the window at the planes taking off and landing.

“Korra… you really have no knowledge of planes, do you?” Asami giggled. “Whatever you do… please don’t open the emergency exit, for the love of Raava!”

Fifteen minutes later, Korra was tightly clutching the blind woman’s hand as the plane began to bump and rumble— leaving the safety of the ground behind and taking off. She felt a lurch in her stomach and nearly set the seat in front of her on fire. Her knee was nervously bouncing up and down at 60 mph, and she bit her lip when she felt the plane tilt to turn.

“This is so terrifying, why’d you let me take window seat?”

“Korra, you fly around on a glider— how is this any different?”

“I’m putting my fate into the hands of a machine.”

“Do I have to remind you just who your marrying? Who do you think designed this plane?”

“Oh shit, really?”

“Listen to that engine purr, babe. Future Industries Tech. Feel better?”

“Okay… maybe a little,” Korra whispered, pressing a long kiss to Asami’s lips.

At least they had First Class seats; they could stretch out their legs and lean back as much as they wanted. Asami’s fingers fiddled with the buttons of the radio as she excitedly listened to different stations. Meanwhile, the Avatar had a confusing adventure trying to figure out the little screen on the back of the chair in front of her— eventually deciding to watch a show called The L Word (whatever that was).

Ten minutes later, there was a profuse amount of nudity on the screen, and as hot and sexy as it was — Korra embarrassingly slammed the OFF button on her display.

It appeared that her fiancé was currently listening to music and meditating; somehow fitting her legs
into the Lotus position (the seats in First Class were certainly big enough for it) and smiling a little as she relaxed. Korra’s fingertips traced her soulmate’s knee, up her thigh, her side, her back, her shoulder, and lightly mapping out her face. Asami smiled a little at the gesture but continued meditating.

Now it was a game.

As softly as she could, Korra ran her hand over her fiancé with the touch of a ghost—the pad of her thumb catching onto Asami’s bottom lip. But her soulmate didn’t respond; and considering what she’d once told Korra, about her sense of touch heightening since losing her sight… Korra couldn’t help but be impressed.

Now it was a challenge.

They still had a few hours before their flight was over.

Korra threw a blanket over the two of them—large enough that it spanned over both the seats. She checked around to see if anyone could hear them, but the flight attendants were busy at the cockpit, and everybody else was watching movies or listening to music.

Perfect.

The Avatar’s hand slithered underneath the blanket and lightly traced Asami’s stomach. She felt a slight twitch in her soulmate’s abs—clearly lacking expectance of the touch. Her fingertips swirled around in patterns underneath the ex-heiress’s shirt, and Asami took a small, noticeable breath through her nose. Her concentration was good; it was no wonder that she had become Tenzin’s favorite student in the past two months.

Fingertips slowly unbuttoned the hem of Asami’s jeans—freeing the zipper at the front. Asami took another small breath, steeling herself. Korra’s digits faintly wandered down her underwear and her index and middle finger began circling the blind woman’s sensitive bundle of nerves. Still no reaction out of Asami; and it was frustrating Korra.

Her circling strokes began to quicken, surely the other woman’s patience would break! She was certainly wet with arousal, and Korra wondered how she was able to keep herself so still.

With her palm still pressed against Asami’s clit, Korra reached a lone finger down; stroking back and forth along her soulmate’s slit. Eventually, she dipped down her finger—pushing through Asami’s entrance. She tried to send a seductive thought into her soulmate’s head;

“Don’t tell me you don’t want to enjoy this.”

No answer.

Korra wondered if she was asleep, but there was a small smile on the ex-heiress’s face. The Avatar was frustrated, and it was supposed to be the other way around. She slowly pushed another finger in and almost gasped aloud at how good Asami’s warm sex felt against her hand.

This was impossible. Korra wasn’t one to brag (who are we kidding here?), but she really knew how to push her soulmate’s buttons… she knew how to make her lover scream within a matter of minutes… something was afoot here…
Defeated, but intrigued, Korra withdrew her hand and flashed Asami a dirty look— not that the other woman could see it. The Avatar bit her lip, pinching her soulmate on the arm. No doubt, she felt the pain on her arm… but the former engineer didn’t even flinch at the sudden sting…

“Because I’m not in the Mortal World, doofus,” Asami’s voice teased.

Beaten at her own game, Korra leaned back and closed her eyes with a pout— easily clearing her mind and allowing herself to be transported into the realm of the Spirits.

When she opened her eyes again, she saw Asami laying down in the grass— her hands resting behind her head as she casually hummed with a wide smirk. Korra walked up to the blind woman with narrowed eyes.

“You’re clever.”

“That’s why you’re marrying me.”

The Avatar rolled her eyes and straddled the former engineer’s hips; her hands massaging Asami’s stomach.

“You win,” Korra whispered. “You’ve mastered meditation, a lot better than anyone else on Air Temple Island— and your certainly better at concentrating than me.”

“What’s my prize?” Asami murmured, finally squirming under Korra’s wandering hands.

With that, the Avatar let out a small chuckle and made sure that almost every Spirit in a fifty-mile radius could hear her fiancé screaming in pleasure.

The passengers on the plane were none the wiser.

“Korra, you didn’t tell us that she was taller than you!” Senna laughed, pulling in both of them for a hug.

“What? Oh… um… must’ve escaped my mind…” Korra muttered sheepishly, patting her Mom on the back.

“Oh really?” Tonraq chuckled with his booming voice. “She’s half a head taller than you!”

“Is not!”

“Am too,” Asami smiled, reaching out and letting Tonraq pull her into a large hug, “It’s wonderful to meet you. I can see where Korra gets her sense of humor.”
Tonraq let out another laugh and wrapped his arms around Asami, “I like this one, Senna!!”

Korra beamed. She knew that her parents had been a little shocked when she told them last night that she wanted to marry Asami— but they’d merely shook their heads and smiled over the Skype call and told her to come on down to the Southern Water Tribe, booking her and her fiancé a flight within fifteen minutes.

“Come on, my room is up here.”

“I didn’t know you lived here,” Asami pondered casually.

“Well… after I was poisoned I came to stay with my parents… I ended up residing for two and a half years. It’s been a while… but I think they’ve probably kept my room the same.”

Korra led Asami into the bedroom— the palace staff had left everything as she had all those years ago; with the exception of their suitcases laying on the bed. Asami opened her suitcase with a shiver and began feeling through the different fabrics— trying to decide which sweater would keep her warm.

The Avatar kissed her on the cheek and threaded her fingers through her fiancé’s. Pulling her over to the closet, Korra let Asami’s fingertips search through thick Water Tribe coats— more insulating and protecting of the winter storms (even though it was supposed to be Springtime… it’s never really anything other than Winter in the South). Asami pulled out Korra’s old jacket— the one that she’d fought Unalaq in.

“This one… feels familiar… I don’t know how to explain it,” the blind woman whispered.

Korra shrugged the coat over Asami’s shoulders— giving her a warm kiss on the back of her neck.

“You told me about Zaheer… and I know about Amon… but what happened when you fought your Uncle?” Asami asked, turning and cupping the Avatar’s cheek.

Together, they sat down on the bed, Korra drawing warm circles into Asami’s thigh with her index finger.

“He lied to everyone— he was using all of us in order to unleash Vaatu from the Tree of Time. Tried to have my father arrested, put up a blockade in the South. Varrick used this to advantage to try and start a war— practically manipulated everybody in Republic City. He captured Jinora’s soul and threatened to kill her if I didn’t open the Northern Spirit Portal.

“I fought him off as best as I could. But I failed to close the Southern Spirit Portal in time— and Vaatu broke free. The dark Spirit merged with my uncle; destroyed Raava within me, and rampaged all across the World. He was what covered Republic City in vines.”

“I remember,” Asami nodded. “My father and I hid underground, in our warehouse. We weren’t sure that we were going to make it.”

Korra tightened her grip on her fiancé’s hand, “I meditated within the Tree of Time— I tapped into cosmic energy and became a giant blue Spirit. I fought UnaVaatu in Yue Bay, and Jinora’s soul helped me pull Raava out of Vaatu. Pull the light out of the dark. And then I managed to dissipate UnaVaatu’s energy.”
The blind woman shook her head, “You’re amazing, you know that?”

Lips surged against each other, arms tangled together—Korra’s weight pressing down Asami and knocking suitcases off the bed. It mattered little; she wanted to show her fiancé how much she loved her. The Water Tribe girl cuddled her lover close and pressed kisses all over her face.

“Korra,” the blind woman hummed, smiling at her lover’s attempt to pepper her face.

“Shhhh… there’s nobody else in the world but us,” the Avatar whispered.

“If you insist.”

“I do.”

“Save those words for later sweetie,” Asami laughed.

The phone rang twice before Korra rolled over and picked it up, “Hello?”

“Put Asami on the line, please,” Hikaru’s voice called.

“Um… you know what time it is?” the Avatar whispered groggily and shivering a little.

Though there was a fire going in the hearth, and Asami’s warm naked body was pressed against her own, the South Pole was another kind of cold at night.

“I’ll be quick, don’t worry,” the Firebender said earnestly.

Korra shook her fiancé awake, and the blind woman reached through the darkness until the Avatar pressed the phone into her hand. Asami sat up and let out a yawn.

“What is it? Everything alright?”

“Hey, cuz. I know that I said this before you two left— but I’m really pissed that you’re not having your wedding at home.”

“You interrupted a perfectly good dream about Jason Mraz, Teagan and Sara, and MCR for this?” the blind woman mumbled.

“Asami… I wanted to do a double wedding!!”

“So have one with Kuvira.”

“Ugh, it’s not the same,” Hikaru whined.

“Do you hear that?”

“Hear what?” the Firebender asked.

Click.
“The sound of me not caring, Hikaru.”

“You did not just hang up on her,” Korra laughed, taking the phone back from Asami and setting it down on the nightstand.

The blind woman mumbled something along the lines of “I’ll call her in the morning” and rolled over so that her arm was draped over Korra’s stomach. The Avatar ran soothing fingers through short black hair and smiled—looking out at the shifting colors of the Southern night sky.

“Do I look alright?” Asami asked nervously.

“Sweetie…you’re beautiful,” Korra chuckled, kissing her on the cheek.

The ex-heiress rolled her eyes, “I know that! But do I look alright?”

Asami was wearing a red sleeveless dress with thin ruby fabric draping over her shoulders. A yellow sash was tied around her waist and she had long yellow gloves to represent her newfound culture. Not that bright ugly yellow, or mustard yellow…but that muted, warm yellow that the Air Nomads wear. An orange necklace dangled from her collar, and the Avatar could only describe her as the human embodiment of sunset. Korra was in a custom-made Water Tribe dress that she’d been reserving for a special day. A large blue pendant hung over her chest and occasionally the Airbender’s fingers wandered up to play with it. The armbands on either side were not the same style that the old tomboy version of her loved, but more decoration based. Her chestnut hair was set in a small bun, with two loose strands falling down on either side.

“You look beautiful,” Korra whispered again, leaning forwards and capturing Asami’s lips in a kiss.

“It is traditionally considered bad luck to view one’s future spouse before the ceremony,” a familiar, drawling voice echoed from the doorway.

“Indeed,” another boring voice sighed. “I do wish that they might end this display and finish the ceremony. The longer we are away from home, the greater the chance that someone might overthrow our government.”

With a long sigh, the Avatar looked over at Eska and Desna—who were impatiently standing and waiting for the two women to finish up. They’d arrived earlier that morning via the Spirit Portal, with an ensemble of Water Tribe nobles following behind, eager to see the wedding of the Princess of the Southern Water Tribe (who also happened to be the Avatar) to the former heiress of Future Industries (who happened to be a blind Airbender). Needless to say, Tonraq only allowed Eska and Desna to see the ceremony.

“Well then that means that only I’m going to have the bad luck, then,” Korra reasoned. “The superstition never said anything about listening to and touching your fiancé before the wedding. Now scram, before I demonstrate the Avatar State to you up close.”

Silently, like cat-owls, the twins walked away, and Korra offered an apologetic chuckle.

“You still want to marry into this family? You’ll have to deal with that every Glacier Spirits Festival.”

Asami smiled and pressed another kiss to Korra’s lips, “I don’t mind in the slightest.”

“Come on. Let’s go get married.”
Though traditional, in all aspects, the ceremony was rather quick. Tonraq walked Korra down the aisle, where a beaming Asami was standing with Senna at her side. The attendants were mostly friends of the parents; who had known Korra for her whole life… and of course Master Katara. And at the end of the ceremony, when Asami’s lips met Korra’s… she could only describe it as the best kiss she’d ever had.

At the reception, Asami was startled when an elderly pair of hands grabbed hers, carefully guiding her aside and giving her shoulder a reassuring squeeze.

“You’re going to make a wonderful wife,” Katara mused. “Are you prepared to be strong, patient, and understanding?”

“Of course,” the former engineer exhaled, shocked that one of the most famous people in the world was talking to her.

“Even if the decisions that Korra makes go against your beliefs?”

Asami thought about it for a few minutes and then nodded, “Like a leaf in the wind— I’ll adapt.”

She heard Katara chuckle, in that soothing way that an old lady does, “I still can’t believe how many Airbenders there are. You were chosen for something great, Mrs. Sato.”

Asami remembered suddenly that she was Suki’s granddaughter. She realized a great deal within those few seconds. That… perhaps… in another lifetime— she would’ve grown up knowing Katara. That this elderly woman holding her hand was connected to her in more ways than one; not solely because Asami had married the Waterbending Master’s incarnation. So she slowly wrapped her arms around the senior and held on tight, feeling a hand pat her on the back as the other woman welcomed the embrace.

“Thank you. I hope we can become great friends, Master Katara.”

“You’re just like your mother, Yasuko— she was always too formal around us members of Team Avatar. That being said… your Aunt Shun’s attitude was a little too much like my brother Sokka’s… I think she took after him. Just Katara is fine, dear.”

“Yes, of course, Just Katara.”

This caused the old woman to chuckle a great deal and threaten to send her son Bumi after the former engineer. Korra ended up having to intervene in order to steal a dance with her newfound wife, but the blind girl couldn’t help but wonder at how intriguing the Waterbending Master was.

Yes… Asami thought that they would indeed become great friends.

And as the newlyweds twirled around on the dance floor, with the grace of two skilled Airbenders… Asami couldn’t help but realize that everything she’d ever wanted was currently holding her tight and
murmuring sweet nothings into her ear.

This.

This must be what it feels like to achieve inner balance.

Chapter End Notes

Wow.

Leave comments.
This is War

Chapter Summary

“The purpose of literature is to turn blood into ink.”

— T.S. Eliot

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Suyin sent several strips of metal flying down the hallway with a snarl on her face. These bastards had taken away her husband. She would not hesitate to kill. Six or seven Equalists fell with spears of steel in their abdomens, slumping against the tunnel walls and staining the floors crimson. Kuvira ran up from behind her and took out a thug at her left.

“Don’t tell me you didn’t see him,” her daughter scoffed.

“I was just waiting for you to take him out.”

“Sure. Where’s Hiroshi?”

“With Lin— down the Western tunnel,” Su answered tapping her foot and seeing through multiple levels of tunnel.

“You sure she won’t attempt to kill him, or worst… arrest him?”

“He’s on our side now, dear.”

A yell echoed from down the hallway and arrows flew past their heads, Kuvira instantly sent them flying back into the bodies of their opponents— allowing them to stick much further than a bow could allow. No longer was Team Avatar taking a passive approach. The amount of blood on Equalist hands could fill a canyon, and Suyin had some revenge to exact. They all did.

A turquoise projection appeared through the walls, “Lin wants to regroup in the main fork.”

“Alright, Jinora, see you there,” Kuvira smiled softly.

Whizz!

“Watch it!” Kuvira snapped at her mother, as another trio of Missiles began trying to take their bending.

“They really don’t learn, do they?” Suyin shouted, as she sent several strips before being struck down with an arrow.

Kuvira ripped the sides of the walls apart and kicked them down the hallway, allowing a giant plate of steel to slip into the trio— effectively ending the violence. For good measure, she slammed the slab into their heads another time.
She turned to her mother and easily lifted the Unobtainium out of Su’s bloodstream, flicking the collected metal to the side.

“Thanks,” the Matriarch coughed.

“No problem, let’s regroup with Lin.”

Jumping onto a plate of steel, they quickly slid down the hallways as though they might be surfboarding. They turned around a corner and were faced against a pair of Chi Blockers. Su blocked each and every jab with the agility that her mother had taught her to possess—twisting the woman’s hand upwards and breaking the Equalist’s wrist before slamming her into the wall.

“Argh!” Kuvira yelped, as the man she was fighting struck her in the neck.

Su slammed a chunk of the floor around his throat and hung him from the ceiling—ignoring the crack! that his neck made. No one touched her children.

“You alright?”

“Ugh… it’ll wear off in about fifteen,” Kuvira groaned, weakly standing up.

The Matriarch slung her adoptive daughter’s arm over her own shoulders—leading the two of them down a set of stairs where they would meet up with Lin and the others.

“Hey, boss. And boss,” a Triad member nodded with a grin. “She okay?”

Right, his name was Shin—Su smiled at how uncomfortable Lin must be at Team Avatar’s suggestion that they ought to work with Triad’s again, since they were formidable fighters (and a little more expendable than teenagers, but you didn’t hear it from Suyin). She internally chuckled at what her mother must be thinking of all this nonsense.

“Chi Blocking,” the Matriarch explained. “Cover us?”

“No problem, ma’am. Lin’s just downs this way,” the Waterbender smirked.

Walking into the room, Su had to stifle an awful lot of laughter at the look of obvious discomfort on her half-sister’s face—Lin was surrounded by Triad bosses and teenage Task Force members, the ragtag Team Avatar, several of Tenzin’s strongest Airbenders, and of course none other than Hiroshi Sato.

“This section of the tunnel is cleared,” Lin said, looking down at a map, “We’re still no closer to finding that bunker you’re talking about.”

“I never actually visited the place—it was a hideout that the Lieutenant and Amon retreated to,” the former CEO argued. “But it’s the best lead we have right now.”

“Have you tried looking for wherever Amon might’ve lived?” Bolin offered.

Hiroshi shook his head;

“The Lieutenant… and the rest of us, we were all so devastated to find out Amon’s Bloodbending secret that we demolished the place before moving on to other projects. No offense, of course,” he added to the Benders surrounding him.

Suyin peered at the map—they had cleared through half the tunnels in Republic City within a week and were still no closer to finding the damn hideout.
“Alright, we’re just going to have to keep moving through these passages. We know that they’re down here,” Lin frowned. “Which means either they were expecting us to come down here, or they’re guarding something.”

“Probably both,” Mako sighed.

Ten Minutes Later:

\textit{Crack! Crack! Crack!}

“Watch out, Opal!” Kuvira snapped, pulling her sister to the side and stomping up a brick wall.

“I’m fine. I’m fine!”

“Yeah, sure. Come on, let’s go find Viper and Two-Toed Ping,” Bao chuckled, a hand on both of their shoulders.

“You just want to see your boyfriends,” Kuvira smirked.

Bao reached out and ruffled her braid playfully— no, she was not dating either of them, but she’d certainly taken up their offer of doing jobs for the Triple Threats. Nothing illegal, just espionage. Hey! It’s not like the Coalition ever paid rent!

Hikaru walked up besides the trio, “Is this hallway clear?”

\textit{Crack! Crack!}

“I’ll give you three guesses,” Bao grunted, sending several powerful kicks of rock towards the Shooters.

Hikaru allowed fire to erupt from her fingertips, and Opal fed the blazes with extra wind— creating a make-shift flamethrower. Kuvira heated strips of steel suspended in the fiery path of Hikaru’s Bending, while Bao kept them busy with a distraction, and then fired scalding projectiles towards the Equalists.

No more Ms. Nice Gals.

The group of opponents fell with screams of pain. Each of them felt equally horrible for this kind of violence— but the criminals had brought such pain upon themselves.

“Come on, let’s head down here,” Bao offered with a smirk.

“There’s a door here!” Opal exclaimed, trying to tug at the handle. “It’s locked!”

“No it’s not,” Kuvira laughed, wrenching the iron entrance open and letting the slab float to the side.
“Show off,” her sister mumbled.

Bao chuckled and let the Beifongs go before her. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Hikaru take a deep breath.

“You alright?” the Earthbender asked, a guiding hand on her friend’s back as she helped her through.

“Yeah. Fine.”

“You sure?” Bao raised an eyebrow.

Hikaru blinked, letting out a soft sigh through her nose, “I’m a parent. What am I doing here?”

“Making the city safe for your kids. And for other children.”

“What if something happens to me?” the Firebender asked with a shaky tone.

Bao bit her lip, “I’m not going to let that happen.”

“Come on, you guys— I think we’ve found something!” Kuvira’s voice called.

Hikaru took a long look at the former leader of the Coalition and then smiled softly, joining the Beifong sisters as they looked at a platinum wall with a combination on it.

“This looks old…” Hikaru investigated.

“What do you mean?” Kuvira asked.

“Look at the keypad… the same four numbers have been pressed over and over again, the paint has rubbed off… so we know that the code hasn’t changed. It’s stayed the same. Whatever this door has probably been in use since the Amon days.”

“So someone who’s been around since the beginning would know the combo?” Bao smirked, seeing where Opal was going with this.

“Hiroshi.”

Opal took a deep breath and closed her eyes, clearly sending a Soulmate Message to Jinora— who was back in the central room of the tunnel system with Lin, acting as a go-between to all the groups currently searching for Equalists. Hikaru and Bao exchanged looks— who knew what could be hidden behind the door?

The Airbender cracked an eye open and grinned, “Try 6-5-7-3.”

Hikaru punched the code into the keypad. The platinum door beeped and clicked open.

Unlike the rest of the tunnels… this route was not filthy, with trash littering the floor. No… the
concrete beneath their feet was swept clean— the walls did not have condensation dripping down the sides from a dense musty underground environment. No, this place was air conditioned and kept clean.

It put Kuvira on edge.

Four girls silently crept around corners— chock full to the brim with Equalist weaponry. This must’ve been one of the caches the Lieutenant had resorted to after Korra had *literally* crashed their party.

Another thing that bothered her was that, despite their silent approaches, the Equalists in this section were alert. Attentive. More than once, Bao would shoot a pebble up at a security camera and shatter the glass before they entered the room— and yet Kuvira was worried that someone might catch up to them.

“How do you know?” Opal asked.

“Seismic sense, come on— do I seriously know more about Grandma than you?”

“Oh shut up,” her sister hissed.

Kuvira sent a strip of metal into a Chi Blocker’s shoulder, who stumbled back against the wall as he tried to deal with the piece of steel causing him to bleed out.

The metal tunnels kept lighting up an impressive orange at every flare of orange— Hikaru sending fireball after fireball towards opponents with a snarl on her face. Kuvira reminded herself that these were the people that had kidnapped the Firebender’s sister and had attempted to kill her cousin. Suki’s descendant was out for blood.

Crack! Crack!

“Idiots, they’re going to cause ricochets!” Kuvira thought with a frown, working with Bao to send a slab of concrete through the hallways.

They sprinted down another corridor and the former Captain let out a yelp— there it was; a control station with security cameras.

“This’ll have the information we’re looking for,” she called to her friends.

“We’ll stand guard, make it quick,” Bao nodded, pulling Opal over to help her protect the entrance.

“Don’t tell me you’re a hacker,” Hikaru scoffed.

“Not a chance. I’m just going to do what I do best,” Kuvira laughed.

She ripped the computer tower apart with Metalbending, pulling out the hard drive and sticking it into Hikaru’s backpack. With a chuckle, she slammed the damaged computer tower through the office— wrecking everything in sight.

“I didn’t even think of that,” the Firebender murmured in surprise.

“Why do you think I was chosen to protect a city? You gotta think on your feet,” Kuvira huffed with
Bao smiled and motioned for them to follow, laughing as she ran through the corridors. Kuvira should’ve gone first. If she’d taken point, she would’ve sensed the Shooter at the end of the hallway.

CRACK!!

Bao slumped against the wall, her mouth instantly flooding with blood. Kuvira didn’t think, she acted—stomping her feet and raising a shield of concrete to protect her friends and then angrily sending chunk after chunk of the floor towards the Shooter. But he was too agile, dodging her every move.

“Look at you filthy Benders! You’re outdated!” the Equalist cackled. “Modern science is going to rule the world, and your pathetic ‘magic’ will become forgotten!!”

“Technology and innovation should be what drives the Nation forward,” the Great Uniter whispered in her ear.

No. Not right now. She sent a few metal strips towards his eyes, desperately trying to blind him as he retaliated with bullets; forcing her to dodge with earthen columns as they tangoed through the hallways.

“Are you ready to show the world what a true superpower looks like?” the Great Uniter hissed.

She sent another strip, managing to pierce him in the shoulder. Unlike his comrades, this man wasn’t going down without taking her with him. The dictator in her head snarled;

“No one can stop us.”

Kuvira let out a yell as the Equalist managed to pierce her left bicep with a bullet. She was distracted. She was clumsy. She…She needed to let the Great Uniter take over.
“Come and get me!” she yelled, allowing the tyrant to channel through.

What could have been.

She ran back down to where the others were hiding. She lowered the wall and made sure that they were still doing okay. Hikaru and Opal were leaning over an injured Bao. A dying Bao.

Enough. Enough of the silly tactics. This is war.

Kuvira looked into Hikaru’s sorrowful amber eyes, remembering the day she’d restored the Firebender’s Bending. What she’d discovered you could do with enough concentration. Footsteps. He was approaching. He was going to put her friends in danger. Her sister.

“Kuvira?”

“Y-Yeah?”

“You know that there’s iron in people’s bloodstreams, right?”

The former Captain barred her teeth, turned and charged forwards, allowing a strip of metal to slam the man’s pistol. With a deafening cry, Kuvira surged her arms forward and then drew them back sharply, with all the power she could muster.

There was a horrible churning sound roaring in her eardrums as she pulled the very metal out of his blood—iron ripping from his skin. It didn’t take much, really.

A human being’s corpse slumped to the floor and she let the iron that flowed through him mere seconds ago fall down beside him. Kuvira turned with hatred and anger in her eyes, looking at her friends.

Hikaru looked scared.

But Opal looked horrified.

“I… I don’t know how I could do that…” Kuvira murmured, looking down at the body. “I just… he was going to kill us…”

Her sister took a few breaths and stepped back, her back hitting the wall, “You killed him.”

But this was a mission where they were resorting to killing.

Kuvira had murdered that man in an… inhumane way.

She’d ripped the blood out of his body. So to speak.

Opal turned and looked at the dying girl next to them, dropping down and holding Bao’s hand
without a second glance to her sister.

“Bao, stay with me,” the Firebender whispered to her friend. “It’s me, Hikaru.”

“H-hey there.”

Hikaru’s hands were stained crimson as she tried to put pressure against the Earthbender’s chest. But she knew. She knew that Bao’s lung was collapsing. That she was being kept in pain.

“D-did we win?” the Earthbender asked, looking up at Hikaru with wide green eyes.


“Yeah, Bao. We won.”

One of the dying girl’s hands gripped Hikaru’s, dragging it away from her bullet wound and holding on tightly as Hikaru watched life drain from emerald orbs. Ragged breathing slowed down to a stop, but her eyes never left Bao’s. Her shaking, broken body stilled. But the Firebender kept the gaze.

It wasn’t until Kuvira gently pulled her away, that Hikaru began crying— tears falling quicker than she could wipe them away as the trio escaped the hallway.

She remembered something her grandmother said about how war isn’t worth it. It never was and it never will be.

Chapter End Notes

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**Chapter Summary**

“Suffering has been stronger than all other teaching, and has taught me to understand what your heart used to be. I have been bent and broken, but - I hope - into a better shape.”

— Charles Dickens, Great Expectations

“There is some kind of a sweet innocence in being human- in not having to be just happy or just sad- in the nature of being able to be both broken and whole, at the same time.”

— C. JoyBell C.

**Chapter Notes**

See the end of the chapter for notes.

It is indeed a strange thing to return from a battle victorious and yet having never felt more defeated in your life. This was how Kuvira felt as the ferry returned to Air Temple Island. She flashed a hesitant gaze to Opal, who had refused to show any signs other than tense hostility towards her sister.

Suyin, on the other hand, had given the former Captain an aura of sorrow and understanding. Kuvira had needed to kill to protect Hikaru and Opal— but in the intensity of battle, she’d used a tactic that had crossed the line.

Her mother rested her hand on the younger woman’s shoulders, forcing Kuvira to look into stern, serious olive eyes.

“I had to do it, somewhat,” Su sighed as they leaned against the railing. “When I killed P’li, that Red Lotus Assassin— she was going to murder Lin. I didn’t think; I lifted my armor off and wrapped it around her head. I used her weapon against her, she was forced to blow herself up. I know you feel horrible for killing someone in a different way than most people would, but you have to let it go. You had to do it to protect family.”

“I can’t let it go, Mom,” Kuvira sighed. “I did something so fucking wrong.”

With that, Kuvira walked away from her mother’s embrace— passing all of her friends recovering from various injuries and wishing that this boat would sail fifty times faster.

“Hey there,” Baatar murmured, wrapping his arms around her.

She didn’t feel any warmer at the gesture, nor calmer. Instead— with every passing second— she
was growing disgusted with herself.

“Neeeed to go,” she murmured, stumbling off towards their bedroom.

“You alright?”


She left him standing in the courtyard with a confused and hurt expression on her face. Pushing her way past people going to greet the injured and victorious, Kuvira hobbled through the hallway—reaching the entrance to her and Baatar’s room and wrenching the sliding door open.

Kuvira hit the ground and passed out.

Opal had known something was gravely wrong when Kuvira had pushed Baatar away and stumbled towards the dormitories as though she were drunk. If the Airbender didn’t know better, she might assume that her sister was sick. But that was not it.

With narrowed olive eyes, she raced across the wooden flooring; her light Airbender’s feet hardly making a sound.

The door to Baatar and Kuvira’s guest room, though wooden, had been twisted off its hinges, and Opal let out a cry when she saw Kuvira passed out on the floor—rushing to her sister’s side and checking for a pulse, a breath, a temperature.

Everything was fine.

Physically.

Opal lifted her muscular, and therefore heavy, sister onto the bed with a grunt. She brushed Kuvira’s hair out of the way and repeatedly tried to shake her awake, even screaming into her ear.

But the woman was knocked out cold.

No tranquilizer dart on her, like the one that’d knocked out Korra during the Red Lotus attack in Zaofu, donned her form. Opal was baffled, calling out for Kya or some other healer to help. Both came to her aid, her Aunt gently pushing her to the side as she worked on sensing Kuvira’s aura.

“Impossible… or I suppose very unlikely…” Kya murmured, running her hands over the Metalbender’s head.

“What is it?” the White Lotus sentry asked.

“She’s… meditating? Pulled into the Spirit World—like you were when Jinora was shot,” the Waterbender spoke with a hum. Fucking hippie.

Opal looked at Baatar, who had entered the room with a shocked expression—instantly kneeling at
the unconscious Metalbender’s side.

“So why isn’t he also affected?” the Airbender asked, pointing at her brother.

“I don’t think that this is a Soulmate issue… perhaps something more personal…”

_Fuck._

“I’m going to go after her, then,” Opal whispered, jumping up on the bed at her sister’s feet. “She might get stuck if I don’t do anything.”

“Are you sure?” Baatar asked worriedly, a hand on his sister’s shoulder.

“If something really, really bad happens— you go get Tenzin or Jinora. But I think I just need to make sure she doesn’t dig herself in too deep. If she was forced in there, she needs to find a way out like I had to when it was Jinora and I.”

The others left the room save for Baatar, who sat in a chair holding Kuvira’s hand— keeping his eyes on Opal as she situated herself into the Lotus Position. Before closing her eyes, she leaned forwards and took a deep breath.

“I love you.”

Baatar’s eyes widened, “I love you too. Be careful.”

Opal closed her eyes, allowing the familiar pull to take her forth through the darkness.

What? What the ever-loving fuck?

Oh no.

She was surrounded by fog.

Kuvira stood. She was back in the one place she feared most. Chakra my ass— she’d been ensnared by the Great Uniter’s desiring voice. And now she was stuck here.

“Fuck you! Come out and face me like a warrior!”

She waited, sitting in the ground and steeling herself for whatever phantom might approach.
Indeed, someone was coming.

This time— the woman was in tan, ratty clothes with holes and burn marks in them. Her hair was loose and feral. Her eyes defeated, but the mole on her right cheek gave it away.

“So what phantom are you?” Kuvira asked.

The woman blinked, “Are you who I’m supposed to meet?”

“What?”

“The Avatar told me to go down here— she said that I’d find someone down here who could direct me. Help me find myself,” the woman explained with a raised eyebrow.

Kuvira studied her further. There was a number tag on her sleeve; a scar on her neck. Though her face was clean— her nails had been bitten and her ribs could be seen in her shirt. This woman was a prisoner.

“Are you a phantom?” Kuvira reiterated. “A spirit? One of the Fog’s creations?”

The woman shook her head with a confused look, “Not that I know of. I’m very real. I attempted to conquer Republic City— attempted to kill the family that took me in and gave me a job and training. I’ve been imprisoned for four years now.”

“Your real,” Kuvira repeated numbly.

“Yeah. Are you a Spirit?” the prisoner asked.

“No. I’m real too.”

“That’s impossible— two objects cannot be in different places at the same time… we’re obviously the same person,” the prisoner argued. “What the fuck are you?”

“I’m Kuvira Beifong. A master Metalbender— sister of Opal, daughter of Suyin, fiancé of Baatar Jr. I’m one of Korra’s best friends and I’m trying to take down the Second Equalist Revolution,” Kuvira explained, blinking her eyes in confusion.

The prisoner hesitantly held out a hand, and Kuvira met it with her own. Sure enough— she was touching real flesh. But that was impossible; unless the Fog of Lost Souls somehow managed to connect… universes… together…

“You’re trying to find me; I’m trying to find you. We’re both lost in our own way,” the prisoner concluded.

“Are you the Great Uniter?” Kuvira asked.

The prisoner version of her slumped to the ground, “Yeah. I was. I hurt so many people. Killed. Constricted people into re-education camps. Tried to kill my Matriarch. Her children. The Avatar. And now I get to reflect on it for the rest of my life.”

Kuvira kneeled down in the dirt and put a hand on the prisoner’s shoulder, “You weren’t loved, were you?”

A shake of the head, “No— Matriarch Suyin raised me as a protégé. I was never a part of the family— no matter how much I tried to show the Beifongs that I wanted to be included. I was shunned. Perhaps even hated a little. Su kept all of her guards like exotic birds in a cage— I just wanted to
prove to her that I was worthy of being her daughter.

“I tried to convince her to help stabilize the crumbled shell that once was the Earth Kingdom. She refused, and I made the most difficult decision of my life. I chose to leave my home— offering Baatar Jr. to join me. He wanted to slip away from his father’s shadow, wanted to become his own person. What we were doing, at first, was fine. Stabilizing Ba Sing Se, being granted permission by the President of the United Republic to move through the Earth Kingdom.

“At first it was easy. Everyone needed our help, and the Zaofu Metalbenders that I’d brought with me were skilled enough to overcome bandits. But I needed more people to rebuild towns, to move resources, and operate machinery. So I asked the former bandits to reform and join my coalition.”

Kuvira shuddered at the prisoner’s use of the word, reminding herself that Hikaru’s group was different. But… was it?

The prisoner continued;

“Eventually, we were getting to the point where our reputation preceded us… Governors were expecting something for nothing. You know as well as I, I’m assuming, that people need to all work together to create a successful government. We were expecting to receive assistance for assistance— whatever natural resource a state could offer in order to help out everyone in the Earth Kingdom. And in return we were more than happy to help out— giving starving people food, the sick and ill medicine, the poor jobs.

“It was actually a wonderful system, but when the Governors started becoming… for lack of better word… dickheads, I had to step up my game. I had to prove my worth— become intimidating. The supporters gave me the name, I wasn’t brash enough to call myself the ‘Great Uniter’,” the prisoner version of Kuvira chuckled bitterly.

“What began happening?” Kuvira asked, scooting closer and leaning in a little— providing body language that she was a confident for this woman.

“I grew cold. Even though I’d asked Baatar to marry me after we’d conquered about half the states— I’d done it for political gain. For appearance. Families needed a family woman to look up to. I had to prove that I was human, even though I grew more and more the opposite.”

Kuvira shuddered at the realization that she’d murdered someone in a very inhumane way.

“Re-education camps. RE-EDUCATION CAMPS?! How stupid was I? I had this fascist idea that I needed to purify the Earth Kingdom! Gods, and I threatened so many people. Governors who wanted nothing to do with me— depending on the support of the Airbenders— I simply threatened them, coerced them into doing my bidding. It got to the point where I’d send them a months’ worth of supplies and ask for a years’ worth of resources in return. Cruelty.

“Thank the Gods I had the stupidity to attack Republic City. But… to think that I attempted to sacrifice Baatar to kill the Avatar.”

Sacrificing Baatar to kill Korra.


“I failed— I failed miserably. The Avatar overpowered me, at the cost of Hiroshi Sato’s life, and the destruction of most of Republic City. And now I’m a prisoner. Stuck in a mountain for the rest of my despondent, wretched life.”
Kuvira pulled the prisoner up, who looked at her— defeated.

“What’s your story, then?”

“Everything about us is an opposite, it seems. I was loved by the Beifongs… by I became one of them. Baatar and I are Soulmates— we’re going to get married for real, and I love him with every fiber of my being… Korra and Asami… I couldn’t ask for better friends.”

“You got it easy,” the prisoner bitterly muttered.

“KUVIRA!! WHERE ARE YOU?!”

“Hey, Kuvira! You okay down there? Do I need to use my great and magnificent Avatar Powers to rescue you?”

Two shattered voices pierced the air, and yet muffled by the fog all the same. Both Kuvira and the prisoner looked at each other.

“Opal’s here?” the inmate asked.

Kuvira blinked, “I suppose she followed me. And that sounds like Korra.”

“The Avatar led me here, yes.”

The Beifong bit her lip and suddenly pulled the convict into a hug, “Love yourself. Please. Do it for me. And try calling her Korra— it really improves her mood.”

“Are you saying that you forgive me?” the prisoner asked, her chin resting on Kuvira’s shoulder.

“If it will help you on your path towards redemption, then yes. I want you to find peace, Great Uniter.”

The inmate drew back and looked at Kuvira with sad, wide green eyes, “How?”

“Like I said, love yourself. Love people. Whether or not someone asks for your love— you have to give the world your heart. You can’t hide behind metal armor for the rest of your life.”

“I’m not leaving prison. I’m stuck there for the rest of my life.”

“So live,” Kuvira smiled.

The prisoner’s eyes widened, and she began fading away, trying to say something to Kuvira— her sneer growing into a smile, widening more and more by every second. Kuvira couldn’t understand what the other woman was saying, and before she knew it— the Great Uniter was gone.

Live.

Go and live, Kuvira.

She turned and climbed out of the valley— meditating back into the Mortal World and feeling fifty times lighter.
Baatar jumped up, “Are you okay?!"

His fiancé sat forwards, rubbing her head, “I fell, didn’t I? Sorry… I was doing some Spirit World shit— what’s Opal doing here?”

She pointed at her sister, sitting on the edge of the bed in a meditative position. With her breath tangling in her throat— she remembered her sister shouting for her in the Fog of Lost Souls.

His eyes widened, “Um… she went in to get you.”

“Oh fuck!!”

The Airbender wandered around, confused as to where she was. She was surrounded by mist— ensnaring and refusing to let her exit this strange craggy valley.

A flash of yellow.

“Who was that?! Opal shouted, trying to catch a glimpse of the person.

Out of the corner of her eye, another flash of yellow— silver irises facing hers for a second— and then she was knocked off her feet.

“Ugh! Who are you?!’’ the Beifong yelped.

Samsara was standing over her with wild, angry eyes. And then she was gone.

“Fuck, Sammy?! Is that you?!’’ Opal screamed, bolting back up to her feet.

Like a bolt of lightning, the Avatar raced past her— knocking Opal onto her back a second time. This time, when the Airbender opened her eyes, Samsara was standing over her.

“You’re weak!” the ancient Air Nomad snarled.
“Sammy! What? How is this possible? I Energybent you! You should be gone!”

Another swift flash of yellow, and Opal was kicked in the face as Samsara circled around her. The Beifong stood up quickly and tried to dodge another strike— but this apparition had Airbending, and Opal didn’t. A gust knocked the poor girl onto her side and Samsara kicked her in the back of the neck.

“Argh!”

A flash of yellow again.

Pain coursing through her as Samsara kicked her in the stomach.

“WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!” Opal screamed at the phantom.

“I loved you,” the ghost seethed. “And you used me.”

A kick to the ribs. But she’d meditated in. Opal shouldn’t be able to feel pain— and yet she heard a snap! and threw up in pain, her head still lying against the rocky ground as the smell of bile filled her nostrils.

“I’m so sorry, Sammy! I manipulated you! If I could turn back time— I’d erase every bit of it! You were one of my best friends!!” Opal screamed into the fog.

“LIAR!” the phantom screamed.

“I killed you! You shouldn’t be able to do this…” the Beifong whispered, blood trickling out of her mouth and speckling the dirt.

“I am a being of nuclear power, and you thought that having sex with me made you worthy of Energybending? You pathetic scum!”

“This isn’t you. Samsara was kind and loving— she’d never say these things,” Opal half cried, half whispered. “Please… no more…”

“That’s what I said! That’s what I screamed into the Spirit World after every night you made love to me! I was your prisoner!”

“Sammy…” Opal shuddered. “I’m… so… sorry…”

This was wrong. This couldn’t be her. This was the Fog manipulating Opal.

“And now you’re back to fucking Jinora.”

“No… I… love… her…” Opal coughed into the dirt, as Samsara kicked her in the abdomen again.

“You think a few flowers can solve everything? Basho built a palace for me— I thought you were supposed to be his reincarnation! As if you could ever be worthy of Jinora!!” Samsara screeched.
“You’re… right… I’m… not… worthy…” Opal repeated, twitching on the ground in pain.

She felt something swirling around her neck, as she was forced on her knees— watching Samsara bend the air out of her lungs, the way Zaheer had tried to assassinate Korra. This… didn’t… make… sense… she… meditated… in…

The air surrounding her was not silvery wind like normal Airbenders manipulated, though, but golden.

Opal could feel her energy being… Bent…

“KUVIRA!! WHERE ARE YOU?!?” she choked out, at the top of her lungs.

Darkness was engulfing her, and it took all of her willpower to stay awake. Opal could feel her soul being ripped away from her as the dark apparition of Samsara continued to Energybend her.

“Your father passed, and like many before you— the natural instinct to flee took ahold of your soul, and in your trauma… you let that instinct command you.”

“You’re weak,” Samsara's phantom repeated.

“No, I do not see this as a weakness… more as a call to grow.”

“Feel the light within you. Not the Spirit of Raava— that the Avatar takes command of, but the natural good within you. In every soul, from the smallest cricket to the largest Lion Turtle, there is a constant dance of darkness and light. Close your eyes and listen.”

Opal closed her eyes, not thinking of the broken rib, of the beating that the phantom had giving her. Not of Samsara Bending her energy.

She let her own energy swing back and forth, instead of letting the phantom rip it away from her body.

“Find the balance within yourself.”
“What are you doing?!” Samsara’s phantom screeched.

“Let your soul move through every part of your body— feel the blood within your heart, the air flowing through your lungs. The tingling in your fingers and the way the wind whips through your hair. Sense my voice in your ears and let it rumble through your body. My paw beneath you. Every drop of the ocean surrounding us. The warm rays of the sun beating down. Let your soul flow through all of these things… connect them all together and think only of the energy that we all share.”

“I broke you down, for my own gain,” Opal whispered, concentrating on letting her energy swing back and forth. “I’m sorry, Sammy. I love you.”

“I AM THE SECOND AVATAR!! POWER BEYOND ANYTHING YOU COULD EVER ASPIRE TO ACHIEVE!!” the phantom screamed. “THE FIRST HUMAN TO LEARN ENERGYBENDING!!”

“I love you,” Opal whispered sincerely. “But you’re not my Sammy. She was broken, yes… but she
was full of love.”

Her energy was growing stronger— despite the apparition’s attempt to Bend her. Samsara’s motions were growing strained and faster as the phantom attempted to silence, to kill Opal.

Two souls, trying to out-Energybend each other.

“All of this is one energy— one being. We are connected. We are one.”

“We are one!” Opal shouted, staring into silver eyes with her olive ones.

“You are a lesser maggot compared to me!!” Samsara cried.

“I will say to you the same thing I said to a young boy many years ago; in the era before the Avatar, we bent not the elements, but the energy within ourselves. To bend another’s energy, your own spirit must be unbendable, or you will be corrupted and destroyed.”

“I corrupted you. I destroyed you. I’m sorry, Sammy,” Opal sighed, allowing her energy to grow more and more powerful with each passing second.

“IMPOSSIBLE!! I AM A POWERFUL SOUL!!”

This time, not only Opal’s voice spoke aloud— but the Lion Turtle’s as well. Combined vitalities. One.

“Sometimes the most powerful soul has the delicate spirit. And in turn, more often than not, the delicate soul has the powerful spirit.”

As Opal bent this sick and twisted phantom of Avatar Samsara— a man flickered and replaced her— none other than King Basho, screaming and writhing as Opal bent the energy. Back and forth. Swinging, like a pendulum. The man’s face was gaunt and full of hatred. Someone who did things selfishly; hurting other people.

“I never meant to hurt you. I’m sorry,” Opal whispered. “In the next life… may you grow.”

Fire
Air
Water
Earth
Gold filled her vision— practically blinding her as she continued Energybending. Suddenly, the phantom was gone, and the Fog of Lost Souls had cleared. She wiped away a tear at the horror of having to end her friend’s life a second time.

“Opal Beifong!”

She turned, to see none other than Aang and Roku, standing at the top of the canyon, both donning looks of awe.

_____________________________________________________________________________________

The former Avatars helped her up out of the craggy valley.

“You are powerful,” Roku mused, giving her a pat on the back as Aang let her to a rock— allowing her to sit down.

“Did I kill Samsara again?” Opal asked, panting.

Aang shook his head, “No— you’d done it properly the first time… Samsara’s energy was released into the cosmos a long time ago. Whatever that was in the Fog was a manifestation of her, meant to hurt you.”

“So I was imagining it?” the Beifong sputtered, clutching at her ribs. Surprisingly, they felt okay.

Roku stroked his beard thoughtfully, “I don’t think so— I do believe you were fighting something very real. Amazing, the power of Energybending. You were able to Bend your own spirit and bring a part of your Bending abilities into the Spirit World. Impressive.”

Aang knelt humbly before her, “You are the Greatest Energybender in the World, Opal Beifong.”

She looked into his stormy gray eyes, “Thanks, but I think I’m good with normal Airbending.”

“Whether or not you choose to accept it— you will need to use this power again,” Aang smiled. “The world needs you right now as much as it needs Korra.”

Opal reciprocated the smile and brought both of the men in for a hug, “Thank you both so much.”

“We did nothing,” Roku mused.
“No— you’ve taught me to love myself. Something far more important than Bending or the Avatar State.”

“A wise Beifong! I’d never thought I’d see the day!” Aang laughed. “You certainly are a leaf in the wind!!”

“I swear the next generation of Airbenders had better adapt a catchier philosophy,” Opal chuckled. “Can you help me back? Like you did two years ago?”

“Goodness, me! That was two years ago? It felt like two weeks!” Roku exclaimed, looking at Aang, “Just how long have I been dead?!”

Aang rolled his eyes, putting a hand on Opal’s shoulder, “I think you can Energybend yourself out.”

“Do you… do you want me to do to you… what I did to the real Samsara?”

Aang and Roku looked at each other and then shook their heads.

“We can still provide our counsel to the world, if they need us… I think Samsara wished to leave because… well… I suppose your soul tethered her to the world,” Roku huffed, with shake of his head.

“But I’m not her soulmate.”

“Perhaps not… but this Universe works in ways we will never understand,” Aang whispered wisely.

Opal remembered when she had given Asami the power of Airbending, how she’d whispered that their souls were tethered… it’d been something that had slipped out of her mouth while speaking— but she was beginning to understand what she’d said.

“I’m tethered to people the Universe wants me to Energybend, aren’t I?”

Both Avatars nodded.

Opal gave them one last smile, “I’ll tell Tenzin that you two said hello.”

She stepped back and took one last look at the Fog of Lost Souls— praying to every God and every Spirit that she might never have to return to such a despicable prison. The Airbender raised her arms and focused on her inner vitality;
“Hey there, Baatar,” she pipped up, opening her eyes and giving the engineer a big smile.

“OPAL!! OH MY GODS, ARE YOU OKAY?!” he screeched, startling the Air Lemurs sitting on the windowsill.

“Never better… have you seen Jinora?”

“Y-You were trapped in the Spirit World for a whole day and you want to talk to your g-girlfriend?!” her brother gaped.

“Soulmate,” Opal corrected, hopping off the bed— never feeling more energetic then at that moment.

“Jinora! Hey, Jinora!”

The Airbending Master turned to her, “Hey there… I stopped by earlier, but you were in a coma of sorts?”

Opal sheepishly rubbed the back of her neck, “I guess the two of us know how to get around.”

Jinora smiled softly.

“Listen… I need to tell you something,” Opal whispered sincerely, her olive eyes boring into brown ones.

“What is it?”

“I told you that I would change for you… but it never occurred to me until now that you wanted me to grow for you. I did do a lot of changing when we first left Zaofü… I became a violent, broken person— thinking that nobody loved me and using someone to try and change. Over and Over again. I want to grow. And maybe I’ve done that… maybe I’ve got a long way to go… but I really, really want to grow.”

Her soulmate was beaming, smiling proudly.

“It doesn’t matter if I’m an Energybender, or an Airbender. Or even a Nonbender like I once was… you don’t want any of that… you just wanted me to grow. And it’s taken me a whole year to realize that.”
Opal was engulfed in a strong, fierce hug— her fingers reaching up to cradle short, windswept brown hair.

“I think you have grown— more than you know,” Jinora whispered.

Their lips met together, passionately and lovingly… and Opal felt her heart soar through the sky.

Chapter End Notes

Grow and Live, ladies and gentlemen.

Leave comments, please.
The White Lotus Sentry

Chapter Summary

“Love never dies a natural death. It dies because we don't know how to replenish its source. It dies of blindness and errors and betrayals. It dies of illness and wounds; it dies of weariness, of witherings, of tarnishings.”

— Anaïs Nin

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Hey! There’s the newlyweds!!” Bolin laughed, running to pick up Korra and Asami—spinning them both around wildly.

“Missed you too, Bolin,” Asami chuckled.

Hikaru embraced her cousin, “I haven’t forgiven you for this. You and Korra need to get a divorce, so that you can get engaged again. We will have a double wedding.”

“Just marry Bolin, and then marry your ego,” the blind woman teased, leaning into the hug and letting out a sigh.

Hikaru chuckled a little— but then buried her face into the Airbender’s shoulder. It had been a rough week, and she needed the physical reassurance that, despite everything that had transpired, Asami was alive and well in her arms.

“Hey there,” her cousin chuckled, as their embrace tightened.

“Mmm… hey, Sams,” the Firebender whispered, letting out a small sigh through her nose. It’d been a long week.

They swayed back and forth a little on the spot before Korra took Asami’s hand to guide her, and the group walked up the marble steps. Hikaru laughed at Suki’s attempt to play Air Ball with the rest of the Airbenders—reminding the Firebender of a story her grandmother had told her about Sokka and Aang trying to play together.

“This is terrific, Pema,” Mako said, slurping his noodles a little as they all crowded the table at dinner.

“Thank you, Mako. Chew before you speak, please,” the Acolyte sighed. “Bolin, please don’t eat with your fingers. Ikki, will you dish out some rice for Rohan?”

“I’m fourteen— I can do it on my own, Mom!”

“Yes, but you always take too much,” Tenzin chuckled, taking the bowl out of his daughter’s hands.
“He’s a growing boy!” Bolin defended with a chuckle, ruffling Rohan’s hair.

“I missed the chaos,” Asami said, carefully taking a sip of her tea.

“Finding that hard to believe,” Hikaru laughed, leaning against her cousin a little.

“I did!”

The Firebender looked up— Hiroshi was standing in the doorway, munching on his bowl of noodles and avoiding eye contact with the rest of the group. It was clear that he didn’t feel welcome. Hikaru frowned and stood, passing Dequan off to Mako. She walked over to the ex-Equalist and put a hand on his shoulder.

“Uncle… we would love it if you joined us,” she whispered.

Two pairs of amber eyes looked at each other, and though Hiroshi’s face didn’t show it— somehow he was smiling under his scaggy white beard. She led him down to a spot next to Jinora, who instantly passed the old man a pot of tea. The longer dinner went on, the more relaxed her uncle became. The more peace filled his old eyes.

Peace.

That’s what Hikaru loved most— even if Meelo and Ikki made that peace pretty damn chaotic.

She refilled Asami’s tea and pressed the hot cup into the Airbender’s hands. Korra spilled sauce all over the table, and Bum Ju was more than excited to knock over everyone’s food to clean up the mess. Kya and Bumi managed to stick five pairs of chopsticks into Lin’s gray bun before the Chief of Police even noticed. At some point, Baatar and Kuvira had just given up and started a food fight against Opal and Jinora.

Peace.

Sometimes it wasn’t about sitting by a stream, listening to the tranquility and trying to find the silence within yourself— no… to Hikaru peace was about a family meal, listening to Asami fake a laugh at Korra’s horrible jokes, or watching Tenzin and Pema walk away for a few minutes to compose themselves; smiles on their faces despite the amount of gray hairs that this family meal was giving them. Peace was taking her baby boy away from her fiancé’s grip to feed him little scraps of the meal, watching Dequan’s face contort into different expressions at the various flavors and giggling.

Peace was watching Hiroshi Sato realize that he had a family.

_______________________________________________________________

“What are we looking at?” Hiroshi asked, taking a sip of his beer and sitting down at the chair.

“I’m not too sure, sir. This code is nice and clean— but cryptic,” Baatar Jr. frowned.

“I wrote it, son. I thought you were an architect?”

“If you’re an engineer, you don’t have spare time,” Hiroshi scoffed.

Baatar began laughing, “It was a trick question— you got me.”

“Smartass.”

“I’ll take that as a compliment, Mr. Sato!” Junior chuckled, typing a few more lines of code into his computer.

Overall, Baatar really enjoyed the opportunity to work with the most famous CEO of the modern era — like it was nothing. They were currently attempting to crack open the hard drive that Kuvira had recovered in the raid (not literally, jeez!), and Junior was no closer to opening this software than Thebes was to solving the Sphinx’s riddle before Oedipus came along.

Bad example.

Anyways, they were leaning back and staring at the code when Baatar turned to Hiroshi in confusion.

“You wrote the code— why can’t you do anything?”

“Because I didn’t write it alone; this hard drive is one of about twenty that Amon and I configured together to create a network for the Equalists to start with. I wrote the code, but the slimy bastard updated and programmed the hard drives.”

“Have we tried asking Asami what she knows?”

“Couldn’t hurt. Let’s go get her.”

Baatar and Hiroshi exited the lounge room and headed down the hallway, discussing programming methods to try and find out what was in the damn piece of hardware. Surely it contained the location the Lieutenant was using— if only Kuvira had stopped and searched through the computer at the Equalist tunnel base before ripping the PC apart.

Whack!

“Ow! Hey, watch it!” Baatar grumbled at the White Lotus sentry that he’d run into.

The man looked between the Sato and the Beifong for a few moments— and it seemed a little strange to Junior. The guard was merely staring at them, his silver eyes boring into theirs. The White Lotus sentry’s mouth turned into a snarl and he grabbed something in his robes.

Korra turned round the hallway, giving the two of them a merry wave just as the White Lotus guard pointed a gun at Hiroshi—

BANG!!

____________________________________________________

Instantly, she was in the Avatar State, kicking a powerful gust of air towards him and sending the
man flying before he could fire again. Another few Air Kicks, and he’d soared through the open window with an “OOF!!”.

Korra jumped after him, but it was obvious that this “White Lotus Sentry” was prepared to fight Airbending—dodging her next strikes and firing his gun with a grin on his face.

An Earthen wall rose up in front of her, and Kuvira pulled her down from behind.

**CRACKLE! SIZZLE!!**

Blue electricity filled the courtyard as Mako struck him down with a furious yell—a bolt of lightning hitting the man square in the chest. He seized up for a few moments, and then dropped to the ground, dead.

Kuvira’s hand shot out, allowing the gun to fly into her hands, unloading the ammo and then twisting the weapon into a ball—rendering it useless. Korra walked up to the dead corpse and ripped his White Lotus robes open; revealing an Equalist outfit on underneath. His neck was tattooed with Amon’s old symbol.

An assassin.

“What happened?” Tenzin yelled angrily, running into the courtyard and surveying the damage.

“Was anyone hurt?”

**Shit! Hiroshi!!**

With a sphere of air, Korra flew back towards the hallways—where Baatar was putting pressure on the old man’s stomach. The former CEO’s body was trembling, going into shock. With a yelp, she drew water from the nearest source—a vase of roses—and began healing his stomach. It eased his injury a little, but she knew it wouldn’t be enough.

“We have to get him to a hospital!” she hissed to Baatar.

Instantly, bandages were at her side as Kya knelt down next to her, bringing more water and helping Korra stabilize him. Two healers were better than one, but fear raced through Korra’s heart. What if…

Kuvira had created a makeshift stretcher out of earth, and they gently laid Hiroshi on top—transporting him through the hallway and running through the courtyard. The Zaofu guards offered the use of their Air Ship to transport him quicker, and they gladly took Su up on the offer.

“Stay with me, Pops,” Korra muttered to the writhing man.

Hiroshi let out a groan of pain and her heart fell again.

As the Airship pulled away, the Avatar looked out of the window and saw her wife standing alone in the courtyard—utterly confused and undoubtedly terrified.
The emergency room took over instantly, wheeling the man into the hospital and leaving Korra and Kuvira standing there on the rooftop—at the helipad where the Air Ship was docked.

“Fuck. Fuck! Who was that guy?” the Metalbender asked worriedly.

“An assassin. I’d never even seen his face before, and somehow wearing a White Lotus uniform he managed to slip past most of the Acolytes and Airbenders. He was probably looking for a member of Team Avatar—most likely me—and when he saw Hiroshi he decided to use his shot on the traitor.”

“I-Is Hiroshi going to live?” Kuvira asked, looking into Korra’s cerulean eyes.

The Avatar’s shoulders slumped, “The shot was so close…the impact…I don’t know, Kuv. Gods…”

Kya walked down from the Airship ramp and put a hand on Korra’s shoulder, “We did everything we can, the rest is up to the Doctors now…”

She guided the Metalbender back onto the ship and the Zaofu guard navigated the vessel back to Air Temple Island. Korra watched it leave and jumped off of the building, allowing a cushion of wind to break her fall. She walked into the Hospital, wiping away a tear.

Fuck the Lieutenant.

“He’s in critical condition,” Dr. Kang said solemnly. “The shrapnel tore through a lot of arteries…the chance that he won’t make it is greater than the chance that he will.”

Asami leaned against Korra—and the almighty Avatar, master of the four elements and bringer of balance to the world felt absolutely helpless. She put an arm around her wife’s shoulders and didn’t let go. The former engineer’s knuckles were white from tightly gripping a Glider Staff—having grabbed the first thing she could think of and flying all the way to the hospital on her own. Korra wasn’t even angry that she’d flown alone—Asami had been so furious that buildings must’ve jumped out of her way while she flew.

“C-Can we go see him?” the ex-heiress asked.

“He’s still in surgery, but as soon as he’s moved to a room; we’ll let you in, Mrs. and Mrs. Sato,” Dr. Kang sighed.

Asami bowed as the doctor walked away, sitting down at a bench in the hallway and beginning to cry. Korra wrapped her arms around the blind woman and pressed her forehead into her wife’s shoulder.

“I’m so, so sorry,” the Avatar whispered.

“I just got him back, Kor…what if something hap—”

“We have to be strong right now. Your Dad needs us to be strong right now,” Korra murmured, gripping her wife’s hand.

Asami bit her lip and nodded, “Alright…strong for Dad.”

“That’s my girl.”
Everyone on Air Temple island was on edge, frantically walking around to perform chores—abandoning all leisure activity to make sure that the place was running smoothly. Kuvira stepped off the ramp and was instantly engulfed in a hug. Realizing that it was Opal tightly embracing her, the Metalbender pulled her sister to the side and let out a shaky sigh.

“Are you okay?” Opal whispered, her voice muffled by Kuvira’s hoodie.

“Yeah… yeah… fine…”

They stood there, in the courtyard, engulfed in a fierce embrace. The Metalbender ran her hands soothingly over her sister’s shoulders; feeling the Airbender’s heartbeat slow down to a calm pace.

“Are we okay?” Kuvira asked worriedly.

Opal drew back and stared at evergreen eyes with her olive ones, a tear sliding down her cheek before she nodded.

“I’m sorry I gave you such a cold shoulder… you were protecting me in the tunnel… you were protecting Hikaru and defending yourself… I just… I didn’t expect it and it scared me a little—but yes, I love you and I didn’t mean to hurt you.”

“You didn’t hurt me,” Kuvira chuckled, hugging her sister a second time. “I just… I didn’t want to think that you were disgusted by me. I know that I shouldn’t have done it, but it was the only thing I could think of.”

“It’s okay. It’s okay… let’s just… you need to go talk to Baatar… he’s a little shaken up…” Opal whispered, kissing her sister on the cheek before walking away.

“Hey there.”

“Hey.”

Kuvira put a hesitant hand on her fiancé’s shoulder— he turned and fell into her arms, sobbing. She pulled him onto the bed and cradled his head as he cried into her stomach.

“I designed those guns!!” he sobbed. “How could I be so stupid?!”

“It’s not your fault, sweetie.”

“No, it is!!” he drew back angrily, looking at the bandage covering her left arm and pointing.

She thought of when she’d been shot in the tunnel— how she’d dismissed the wound to protect her sister. How if the Equalist’s aiming had been a little to the left, she would’ve been shot in the heart. She took a deep breath and kissed him on the forehead.

“You just wanted to create a tool to defend yourself. You didn’t mean for this to happen,” Kuvira
muttered.

“What if he dies?”

Kuvira took another shaky sigh, “It’s not your fault… Hiroshi’s going to be okay… come here, love.”

She cradled Baatar as he cried into her shoulder— upset at the horror that he’d invented. A small amount of hatred coursed through her as she thought of the “White Lotus Sentry”, and she was more than thankful that Mako had been there to stop him.

They needed to take down the Lieutenant before this destroyed everyone Kuvira loved.

Chapter End Notes

mnmnmnm nope nope nope

Leave comments.

P.S.: I was looking back through the chapter, and there’s a slight bit of unintended symbolism. If you spot it, you get a cookie.
Parents - Part 2

Chapter Summary

“I believe that what we become depends on what our fathers teach us at odd moments, when they aren't trying to teach us. We are formed by little scraps of wisdom.”

— Umberto Eco, Foucault's Pendulum

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Korra pushed the door open and led her wife through— taking great care to make sure she didn’t bump into any medical equipment. Hiroshi was faintly awake, smiling and whispering hello. The Avatar guided Asami over to a stool next to the bed and sat her down.

“Are you comfortable? Is there anything I can get you?” Korra asked, taking the ex-Equalist’s wrinkled hand.

“I'll be okay, Korra. Thank you, though.”

Asami’s fingers fiddled with the sheet’s on her father’s bed— her fingers twiddling around the fabric. Korra put a calming hand on her back and rubbed a circular pattern into her spine as the blind woman worked up the courage to say something. Anything.

“Are you in pain, Dad?”

“No, no. They have me on something strong, dear. Don’t you worry one little bit about me. I may be old, but I’m tough.”

Korra smiled at his bravery; how determined he was to make sure Asami didn’t feel worried. Her wife let out a small sigh through her nose— defeated at the prospect that there was nothing more she could do to help her father.

He was dying.

On the outside, he looked perfectly fine— there was color in his cheeks and a warm smile tucked beneath his bushy gray beard. His hair was a little ruffled, but otherwise clean. Hiroshi’s hands weren’t even shaking.

But on the inside; he had been shot. They’d removed every piece of shrapnel, but his insides had been torn up. Arteries had been sliced. The impact of the bullet had been too great, and he was just too old.

“Would you like me to put on some music?” Korra asked— thinking of how Katara used to play blues and jazz whenever she was healing a sick or elderly patient.
“That would be lovely, Korra,” the old man smiled— his amber eyes twinkling.

She’d never seen such kindness from the man, not even from before his Equalist identity had been revealed— and he’d assumed that his daughter was merely “friends” with the Avatar. This was different. Not only was this a man who’d spent a year in a prison, away from the person he loved most, but this was a man who had been trying everything to live and grow again.

And now this was a man who was dying— family at his side, the hospital lights dimmed low and replaced with some Jasmine candles that Asami had snuck in (her father’s favorite scent), and soft cello music playing on a shelf. Korra pulled up a second stool from across the room and patted Hiroshi’s knee.

“You’ll be okay, right Dad?” Asami whispered naively.

Hiroshi took a deep breath, flashing a look at Korra that he knew his daughter wouldn’t see. The Avatar’s usually bright and cheerful eyes became solemn and understanding as she put a hand on her wife’s shoulder.

“Dad?”

“Sorry, sweetie… I was lost in thought. I think that… in the grand scheme of things… I’ll be okay,” Hiroshi answered wisely, looking directly at Korra with a soft smile. “Would you excuse us for a moment, Asami? I need to talk to your wife.”

Korra led the blind woman into the hallway and sat her down, pressing a kiss to her forehead. She would’ve felt a little guilty for leaving her there— but at that moment one of the hospital service dogs, the ones that visit children and the elderly, sensed her sorrow and planted its head on Asami’s knee. The Airbender’s fingers ran through soft, long hair as the Golden Retriever let out a sympathetic whine. Perhaps it did the trick, for Korra walked back into the room sensing her wife’s heartbeat calm down.

She sat down next to Hiroshi, “Are you in pain, sir?”

“I’ve been worse— really Korra, how many times do I have to tell you? Hiroshi, please.”

The Avatar took his hand with an amused smile and gave it a squeeze, “We’ll work on it.”

“Korra.”

“Yes?”

He let out a cough, a slight bit of blood dribbling down his chin. The Avatar stood and dabbed it off his face with a paper towel. The nurses had told her that Hiroshi had been doing it ever since they’d set him up in the room.

“I think— I think that you know as well as I that I’m not walking this one off,” Hiroshi whispered sorrowfully.

Korra’s shoulders slumped, and she looked at the spotless linoleum beneath her feet. So much for being the Bringer of Balance.

“I never got to tell you how happy I am that you married my daughter,” he continued.

She looked up, into his amber eyes.
“I would’ve thought… you’d be a little upset at me…”

“You asked for my blessing— even when it wouldn’t have mattered to Asami. And… I don’t care that you’re a Bender. I never told anyone this, but my brother was a Firebender, too. There was a large chance that Asami was going to end up being a Bender—and I’m just glad she’s found a place where she belongs. With you.”

Tears dripped down both of their eyes, but Hiroshi didn’t waver.

“I want you to have something— it’s on the shelf, in my wallet. When we returned to Republic City, I had one of my former servants deliver it to me, since you had Chief Beifong unfreeze the Sato bank account. It was in the vault… had been ever since Yasuko passed away.”

Curious, Korra stood and walked over to where Hiroshi’s black leather wallet was laying on the counter— picking it up and looking inside. There was a golden ring, slightly big for her fingers, with a large emerald in the middle. She turned and brought it over to Hiroshi, placing it in his hand— he studied it fondly for a few moments before looking back up at her.

“Would you Metalbend it for me? So that it fits on your finger?”

She carefully reshaped the gold— feeling the teeny tiny amount of Earth inside the band and allowing the metal to constrict ever so slightly. The ring floated back into Hiroshi’s hands, and he slipped it onto her ring finger.

“This belonged to my wife— actually, it was a Sato heirloom. The last one, really. My grandfather gave this to my mother when my parents were wed, and my father gave this to Yasuko on our wedding day. I think… since you gave Asami that beautiful necklace… you deserve to keep this ring. If… if you ever have kids, and one of them gets married… please.”

“Yes. Yes of course!” Korra whispered, her voice choking into a sob.

She hadn’t even thought about kids with Asami… they’d known nothing but violence in their relationship together— and yet seeing how happy Hikaru and Bolin were with Dequan… and Hiroshi’s request… Korra knew that she’d want nothing more than to start a family with her wife. She stood, leaning over and pressing a loving kiss to Hiroshi’s forehead.

“Would you like me to bring Asami back in?”

“Yes… I need to have some words with her, too. You can stay if you like—”

“I’ll… I’ll wait outside. You’ve been separated for so long… the two of you deserve to have some time alone,” Korra sighed, offering him a warm smile.

He reciprocated the expression, and she walked out of the room— her hands playing with the little emerald on the Sato heirloom.

Asami was still sitting, and the dog’s head was still resting on her knee as Korra leaned down and pressed a kiss to the top of her head. Wordlessly, her wife stood, giving the Golden Retriever one last pat and then walking back into the room. Korra sat down in the seat that the Airbender had been occupying and began petting the dog— whispering sweet nothings and gazing into wide, warm brown eyes.

She missed Naga.
Asami felt around in the darkness that she’d grown to be accustomed to, perhaps even a little comfortable with, until she clasped onto her father’s familiar hands.

“Asami…”

“When you get better—”

“Asami…”

“— let’s take a trip to Ember Island—”

“Asami…”

“— we always used to go see the plays there—”

“Sweetie! P-Please… I’m… I’m dying…” Hiroshi whimpered.

Asami broke down and began sobbing. She had been denying this moment thus far, and the sorrowful tone in her wife’s and her father’s voices hit her full force. She clutched her father’s hand, lifting it up and pressing tear-stained lips to his knuckles.

“In… in a life of regret— you’re the one thing I look back on that makes me smile. I just want you to know, I’m so proud of you, Asami. You are the greatest thing I ever created. I know we’ve had our crash landings as a family… I know that we’ve spent more time lying to each other than we have spent telling the truth… but I love you more than anything else. I said it before and I’ll say it again— I’m so proud of you, sweetie. You’re going to make it through this lifetime kicking ass from start to finish. You’ve always been… so brave…” Hiroshi whispered, his voice scratchy from a life of drinking and smoking.

His hand was trembling, or perhaps it was her own— Asami wasn’t too sure. She’d sobbed through most of what he’d had to say, and yet had heard every single word.

“I l-love you D-Dad… I love you s-so much,” she cried, standing and burring her face into his shoulder. “I… I f-forgive you.”

A rough, calloused hand stroked her short black hair and pulled her head slightly closer so that Hiroshi could kiss her brow. She shuddered a little and gripped the blanket lightly resting over him. For the rest of the afternoon, they remained still as statues— silent as the grave.

“I’m sorry, Mrs. Sato… your father passed away a few minutes ago.” Dr. Kang said, a hand on Asami’s shoulder. “He was comfortable, and we made sure that he wasn’t in any pain. He died peacefully in his sleep.”

“Would you like to take a walk?” Korra asked calmly.

“Yes. That would… yes.”
Two warm, soft hands guided her own—gently directing her through a garden out in front of the hospital. Asami took a whiff of the blooming flowers and sat down at the wooden bench—letting the cold morning fog wash over her face and hair.

Korra didn’t say anything to her, and Asami preferred it this way. She leaned up against her wife and closed her useless eyes—trying to remember what her father looked like…not in Zaofu prison, and certainly not when the Estate was collapsing atop their heads.

A car was waiting for them as soon as they stepped through the lobby and out the doors. The driver gave them a bow and they climbed inside of the car.

Hiroshi started snickering.

“What?”

Amused, her father pulled her collar up a little, “Nice…blemish.”

The heiress’s face went red as soon as she realized what he meant. She covered the hickey on her neck. Damn Korra for giving her that yesterday! Embarrassed, she gave him an apologetic smile and he ruffled her perfect hair a little.

“I don’t suppose I get to meet him?”

“Uh…she’s a she, Dad.”

To her astonishment, Hiroshi gave her a surprised smile, “Oh! OHHH!! Well, I don’t mind! I just…oh!”

Asami giggled, “I’m sorry… I should have told you sooner…she’s a little…intimidated by you…I don’t think I should introduce you two…”

Hiroshi laughed and patted her shoulder, “It’s alright…I suppose I wouldn’t have to worry about you accidentally…you know…getting pregnant!”

“DAD!!”

She playfully flicked him on the forehead. It felt good to joke around with her father.

“I’m just teasing!! Ouch, I was just kidding!”

The last good memory, before Asami’s life had been flipped around; her emotions and her soul being tossed around like a ragdoll. But…truth be told…that moment had been a happy one, no? Certainly not the aftermath of the lunch date—but at that instance, she’d been able to tell her father something about herself, and have him genuinely care. To laugh and play. To be a family.

That was the side of Hiroshi Sato that’d shown today, before his death. That sweet, kindness that no amount of anger and hatred could ever truly destroy. In the end—he was not an Equalist, nor a hero. He was not a martyr. He had not been a powerful executive.

Hiroshi Sato had been a father in the last few moments of his life, and for that Asami would always be grateful.
Chapter End Notes

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Leave comments...
Chapter Summary

“Falling in love is very real, but I used to shake my head when people talked about soul mates, poor deluded individuals grasping at some supernatural ideal not intended for mortals but sounded pretty in a poetry book. Then, we met, and everything changed, the cynic has become the converted, the sceptic, an ardent zealot.”

— E.A. Bucchianeri, Brushstrokes of a Gadfly

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Air Temple Island was absolutely silent, the way that a marina is in the morning— glassy waters and a layer of fog, and not even the seagulls have dared to disturb the peace. A wind chime, glass-blown and a beautiful array of colors, dangled back and forth on a string, tethered to an old, withering tree. Everyone could hear the chime from their bedrooms— nobody protested, of course. The sweet musical melody was a solemn wake-up call that most of the inhabitants needed.

‘Twas their war drum.

Silence followed the Air Acolytes and Benders as they moved to and fro— helping out with chores and performing morning duties. Incense and candles lit in the main chambers, the elderly ones chanting at a low whisper in the name of peace and enlightenment. The lemurs noticed the tension among the humans, and it seemed that they’d resided to cause as little mischief in their antics today as was “lemur-ly” possible. The Sky Bison bellowed quietly in the caves that they preferred to reside in, the babies teething at the little metal rings set out for them, and the mothers and fathers patiently resting while Airbenders helped shed all their fur.

This morning, the task currently occupied a very specific Airbender— none other than Opal Beifong untiringly brushing as much fur off of Juicy as she could. The clumps of white and brown hair fell to the floor and she kicked them away with a gust of air, towards the large pile that the Acolytes were collecting— a large ceremony to be done to let the shed fur float away into the wind (much to the dismay of local fishermen).

“How does that feel, boy?” she cooed, taking another long stroke with her brush.

Juicy let out a low, happy bellow and rolled over on his side— demanding that his belly be taken care of. With a chuckle, Opal shook her head and met his demands. Fur fell down onto her shoes and she nearly sneezed at the amount of hair surrounding her. How horrible it must be for Airbenders allergic to fur; not being able to ride Sky Bison to and fro.

Come to think of it— she’d never met an Airbender with asthma. A bitter irony, to say the least.

“I’m starting to think we ought to move into a clothing line with all this loose hair,” a soft voice rang from some ways down the cave.
Opal (much to her Sky Bison’s dismay), turned and gave a warm smile to her Soulmate, who strode up with her hands hidden behind her back and an innocent twinkle in her eyes. Jinora smirked and suddenly something dangled in front of the older girl’s nose.

A pendant of some sort?

“What’s this?” Opal mused, reaching up and carefully tugging the carving away from Jinora’s hands.

“Rohan taught me how to carve while you were— a few… uh… a few months ago,” the Airbending Master whispered shyly.

“I was gone. You can say it. This is beautiful, Jinora.”

The wooden piece in her hands depicted a Lotus flower, neither white nor red— but pink. Sacred. Her thumbs ran over each and every tiny little petal, the leaves surrounding the carving; no more than an inch in height and width. Intricate, to say the least.

“Beautiful,” Opal repeated with a proud smile. “Did you carve this?”

With a blush, her lover nodded.

She stood on her tippy toes to give her Soulmate a kiss on the forehead, lingering for a few seconds and closing her eyes— breathing in the scent of peppers and spices that Jinora always smelled like after helping her mother out in the kitchen. Her mouth lowered and pressed a lingering, sweet kiss to Jinora’s lips— taking the time to pour out a great deal of gratitude and smiling a little when Jinora began kissing back; swiping her tongue between Opal’s lips and moaning softly. The older girl broke them apart with a giggle.

“Thank you.”

Jinora blushed, “It was nothing. I really ought to make sure Rohan does chores more often, but when I saw him carve something out of a stick… I wanted to try and—”

“Oh, it’s not nothing,” Opal mused, looking back down at the little carving. “On the contrary, it’s everything. You have to plan…”

“What?”

“You have to plan… no human life goes without conflict and consequence— we can’t just run away from each other after every single argument. We were naïve. Innocent. We tore ourselves apart because we didn’t yet understand how to repair. The way a body’s muscles grow— ripping and tearing after a workout, only to rebuild over the next few days and become even stronger. Over and over. Our relationship needed to break so that we could rebuild it sturdier and more durable this time.

“Now that… that doesn’t excuse what I did to you. I** cheated** on you and tore us down another level. I broke that trust, and now we have to rebuild that on top of everything else. I have to reestablish that connection. But… this is so **stunning**, this carving. Looking at it… I’m grateful that… that you wanted us to reestablish what we had. I’ll always be grateful for everything you do, Jinora.”

Her soulmate only stared at her with a gaping mouth, blinking in confusion.

“It’s just a carving.”

Opal smiled, kissing Jinora again on the forehead, “More than that. It’s a gift. Perhaps even a sign of trust.”
“You really have grown, haven’t you?”

“I’m trying to. Will you tie it on for me?”

The older girl turned around and Jinora wrapped the leather string of the pendant around Opal’s neck— taking great care that the necklace would not be too tight that it might feel uncomfortable, and yet not loose enough to get in the way of a good flight or Airbending practice. After she tied a perfect, unyielding knot on the back of Opal’s neck, Jinora pressed a kiss to her Soulmate’s shoulder, wrapping her arms around the Beifong’s waist. Ebony hands reached down and traced light blue arrows, thumbs running across knuckles.

“You don’t have to apologize for being gone every single time we look at each other,” Jinora whispered sincerely.

“I’m sorry.”

“What did I just tell you not to do?”

“Oops… sorry,” Opal murmured sheepishly.

“You’re impossible,” Jinora huffed with a pout.

Opal turned and kissed the expression away, giggling a little as her hands slithered around her girlfriend’s waist— drawing the two women closer. The younger girl’s hands ran up and tangled into the Beifong’s scraggily black hair; tugging a little tautly and drawing out a groan from the older girl. To retaliate, Opal bit down on Jinora’s bottom lip, tugging and sucking and eliciting gasps from both parties.

They were alone in the cavern, save for the Sky Bison next to them— laying on his back with a confused look as to why his companion was not continuing to brush him.

Once more, for clarity— they were alone.

“Someone’s wound up,” the younger teased. “Tense, are we?”

“It’s been a while since I’ve last experienced this much pleasure…” Opal murmured.

Her eyes widened at what she’d just implied (or rather, admitted), and her mouth opened to apologize for reminding the both of them of Opal’s relationship with Samsara. However, Jinora cut her off with a fierce kiss and pushed her up against the rocky wall. Of course she cared that her woman had slept with someone else; perhaps she always would remain jealous. But in a moment of passion and craving… it didn’t fucking matter. Her teeth grazed the pulse point underneath Opal’s jaw and the older girl sucked in a sharp breath through clenched teeth.

“You really want to do this here? In a cave? Seems a little… like a bad porno,” Opal whispered, her face growing a little red. “Someone could walk in on us.”

She could see a fire in Jinora’s eyes, and the Beifong gulped. She possessed no desire whatsoever to be caught by an acolyte, by one of her friends, or worse… by Ikki or Meelo— but like all adults, she also yearned to satisfy both their hungers of covetousness. A hand reached around and squeezed just below her ass— in between her legs; and Opal involuntarily pushed her hips up against Jinora’s with a moan.

“The top of the temple tower in two minutes,” Jinora whispered in a husky voice, her teeth now playing with Opal’s earlobe.
“You sure that isn’t heresy?” the older girl shuddered, as Jinora’s tongue explored her jaw. “Well… you know best; I suppose… oooohhhh Jinora…”

“I’ll see you there,” the Airbending Master whispered, biting down a little on her Soulmate’s collar before turning and leaving with a wink.

Juicy remained rather disappointed that he only had half his fur brushed that morning— but unfortunately Opal had found herself otherwise occupied.

__________________________________________________________

Despite the fact that the sun made the day rather warm, Opal donned a red scarf to hide the blemishes on her neck— her Soulmate walking around the courtyard with a smug grin on her face. The two of them exchanged gazes and Opal tightened her scarf a little in annoyance, prompting a chuckle from Jinora.

Spirits… that was the best sex I’ve ever had… I suppose we’re back to being the real deal again… I’m never letting her go…

Opal shook the thought out of her head with a laugh— thank goodness mind reading was not a Bending art; else she might find herself in a great deal of embarrassment!! She walked over to the gazebo, where Hikaru, Bolin, Dequan, and Suki were enjoying a morning tea. Her eyes narrowed; Something was different.

The Airbender closed her eyes and sensed the energies of the people surrounding her. Sure enough — as when Asami first returned from battle, blinded— a strong aura pierced the environment. With a gasp, Opal realized that this aura radiated from none other than little Suki. Not that the young girl noticed; smiling and taking sips of tea as Bolin told a fierce story of when he discovered Lavabending.

“I’m tethered to people the Universe wants me to Energybend, aren’t I?”

Cautiously, she walked up to the family.

“Good morning, Opal,” Hikaru smiled, shifting Dequan’s weight in her arms.

“To you all as well… how are you feeling, Suki?”

The little girl looked up, “Fine.”

And then back down to her coloring book— her attention lost to the world.

Opal shot a look at the parents, who’s eyebrows raised at the Beifong’s sudden interest. She knelt
down and gave them a look. The look. The look that says “remember the time I Energybent your cousin? I think I need to give your sister Airbending.”

Unfortunately, such a realization did not register in their minds.

Clearly.

“H-How can we help you?” the Firebender asked.

Opal let out a sigh, “Suki’s energy is... the same as Asami’s was before I bestowed her Airbending. I think I need to tap into your sister’s dynamism.”

“You could make me an Airbender?” Suki asked, “Like Cousin Asami?”

“Yes.”

“And that means I’d get to play Air Ball with the others, right?” the girl asked with a determined glint in her blue eyes.

Opal nodded.

Suki turned to Hikaru, “Can I do it, Huka? Pretty please?”

The Firebender closed her eyes and rubbed her forehead, and then glaring at Opal for planting such an idea in her little sister’s head. With a defeated sigh, she smiled at the both of them and nodded with weary amber eyes.

“Stand here, yeah— like that.”

“Does it hurt?”

“Energybending? Naw.”

“What am I supposed to do?” Suki asked curiously.

Opal put a hand on the ten-year-old’s shoulder and smiled warmly, “Close your eyes.”

She did.

“Now... think of the blood that flows through you— little cells moving back and forth. Nutrients being absorbed in your muscles. Think of how your heart beats slowly, one big muscle moving back and forth— how your lungs collapse and expand without a moment’s hesitation for you.

“Imagine a pool of water, with two fish swirling around in a circle. Around in around. One of the fish is white with a black spot on its head, and the other is a black fish with a white spot on its head. They’re simply swirling around and around. You with me so far?”

“Yeah,” Suki nodded.

“Imagine the energy within your body swirling around and around. Back and forth. The black fish and the white fish. The light and the dark. All the little nerves in your body. All the little ticklish spots. All the thoughts that’ve ever run through your head,” Opal whispered. “They’re all connected.”
After a moment, Suki let out a calm sigh through her nose, “Okay.”

Opal reached out, a hand on the girl’s right shoulder, and a thumb on the girl’s forehead. She allowed the swirling, in motion energy to dance with her own—to connect with the world around her. Every Acolyte, Airbender, Lemur, Sky Bison, White Lotus Sentry. The guards of Zaofu, pacing around the temples. Opal’s family. Suki’s family. Jinora. All of them... concomitant.

As though she’d unlocked a door, she tapped into Suki’s energy and allowed wind to flow through the other girl’s vitality.

| Fire | Air | Water | Earth | Light | Dark | Spirits | Energy |

Simultaneously, Suki opened her eyes and let the wind around her twirl with a big smile on her face. A small tornado whirled around her fingers.

“This seems right. Natural,” the little girl whispered.

“You were always meant to be an Airbender,” Opal bowed, being the first person to recognize this girl’s newfound ability.

Hikaru pulled her sister into a hug, “Thank you, Opal. I just hope that she’s responsible enough for this kind of gift.”

The Energybender laughed, “I suppose if it got out of hand— I could always take it back.”

Suki’s cheeks went a little pink, “No thanks... I’ll be good.”

The trio was engulfed in a big bear hug as Bolin picked them all up (having passed Dequan over to an Acolyte for a few seconds) off ground and spun them around.

“This is so cool! We can have sparring matches together!”

“Wholesome family activity,” Hikaru grumbled, playfully ruffling her fiancé’s hair.

Opal left the clan of ragtag Benders to explore the newfound powers that she’d bestowed to Suki—and in that moment the Beifong had never felt more wanted in the world.
A Few Hours Later:

“Have you ever thought about marriage?” her lover asked, feet dangling over the edge of the cliff.

“What?! We just got back together, Jinora. You can’t be serious. I’ve barely forgiven myself for hurting you—”

“No! I mean… we’re still really young and we’ve got a long way to go… but maybe someday?”

“Yeah… someday. I’d love that. I really would,” Opal whispered sincerely.

“Who would propose?”

“I think we both would. On accident.”

“Like, we’d agree to a sunset picnic overlooking Republic City—”

“You’d try to whisper some grand speech about ephemerality and how our time together is fleeting.”

“And you’d make a comment about how we’re forever,” Jinora smirked.

Opal turned, facing towards her lover and holding her hands. Their noses bumped against each other and they both smiled.

“You’d make me a ring, but you wouldn’t have your family Metalbend it for you… you’d smith it yourself if you could. You’d go through jeweler’s school if it meant the ring was the best it could be. You’re just that determined.”

“But you, Jinora… you’d just make me a daisy crown and ask me to be your wife.”

“Would you say yes?”

“Of course. Would about you?” Opal questioned.

“I’d just fiddle with the ring for the rest of the night in wonder. I wouldn’t talk and it might make you nervous— because I’d be too amazed at the craftsmanship. But when you’d gone to sleep, I would lean over you and whisper ‘yes’ into your ear.”

Opal kissed her, right then and there— with the moon casting a protective gaze down upon them. The girls hugged each other tightly, as though no physical force in the Universe could ever be remotely capable of tearing them apart.

“Can I try something?”

“What?”

“Energybending you.”
“Like you did to Samsara? Or like you did to Asami and Suki?”

“Neither,” Opal whispered with a shake of her head.

They were still embracing, swaying a little on the spot— and Jinora’s grip tightened. She trusted Opal.

“Sure.”

She took a deep breath, closing her eyes— but not sensing a bright glow like with the other Souls that Opal had been tethered to. That didn’t make their bond any less powerful; what they had by definition of Soulmates was, of course, atomic. But ‘twas not the same as the connection, the tether that Opal had felt to Suki, Asami, and Samsara.

Unyielding, Opal focused on not two energies, her own and Jinora’s— but combining them into one. She swayed around the two of them on the spot; both physically and spiritually.

“Do you feel that?” the older girl whispered.

The Airbending Master nodded, “Yeah… we’re… one entity now…”

Back and forth… dark and light…

“We are one."

“Yes we are. I love you, Opal.”

“I love you too, Jinora.”

Their bodies were rooted to the spot, and yet it felt as though they were star-walking— exploring the cosmos together as a single being. A god, almost. Eventually, after letting the bliss of being tethered to Jinora’s soul shower over her own… they returned back to Earth’s simple, loving dynamism.

“Wow,” her Soulmate murmured, opening her wide brown eyes.

“Yeah…”

A metal clinking could be heard, and the girls broke apart. Fully armored up in a Chief of Police outfit, her Aunt Lin walked up and smiled sadly;

“I hate to interrupt your time together— but I’m afraid Korra wants to speak with everybody. Baatar broke into the hard drive and found an important location. We’re going to take down the Lieutenant this week; once and for all.”

Chapter End Notes
Cool beans! Shit's gon go down, but happy st patricks day pinch someone's butt for me

Leave comments
Chapter Summary

"The two most powerful warriors are patience and time."

-Leo Tolstoy

“Sooooooo… who’s going to die? Because every time that we go after the Lieutenant… someone dies.”

“Bolin?”

“Yes, dear?”

“Shut up.”

“Right. Sorry.”

Hikaru sat down next to her cousin, who’d ignored Bolin’s senseless remark and was toying with the zipper on her sweater. Dequan was squirming around in Hikaru’s arms—and she contemplated giving the baby boy to Asami so that the blind woman would have a different distraction. Rather than listen… to the impending meeting.

“Alright listen up!” Korra said, turning away from the screen where Baatar was programming.

The Avatar clearly commanded power in this room—every pair of eyes gazed upon her, standing in between Saikhan and Captain Fai. No one had ever looked more authoritative than Korra at that moment. Her hands were behind her back and she set a stern, unyielding expression on her face.

“There is an abandoned Future Industries factory outside the city, and the data files and equipment reports seem to suggest that the rest of the Equalists, including the slimy bastard himself, are holed up. According to one of Asami’s old Future Industries maps—this factory spanned roughly three underground floors and an expanse of tunnels. It would appear that the Lieutenant drilled all the way through in the past two years and created a network for himself.

“The bomb that we removed from Future Industries tower was our first clue, leading down to the old workshop that the Equalists used to use. From there a tunnel system spans all the way out. It covers miles of land, and I’m not stupid enough to send all of us down that way.”

“Won’t we lose our element of surprise if we don’t take the route?” Mako piped up.

Korra shook her head, “We’re going to send the Earthbenders and Zaofu Guard down that way. Surrounded by your element—I’m trusting you to be able to take care of yourself. I’ll go down there with you; I want to make sure he doesn’t see me coming.”

“Firebenders and Waterbenders around going to assault the Factory from outside—providing a distraction,” Lin explained. “Since they are the most exposed, they get the bulletproof vests. Just
“keep them occupied while we infiltrate from below.”

“What happens with the Airbenders?” Kuvira chimed in.

“We’ll be breaking in from overhead,” Tenzin sighed. “We’ll also be keeping an eye on the sky. Say the Lieutenant tries to escape via Airship— we won’t let him get the chance.”

The crowd dissipated, preparing for a battle. Hikaru stood, cradling her baby close to her face.

“Mommy loves you. Mommy loves you so much,” she whispered, feeling a tear slide down her cheek. “I want you to behave for Baatar and Pema while I’m gone. I’ll be back before you know it.”

“You can’t be serious.”

The Firebender turned. Asami had her hands on her hips and a scowl on her face.

“I have to fight. I vowed to protect Republic City from Equalists two years ago. I’m keeping that promise. I’m doing this for Tesmee and Bao, I owe them that much.”

“Huka, you’re a mother,” Asami argued.

“And you’re blind. That’s not going to stop you, is it?”

There was a tremble in her cousin’s shoulders, and it occurred to Hikaru that Asami had lost someone very important. That Asami couldn’t bear to lose her. Irony had a strange way of unfolding— how they depended on each other like a body needs oxygen and water, when only six months ago they were at each other’s throats. Hikaru stepped forwards, pressing her forehead against the Airbender’s.

“I love you. I’m sorry that… that we didn’t get a chance to connect sooner in our lives.”

Asami pondered this for a moment with confusion furrowing her eyebrows— as though she were remembering something from a long time ago.

“Maybe that’s why fate brought us together. So that we can grow up again,” the blind woman smiled.

Hikaru put a hand on her cousin’s cheek, feeling Asami lean into the touch.

“I’d like that,” the Firebender chuckled.

“Kyoshi Island.”

“No.”

“No? What, are you scared of the Unagi?”
“Bless Asami and Hikaru, but there’s like three buildings,” Baatar argued. "There's probably nothing to do there."

Kuvira sighed and fiddled with her fiancé’s fingers, allowing them to thread through her own. Junior was staying on the island with the rest of the Acolytes—and a handful of the White Lotus. Though he was immensely brave and incredibly loyal… Baatar was not cut for battle.

“How about the South Pole? North Pole? I’ve heard great things about the palaces—and we could check out the Spirit World, too!”

The Metalbender smiled, “I’ve had enough of the Spirit World for a lifetime.”

“You got stuck in a Fog! I’m talkin' about trying to find Wan Shi Tong’s Library! I heard that Jinora did it once!”

“Sweetie, I am not spending our honeymoon being chased around by Avatars and Spirits. And you can’t even go three minutes before wanting to fiddle with an electronic.”

Baatar sighed and gave her a playful pout, kissing her and shrugging, “Okay. We’ll figure out our honeymoon after we get married.”

“If you ever get married!” a voice called from across the courtyard. “You’ve been engaged for three years!!”

“Aunt Kya! You’re one to talk!” Kuvira laughed. “I haven’t seen a ring on Lin’s finger yet!!”

That shut the Waterbender up rather quickly. Baatar twirled Kuvira’s braid around and playfully tickled her nose with it. With a playful yelp, she began prickling his neck—causing him to squirm and scream in a fit of giggles.

“Stop it!! No!!”

“You’re just like Opal,” Kuvira smiled. “She’s ticklish there, too.”

“Oh really? Do you do this with her?” Baatar asked, bringing her in for a long kiss.

“Mmmm… no… mmmm… you win…”

“Come back to me in one piece, okay?” he asked with wide, innocent eyes.

Kuvira felt him wipe away a tear and clung to her future husband—burying her face into his shoulder and breathing in the scent of aftershave and cologne. His arms were so relaxing. She could’ve fallen asleep right then and there—except the rest of the Earthbenders were waiting on her to head out.

“I love you.”

“I love you too.”

“Are you scared?” Kuvira asked. “Not, uh, not that I’m scared—I just wanted to know if you’re scared.”

Korra smiled and put a hand on her best friend’s shoulder, “It’s okay to be afraid. This is a dangerous mission. I don’t expect you to be emotionless and stoic, Kuv. You’re a human being.”
“I’ve just got a really bad feeling about this. Whatever. Let’s get it over with.”

Korra nodded, holding up a ball of fire to create light for everyone. Saikhan, Suyin, and Lin began Bending the large stone platform with the help of some other Earthbenders as they moved along the tunnel—a similar fashion to the Ba Sing Se rail systems.

The ride was silent, and Korra realized that Kuvira was gripping her hand and had her eyes closed.

“It’s okay,” the Avatar whispered. “You’re one of the strongest people I know—and you’re the best Metalbender in the world.”

“Toph beats me.”

“No, she’s the strongest Earthbender—but you’re the only Unobtainiumbender out there. Hell, it wouldn’t surprise me if you practiced hard enough and began Bending platinum, too.”

Kuvira offered her a smile, “Probably an alternate universe version of me.”

“What?”

“Nothing. I’ll ask around in the Fog of Souls, if we make it out of this.”

“We’ll be fine— Kuv.”

And yet the Metalbender couldn’t help but feel as though they were headed to their deaths.

Opal reached down and fiddled with the carving that Jinora had given her, running her fingers over the petals of the lotus flower. Though they were both Airbenders—Master Tenzin had decided it would be better if everyone worked in pairs; splitting all of his pupils up so that they were a more difficult target to attack. Which meant that she was not going to see her Soulmate until after the battle.

A hand rested on her shoulder.

“It’s going to be okay.”

“Don’t say that, Asami… reassure me that you’ve got my back or that I’ll die before I let something bad happen to you,” Opal sighed. “But don’t say that it’s going to be okay.”

“Why?”

“Because lying is a sin.”

“You don’t believe in us? In all of us?”

“It’s not that. It’s the fact that we’re going up against metal projectiles with air. That Korra and Kuvira are tunneling underground into Gods-know-what fate there could be. That Hikaru and Mako and Kya and Captain Fai are fighting right out on the front lines—when all of them have family to
think of. The stakes are so fucking high— and what does the Lieutenant have to lose?"

Asami didn’t say anything, only letting out a small sigh through her nose as the two of them walked to the edge of the cliff.

The Glider Suits seemed a little too wrinkly. The sun was shining a little too bright. It was too warm out. Opal’s nose was itching but she was already running and didn’t have time to scratch it. She’d left a glass of water on her bedside table and it was going to leave a ring— goodness knows Pema had enough on her hands. The seagulls were too loud. She was going into battle with a blind woman as her partner.

Everything was going wrong, wasn’t it?

“Are you sure you’re okay?” Asami called over the wind as they flew. “We can turn back if we want, there’s practically a whole army going into battle. I’m sure they can make do without us if you don’t feel okay.”

Opal let the wind tangle through her hair and stared down at the Republic City sprawling beneath them. All these Benders and Nonbenders who were sick and tired of Equalist terrorism. Children who might become orphans if the extremists attacked another public structure— like they did on Jinora and Opal’s date. College students who just wanted to study and walk to class without having to look over their shoulders. Parents. Firemen. Police officers. Doctors. Probenders. Monks. Business owners. Artists. Homeless. Tourists. Innocent civilians.

She had to do this for them.

“The world’s counting on us.”

She heard Asami chuckle as they flew over a skyscraper.

“I used to say that about my role in the Equalists. How I was fighting for the masses— how what I was doing was right.”

“Do you think the people we’re going up against think the same thing?”

“Once upon a time I would’ve said yes. But at this point— how mercilessly they’ve killed. How willing they are to go through buildings full of people just to reach one Bender? They slaughtered my Board for no reason— all of them Nonbenders— just to send me a message. They staged an attack against Zaofu just to hurt my father and I; they didn’t even care that they didn’t kill or capture us… they just wanted to warn you to back off. Tesmaa. Bao. Jiang. Ai. Dad. You and I. Coalition or Equalist, it doesn’t matter if you think you’re doing the right thing— what matters is how you accomplish your goals.

“At this point… if you’re an Equalist and you’ve stuck through this violence for this long… you don’t care about Benders and Nonbenders— you just want to kill for fun. The vehemence of battle. War. They’ll go down laughing.”

Opal solemnly looked at the other pairs of Airbenders scattered across the sky, and at this distance so small that she wouldn’t have distinguished them from birds if she couldn’t faintly detect their energies.

Had she been chosen by a divine force? Why her? Anyone could go to the Lion Turtle and receive Energybending. If he deemed them worthy. And… why Asami, of all people? Why was she blinded? Why was she an Airbender now? What did the Universe want from them?
No mere coincidence, surely.

_Bullshit,_ Opal thought. _This is all bullshit._

She grabbed Asami’s hand— signaling that they were flying a different direction. Lacking any other choice, the blind woman turned with her and they picked up velocity.

“Come on,” Opal muttered, her eyes narrowing.

“What? Where are we going?”

“To the tunnels underneath the city.”

“What about the Airbending plan?”

“Master Tenzin and the others will be fine without us. The two of us have to do this our way.”

“You’re making no sense,” Asami scoffed, following Opal down through the buildings.

“We’re going to do this the way we were born. The Nonbender way. Korra’s plan is all well and good— but we need to think like Equalists, or else the Lieutenant is getting away from all of us for a final time; and we can kiss any chance of victory _sayonara._”

Opal held onto the blind woman and shot air out from her feet to land the two of them on the ground. She kicked a piece of rubble to the side and ignored Asami’s vicious coughing.

“Why is there ash everywhere?” the older woman sputtered, reaching out in the darkness and finding Opal’s hand.

“Because we’re at the remains of the Art Museum.”
The Battle - Part 2

Chapter Summary

"We serial killers are your sons, we are your husbands, we are everywhere. And there will be more of your children dead tomorrow."
— Ted Bundy

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Hikaru let out a snarl as she sent a fireball towards the sentries set out front—all of whom were prepared yet surprised at the oncoming group of Fire and Waterbenders. Out of the corner of her eyes, she saw Mako send lightning bolts at Equalists who had rifles in their hands, lighting up the metal, and by extension themselves. Captain Fai and his Firebending branch worked together to storm the sides of the building, sending blasts of heat towards the masks of Chi Blockers. To her right, Kya and Eun were working together to hurl large chunks of ice into the doors and windows of the abandoned factory.

A gloved Equalist began charging her, unwavering at her attempts to strike them down with fire.

His weapon crackled to life and attempted to bat at her head.

Shit! Uh! Uh! Redirect! REDIRECT!!

She let him his her in the arm, feeling a great deal of pain and choosing to ignore it—allowing the electricity to flow through her stomach (remembering not to let it touch her heart), pooling and collecting before she sent the volts into his skull with her other hand. A trick that her grandmother said Fire Lord Zuko was fond of.

Thank the gods I was born a Firebender, she thought—kicking the Equalist’s body away. THANK THE GODS I'M NOT PREGNANT ANYMORE!!

Though she didn’t want to have to encounter more situations like that, Hikaru kept the tactic in mind. Fire felt useless in this situation—and more than once Hikaru had to remind herself that her ancestors nearly conquered the world with fire. And her other ancestor stopped them.

The sun kept her going—it’s warmth like a beacon. Hikaru wondered if she would ever get to see Sozin’s Comet. If she lived past this battle.

I have a son to think of.

She shook the thought—knowing that if she was in the least bit distracted she wouldn’t make it, and therefore her worrying would be pointless.

“Quite the cheery day we’re having, hmm?” Mako called out, slamming another Chi Blocker to the ground with a blast of fire.

“No kidding!”
A pistol pointed at her and Hikaru remembered Kanji’s trick— bringing up a huge wall of fire and blasting away with a propulsion. It stunned the Shooter long enough for Eun to whip him in the face with a powerful tendril of water.

“Just like the Probending days, eh Hikaru?”

She smiled, covering Eun’s back as the Waterbender send shards of ice into opponent’s masks— cracking their goggles and blocking their vision. Once their masks had to be removed, they were more vulnerable. Hikaru sent blast after blast with a snarl— thinking of Dequan and Suki. How they’d just abducted her sister like it was a piece of cake.

Hikaru let out a yell and fire erupted from her palms, spanning in a large funnel in front of her— torching any and all in her path.

“Damn son,” Eun whispered, picking up a Chi Blocker and slamming him into the side of the factory.

“I’ve had enough of these assholes.”

“Atta girl,” Kya sighed. “Come on, we need to keep them distracted, but we can’t distract ourselves.”

Hikaru looked up for a few seconds, where Airbenders were dropping rocks through the roof of the factory and causing chaos from up top. She shook her head and went back to striking down Equalists. Her friends were fine, she had herself to worry about right now.

Jinora swerved to the right, grabbing Kai and pulling him out of harm’s way of an arrow— if one of them was hit this high up and lost their bending…

“Thanks!” he called.

“Come on!”

They dived down and picked up a few more rocks. It was the best they could think of, attacking the factory from above while Korra and the Earthbenders dug out their floor. She hurled a boulder, thinking of the time the Equalists shot her for no reason. She was not fucking expendable.

Smash!

“Nice hit!” Kai laughed, landing at the edge of the windowsill and using his Airbending to fire the rocks down at a group of Equalists. He flew off before they could aim at him, laughing as he rejoined her.

“Just think of it as the despicable version of Air Ball,” Jinora huffed, landing in a tree to catch her breath.

She wasn’t sure if they were winning or not— but she’d be damned if she gave up anytime soon.

Whizz!
“They’ve got Shooters on the roof, we need to take them out!!” Jinora shouted.

Her and Kai were relentless, using their Airbending to shoot what they could towards the Shooters. With a distracted aim, they used the opportunity to swirl around the three or four Equalists on the roof and force them together with a powerful gust.

“Now!” Kai shouted.

She felt horrible. She really did—but the Equalists had gone too far in their campaign. They’d murdered, tortured, kidnapped, and bombed. Jinora balanced her Chi, summoning power within herself and using a powerful Air Kick.

The four Equalist flew off the roof—off of a four story factory—with no possible chance of survival.

“Forgive me, but you left me with no choice,” she whispered, turning and flying off to aid the rest of the Airbenders.

She didn’t even notice that Opal and Asami weren’t a part of the fight.

_____________________________________________________

“What the fuck are we doing down here? We need to help out with the fight!” the blind woman argued.

Where was it? Where was it? Ah-ha!

Opal led her friend down a Lavabent tunnel, created months ago by Bolin, Kuvira, and Korra when they’d been searching for tunnels that led to an Equalist hideout. They’d found the three Equalists, yes, but distractions arose—you know, Korra having to turn herself over to the fuckers in order to save Suki, Gyeong, and her Mr. Uhm. The tunnel hadn’t been explored since—what with them thinking that Korra had killed the Lieutenant.

And so there they were, stumbling around in the darkness. I mean…not much of a change for Asami, but Opal’s phone was running out of battery as they explored the tunnel.

“What are you expecting to find down here?” Asami hissed.

“A clue. A passage. Something. We didn’t come all this way for poetic coincidence.”

“What the fuck, Opal?”

“Look. Do you honestly think we’re fighting against some dainty War Lord, Sams? This guy has a motive—we need to find it.”

“A mo—a MOTIVE?! He’s the leader of the Equalists, that’s his motive!” Asami yelled, her shouts echoing off the tunnel walls.

“Pipe down, they might be down here. Okay, hear me out. You and your father were constantly in the way of the Lieutenant doing whatever he wanted—he needs you out of the picture as soon as
you entered it years ago. This guy shoots Jinora, and it seems totally random—right? No, he targeted her. Because he knew that you were getting close to the Avatar’s friends. And then he specifically chooses you to take on the Art Museum project? Think about it… he must’ve done some research beforehand once he learned about the Unobtainium deposit here.

“He would’ve known that your mother was the one to build the place. And yet he still had you in charge of digging the ore. Jinora and I watched the Estate fight— he waited until Korra had shown up at your house to attack. He wanted to expose your identity while Korra looked on. And in some twisted way, he succeeded, didn’t he?

“Zaofu. He fucking attacked an entire city with a handful of warriors; and it didn’t even matter to him that he didn’t succeed in killing you or your father— if he really wanted you dead he wouldn’t have used poisoned roses. He wouldn’t have waited until he was out of the city to kill Hiroshi— he wanted to kill my dad to send Zaofu a message: help the Sato’s and you’re the one who ends up dead.”

Asami took a deep breath, looking at Opal with lifeless eyes and biting her lip.

The Airbender continued, “You came back disguised as someone else— and you were free of trouble for a long time. As soon as he needed to flee Future Industries, he fucking murders your Nonbending Board Members… all because they worked for you once. And if the Lieutenant has gone to this much trouble to cause you suffering; he’s done his research… he knew that Hikaru and Suki were your family. So… he captured Suki and demanded Korra— to toy with you. He tortures Korra every single day because he’s figured out about your Soulmate connection, until you decided to do something about it and bring a battle to his gates. That’s all this ever fucking is to him— a game.

“It’s his victory after the hangar battle, because you were blinded. And he managed to survive Korra’s assault, so why worry. It’s not until he decides that he wants to remind you that he’s still breathing— that he attacks Harmony Tower. And the cherry on top is that he sent an Assassin on the island dressed up as a White Lotus guard— the very sentries that are supposed to protect you and Korra— to kill your father. And now we have an army at his gates, even though I have a funny fucking feeling that he’s not even there. The bastard is an irrational time-bomb, just waiting for the right chance to strike.”

The blind woman’s breath was trembling in anger, and Opal heard her take a few huffs to calm her lungs down.

“Gods… you’re right, aren’t you? All this time… he was after me… trying to make me suffer until I broke… but what does that have to do with the Museum?”

“Obviously Korra, Kuvira, and Bolin didn’t explore these tunnels all the way… they left as soon as they found someone that could bring them information. But… the direction that they’re pointing… let’s see… Asami… they all go West.”

“The direction of the Factory.”

“Which means that if the Lieutenant tries to escape— this is the way he’s going to leave. Not Korra’s direction. Not out the front gates. Not by Airship. This man is obsessed with irony because he’s a psychopathic serial killer. And we’re going to fucking face him once and for all,” Opal sighed.

Simultaneously creating Air Scooters, they rapidly flew down the tunnel— bent on ending this struggle once and for all.
“Slice!” Korra yelped, as a metal strip flew past her ear into the neck of the Equalist that she was fighting.

“Just covering your back, Glowstick,” Kuvira called out, sending several metal strips out and pinning Equalists to the wall.

Korra let Fire and Air erupt from her fingers, mixing them together and lighting up opponents in her pathway. They’d tunneled into the bottom of the factory, Earthbenders ripping apart the place and taking Equalists down with chunks of concrete flying everywhere. She could hear rumbling as two separate battles raged above their heads—but she hadn’t felt any pain yet, which meant Asami was okay.

“He’s not here,” Korra muttered to her best friend. “The Lieutenant isn’t in this fucking factory, I just know it. He left his army here and fled.”

She sent a kick of air towards several Shooters, and Kuvira and Suyin wrapped steel cables around their waists—slamming them into the ground.

“Look!” Kuvira hissed, pointing to the right.

“What?”

“That tank… it’s a fake,” the Metalbender concluded, stomping her feet on the ground. “There’s a passage behind it—headed back towards Republic City.”

She was pointing at a large fuel tank hidden in the corner, looking a little out of place in a storeroom of weapons and ammunition. If this were a video game, there’d be a little button off to the side to open it up or something—but no such lever existed. Not that it mattered—nothing would stop Korra from ending this man.

“Do you think he took this way out of the factory?”

“Only one way to find out, Glowstick… he’s got to have used it—it’s platinum!! That’s gotta be his escape route.”

“SU! LIN! BO! TAKE OVER!!” the Avatar commanded, her eyes glowing a blinding white.

She raised a chunk of concrete the size of a Satomobile up, repeatedly smashing it into the tank—denting the metal over and over until it tore open. With a final CREAK!! the fake platinum tank was ripped open, revealing a tunnel. Korra and Kuvira managed to squeeze through the sharp edges, and the Avatar lit a ball of fire in her hands so that they could see where they were going.

“I think I can sense him… about half a mile away,” Kuvira muttered, tapping her foot repeatedly against the ground.

Korra took a deep breath and steeled herself.
“He’s with someone,” the Metalbender warned. “He’s… coming back towards us?”

There was a cistern up ahead—a meetup point where about four tunnels all connected. Korra and Kuvira readied themselves as the duo of Equalists approached. They wouldn’t hesitate to make sure he was really dead this time.

Except… it wasn’t the Lieutenant this time.

“O-Opal?”

“Asami!!”

The Airbenders ran towards them, embracing them tightly and burying their faces into strong shoulders and open arms.

“What are you doing down here? Why aren’t you with Tenzin and the other Airbenders?”

“We found this tunnel under the Art Museum, and we were afraid that he used it to escape the factory,” Opal sighed in relief. “At least we were wrong.”

“We were about to attack you,” Kuvira chuckled.

“He could’ve gone down one of these side passages,” Korra pondered.

“OH NO WORRIES, I’M RIGHT HERE!! FOUR BITCHES WITH ONE STONE? HAH!! WHAT A PERFECT DAY!! THE GODS ARE CLEARLY ON MY FUCKING SIDE!!”

The Lieutenant was hiding up in the shadows, and Korra’s eyes widened as she realized that he was holding a detonator in his hands, pushing it without reason. Her only thought was the blind woman in her arms—shoving Opal and Asami away from them with a powerful, Avatar-worthy blast of air.

“He’s gone fucking mad!”

“SHIT!”

“NO! STOP!!”

BOOOOOM!!

Korra felt herself falling as the ground crumbled beneath her feet—Kuvira falling beside her as they tumbled through the caverns beneath the cistern; rocks falling down on top of them and the fire of an explosion filling their eyes.

The last thing she remembered was the feeling of rocks burying her alive, her best friend’s fingers still gripping onto hers as they fell and collided against the ground.
Chapter End Notes

ugh

Leave comments...
Chapter Summary

“The moment you doubt whether you can fly, you cease for ever to be able to do it.”

— J.M. Barrie, Peter Pan

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“NO! NO NO NO!! NO!!” she screamed, falling to the ground and feeling Opal’s arms pull her away from the edge.

The body behind her was trembling— tears falling onto her neck. It was obvious that the younger girl felt just as much emotional pain as Asami… but it hadn’t been her Soulmate that’d fallen.

As though she were being crushed in a Trash Compactor— every bone felt as though it were on fire. She could feel herself choking, her lungs being flattened, her ribs snapping. Korra had to be dead. Asami tried to fight Opal’s steel grip but her efforts were useless.

“Asami… Asami… we have to go after him… before he gets away…” the Energybender’s hollow voice rang out. “We can grieve later… we can… just… let her go… we’ll grieve after we get him… let her go…”

The ex-heiress gripped the stone beneath her knees, her nails scratching down the rocky floor and causing her fingers to vibrate a little from the friction. Her wife. Her Soulmate. Her Avatar. Gone, like a drop of water in the ocean. Erased with the push of a button.

“She’s gone down one of the side tunnels… Asami… you there? Stay with me, please!!”

She took several heaving breaths, feeling Opal thump her on the back. The pain.

Let her go?


Korra was looking at her with admiration, even though Asami was droning on about car mechanics. The engineer trailed off on her monologue and looked at those… those en captivating cerulean eyes.

The two faces began looming closer and closer.

“Korra…”
“Asami?”

“I… I can’t…”

“Why?”

Because I’m an Equalist… I’m the bad guy…

Asami took a deep breath. She could feel the anxiety attack swirling within her and looked down. Korra’s dark hands were creeping towards hers— ever so slowly.

“I… I lead a complicated life and so do you… and…”

Their lips were close enough that Asami could feel Korra’s warm breath. She felt fingers intertwine with hers. Korra’s hands… they were so warm…

“Not right here. In this room… we’re not anybody… I’m not the Avatar and you’re not a future CEO,” the Water Tribe girl muttered. “We’re just Korra and Asami…”

I can… I can live with that.

Their lips met. Not passionately— with burning blazes and exploding fireworks— but slowly, and with the warmth of a hearth. A soft tangle of mouths and arms and hands and legs, as Korra leaned on top of Asami and pushed her, slowly and softly, down onto the cushions. The engineer let out a whimper and cupped the Avatar’s cheek… she needed more… she needed so much more.

Let… go…

“GO AHEAD AND KILL ME NOW, IF IT SO PLEASES YOUR DIGNITY!!! DO IT, AVATAR—I’M AS GOOD AS DEAD IN YOUR HEAVENLY, DEVINE, AND CHOSEN EYES!” she yelled, her screams echoing throughout the halls of the vessel.

Korra reeled back against the wall, clutching a pipe and blinking in shock— to discern who was really in the prison.

“But know this,” Asami continued, the volume of her voice at the maximum, “I fell in love with you because you chose me! I fell in love with you because you began to turn my dark into light! I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU— NOT FOR THE SAKE OF DISTROYING YOU, BUT THE EXACT OPPOSITE!! I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU, THAT YOU MIGHT BE SAFE FROM THE HARM THAT I COULD DO!!”

Let… go…

“I want to be her,” Asami whispered. “She looks so happy…”

“Because she did the right thing… she stood up to her father… she helped properly defeat the Equalists…” the business woman said, turning to Asami and smiling sadly.
Asami tentatively walked forwards... closer and closer to Korra. The blue-eyed woman was still looking out across Yue Bay, and Asami reached forwards, cupping the Avatar’s cheek and running her hands through short, chestnut hair.

“I love you. I promise to change for you.”

Korra looked at her very suddenly, her eyes blinding white in the Avatar State, “Are you afraid of me? Of my Bending? Of my power?”

Asami swallowed a gulp and answered honestly, “Yes. But I respect you and care for you... I love you so much, Korra. I’m going to fix everything I’ve done.”

Let... go...

“The Thought Chakra on the crown of the head— the ability to tap into pure cosmic energy. To reach into the stars, you have to be able to fly. Such flight is blocked by Earthly Attachments.”

Let... go...

“Do not think of your love as a lust-filled shackle that binds you to the Earth. Fill your love with compassion, rather than regular passion.”

Asami closed her eyes and thought of Korra, not when she was bending and fighting with glowing white eyes, but when they laid together on the couch for the first time— whispering promises that their identity wouldn’t get in the way of a relationship. And then when they made love for the first time, how there had been no turning back.

Let... go...

She saw a path in front of her, realizing that she was among the stars. Towering above her was a version of her, neither the Kyoshi-Asami nor the metal Equalist version of her, nor the business woman giving tea to Korra in the gazebo. This version of Asami had the short haircut that she’d recently acquired, wearing robes of some sort. Her eyes were covered by a cloth and yet this celestial being looked calm and collected.

She thought of... the need to let Korra go. Could she? She had already— hadn’t she? Though she couldn’t live without Korra, she already had been living a, albeit mediocre, life in Zaofu without the Avatar. And though they were tethered by a predestined soulmate bond, Asami would bring... balance to Republic City with or without Korra.

Let... go...
The path lit up and she walked towards it, touching a sphere in front of her and feeling the skies around her glow.

“You’re not giving her up,” Kya’s voice whispered, “You’re merely letting her fly up with you. And that is the most powerful form of love.”

Let… go…

“I love you,” the engineer mumbled repeatedly against Korra’s lips, “Gods, I love you so much. I’m so, so sorry… for everything I’ve done…”

“It’s okay,” Korra whispered, pressing a kiss to Asami’s forehead, “I’m just… I’m not mad at you anymore. These past three weeks… I was too scared to think of anything but how much I yearned to be reunited with you. I needed to see you again. I needed to know that you were safe.”

She’s dead. Let go.

“Do you think there are any wild Sky Bison out there?”

“Hmm… I don’t know… the Fire Nation kept raising them during the Hundred Year War… but I imagine that, despite their symbiotic relationship with the Air Nomads, there might be whole herds of them somewhere up here.”

Asami chewed her lip thoughtfully, “Can you imagine being able to fly?”

Next to her, she noticed Korra stiffen. The Avatar picked at her sweater and let out a shaky sigh.

“You alright?”

The younger girl sighed, “Did I ever tell you about Zaheer?”

Let go of her.

Let go your earthly tether. Enter the void.

“I’m sorry, Korra. I’m doing this for you,” she whispered.

Asami felt something determined stir within her as her body grew weightless— letting the air
surrounding her pick her up on its own accord. Her fingers left the stone as she surged forwards, ignoring Opal’s cries and jumping into the chasm.

Except she didn’t fall.

She flew.

Asami Sato had unlocked… flight.

“Impossible,” she heard Opal whisper.

Blasting wind down one of the side tunnels, a vibration repelled back— Asami could sense the Lieutenant staring at her in wonder. He spun and began sprinting down the passageway; but Asami wasn’t so keen to let him escape. With a yell, she turned and grabbed Opal around the waist… flying across the chasm and chasing a screaming murderer. She dropped Opal down on the ground next to her and heard the younger girl create an Air Scooter. Asami sent more vibrations as she let her newfound weightlessness carry her through the passageway.

Something felt a little different, and with a smirk she realized that Opal was not only Airbending, but simultaneously Energybending; merging their energies so that Asami could sense the Lieutenant’s life force attempting to flee. Working together in unison. One.

“Not so fast, you fucker!!” she called out.

For someone with a whole element on her side— Asami did something very strange. She willed the air around her to carry her even faster, slamming the Lieutenant into the wall and punching him in the face. Hard.

That felt good.

________________________________________________________________________

Kuvira groaned, stirring awake and feeling a sharp pain in her right leg. She twisted her face a little in the dirt so that she could feel the source of the pain.

Oh. Great.

A pile of rocks and rubble had collapsed on top of her— below her waist was submerged in rock.

She set to work, sending rock by rock to the other side of the room. It was evident that at least one of her legs was crumpled under the sheer force and impact of falling. Crap, why didn’t she stop and sense those goddamn explosives.
The Earthbender was halfway through excavating herself when she sensed a heartbeat. A lone heartbeat, pulsing through the earth beneath her palms.

Korra.

Oh shit!!

With a cry of desperation, Kuvira began to work faster— shifting rocks to the other side of the cavern in an attempt to unbury both herself and her best friend. Once she was not buried, it became easier to crawl around and begin Earthbending rocks and boulders across the room.

A hand.

And arm.

More rocks continued to part, and Kuvira mustered all the energy she had to move at least half the pile at once.

A face, caked in dirt and bleeding from the nose.

Her torso uncovered.

“Come on, Kuvira, you’re Toph’s goddamn granddaughter!! You can… you can do this,” Kuvira sniffled, trembling and shaking as she managed to Bend the rest of the rocks away.

She crawled over— her right leg numb and useless— and flipped Korra over on her back.

“Korra? It’s me, Kuv!! Glowstick!!”

The younger girl’s torso was bruised and bloodied, and the misshapen dips and edges in her chest suggested that a few of her ribs had broken. Korra’s head was lopsided and her jaw slack. She wouldn’t respond to Kuvira’s pleas.

She heard screaming somewhere up above, and for a moment Kuvira thought she saw something floating in midair, but she shook it off. Korra was her priority.

“Wake up, come on! Wake up, you stupid Avatar! It’s me, your best friend!!” she screamed.

Too scared to try CPR and push down broken ribs onto Korra’s organs— Kuvira pressed her mouth against the Avatar’s; blowing air in and letting it naturally exit, in an attempt to expand and collapse Korra’s lungs. Still no heartbeat.

*There is one thing I could try. Shit… I promised I wouldn’t… but she’s going to die if I don’t…*

Kuvira’s hands hovered over the Avatar’s chest, and with tears dripping down her dirt ridden face— she tried to sense the iron flowing through Korra’s bloodstreams… the iron in her heart… and though she didn’t have a medical degree, Kuvira knew that leaving too much iron in Korra’s heart could lead to cardiac arrest. She had to be careful.

Her hands, raised above Korra’s body, slowly moved together and apart— contorted like claws as she willed the iron in Korra’s blood to move her heart. She tried to keep the pace of a heartbeat— timing her Bending to one of those songs that you’re supposed to think of during CPR.
The ground beneath her vibrated once as Korra’s heart beat on her own.

“Please, Raava— don’t give up on this Avatar yet. She’s got so much spunk left in her,” Kuvira sobbed, her hands continuing to Bend the iron in Korra’s heart.

“No way.

Korra’s eyes shot open a blinding white and suddenly Kuvira could feel a regular heartbeat in the rocks beneath her palms.

Thank goodness that they’d fallen from a cistern, of all things— the water falling atop the piles of rocks flowed into the air and surrounded Korra as she healed herself in the Avatar State; not even acknowledging the Metalbender’s presence.

Kuvira leaned against the cavern wall and lowered her head between her knees— ignoring the ache of a useless leg and letting her tears freely fall from her eyes.

“Thank you, Kuvira. You saved my life,” a soft whisper echoed through the cave walls.

“My pleasure,” the Metalbender smiled, her head still between her knees, “It’s not every day I’ll get to break your heart.”

Clearly weakened, she observed as Korra leaned against the cave wall for a few moments, and then throw up the contents of her breakfast. The Avatar punched the stone walls and fell to the ground— clutching her ribs and shivering in pain. Kuvira could only watch, pain shooting through her lower body now that she was no longer distracted by her best friend’s health.

“I’m not going to be able to return to fighting anytime soon. Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck. FUCK!!”

“Let’s just hope that Asami and Opal got out of there in time,” Kuvira mumbled, her pain and dismay threatening to force her back into a round of sobbing.

To be fair, he tried to put up an impressive fight—dodging all of her moves with a chuckle, pulling out a pistol and clicking the little loading mechanism. Asami knew that he was pointing it at her chest.

“Oh no you don’t!” Opal yelled.

Asami, still hovering effortlessly in the air, listened as the Lieutenant let out a strangled cry and slumped to the floor.

“What did you do?!”

“Kuvira once pulled the iron out of a guy’s blood— I pulled the air out of his lungs. It won’t kill him,
he’ll just be knocked out for a few seconds.”

“Perfect,” Asami growled, kicking her feet out and slamming the bastard into the wall another time. “What should we do with him? Kill him?”

Opal hesitated, “I… I don’t think so…”

“What?! You said that we were going to end this, once and for all!!” Asami snapped.

“His energy… it’s radiating.”

“You mean like with Suki and I?!”

“Yes.”

“Oh shit… you mean…”

“He’s taken so many lives, Asami… his own life isn’t worth it… but his lifetime is… I can… try to Energybend him…”

“You sure?” Asami said.

She wasn’t going to get used to the fact that her feet didn’t have to touch the ground, but the idea seemed appealing as she dove down— grabbing the mumbling Lieutenant by his shoulders and raising him up so that they both were floating in the air, holding him up and pinning him against the top of the wall— his head cramped against the ceiling of the tunnel.

Her lifeless eyes attempted to bore into his awakening ones.

“So… this is how it ends?” he snarled, not even struggling against her.

“The last time someone said that, they also tried to kill me,” Asami whispered. “I just keep coming back, you know? The more times you’ve tried to tear me down, rip me apart… the stronger I return.”

“What’s stopping you from ending this right now then?” he challenged, spitting into her face. “Go ahead, drop me down the chasm and kill me.”

Asami smirked, lowering him down and pinning him down against the wall, “We have a better idea.”

Opal walked up to him, and with a quick puff sending vibrations through the room, Asami realized that both the Beifong’s hands were clasped on either side of his head— his mask off and his eyes wide in horror.

As she began to Energybend him, he let out a piercing scream.

Chapter End Notes
oh shit son, Asami did the thing

Leave comments
Chapter Summary

“And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it.”

— Roald Dahl

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

As soon as her hands had clasped both sides of his head— the very millisecond that she’d tapped into the Lieutenant’s energy— Opal could feel nothing but disgust. Disgust for Korra, Kuvira, Asami, herself. Disgust at every Bender currently invading the factory. The entire world full of Benders. But Opal had not come this far for some puny Mortal man to drag her down. She’d Bestowed Airbending onto Nonbenders. She’d out-Energybent a phantom in the Fog of Lost Souls. She’d freed a broken Spirit from 10,000 years of misery. She learned this ancient art from the last living Lion Turtle.

She did not come this far to let the man who’d killed her father get off easy.

Fire
Air
Water
Earth
Light
Dark
Spirits
Energy

With clenched teeth and nails digging into the sides of the man’s head, she willed both of their energies to move back and forth as one— ignoring his screams and connecting the Lieutenant’s dynamism with the cosmos. Dragging them up through the stars and forcing the Equalist to experience every single pocket of Energy, all at once.

For her— it was intense and painful; so glorious was the vitality of the universe.
For him— well, he wasn’t an Energybender… Opal could feel his own Energy becoming unbalanced. Going mad. Not that he already wasn’t, but she remembered Jinora once joking something silly that you always ought to “fight madness with madness.”

So be it.

Still Energybending the Lieutenant— Opal willed herself to tap into the vitality… of every single person whom this man had ever done harm to. Had ever struck down. Had ever murdered.

Every. Single. Person.

She could suddenly hear voices screaming in her ears; crying out at an earsplitting volume that she’d slaughtered the thousands, and she became aware that she was physically shouting out loud over the roar of the masses in her head— attempting to funnel their energy into a capsule.

What capsule would that be; I hear you ask?

The Lieutenant’s body.
He was twitching in her hands, but Opal didn’t relent; forcing his Chi and energy to open up to the thousands of lives, siphoning them in to berate and possess him. Not physically of course— but with a deep breath and a great deal of concentration, she could feel his own soul dwindling down to practically nothing as it was forced to make room for all these new duplicates. Copies of other energies.

Fire

Air

Water

Earth

Light

Dark

Spirits

Energy

It seemed to be working, for when she opened her eyes— allowing the two of them to return to the Mortal World, to the dark and dingy tunnel…

Asami floating up next to her with a confused look on her scarred face…

The Lieutenant slumped against the wall mumbling to himself and clutching his face…

Her own body, too exhausted from the Bending that she’d just performed, collapsing to the floor…

“You drove him mad?” Asami asked, befuddled.

“I merely let him feel the pain that he’s caused the world.”

Opal crawled forwards, her hand reaching out and grabbing his jaw— forcing the Lieutenant to face her. His silver eyes were glazed over and it was clear to Opal that his days of terrorism had come to an end.

“Can you hear me?”

More mumbling, a tiny “yes” mixed in somewhere.

“What’s your name?” Opal asked sternly.

But he was too lost in his incoherent babblings— being forced to experience thousands of deaths and injuries, every single person who’d had their Bending removed. Every single strike of one of his Kali Sticks. Every bomb. All of the terror that Republic City faced. He was being forced to experience these memories all at once; along with the onslaught of voices that had screamed at Opal.
She didn’t pity him; he was too evil for death and too dangerous for mere prison.

“Oh… and since you love your poetic irony,” Opal smirked, putting her thumb against his head.

“No…” he whined softly, his gray eyes trying to focus on her.

“If you ever manage to silence the thousands that you’ve harmed… a second time… you’ll realize that you should’ve been more respectful to Avatar Korra. After all—”

She felt their energies eddying together one last time and unlocked a door within his soul— feeling the wind around them whirl and swirl. Her thumb left his forehead and his eyes widened at the heightened sense of the air surrounding him.

“— you’ll beg for her to take your Airbending away.”

Too weak to protest, still mumbling incoherently, the Lieutenant raised a hand— letting air flow from his index finger and beginning to sob— ranting about the various Benders he’d hurt and innocents that he’d killed. She stepped away and ignored his babblings, turning to her friend. Asami had a shocked expression on her face; and yet her lifeless eyes were narrowed as she took a deep breath.

“Opal,” the blind woman in front of her whispered.

“Hmm?”

“Remind me never to piss you off.”

The Beifong smirked, turning and engulfing Asami in a tight hug. As though Opal, too, were weightless— Asami picked her up and spun her around.

Free spirits, the both of them. Free, strange, and all abundances of wonderful.

“We need to go look for Kuvira. And… try and get Korra’s body,” Asami whispered miserably, tears dripping down her cheeks.

“Sams… I’m so sorry,” Opal muttered, pressing her forehead against the blind woman’s.

Though she didn’t quite tap into the energy, she could feel the pain that the ex-Equalist was experiencing. Opal’s fingers interlaced with Asami’s as they walked down the tunnel.

“Are we just going to leave him there?”

“He’s not going to get up and walk away— if that’s what you’re suggesting,” Opal smirked. “I don’t
“Cruel and unusual punishment.”

“Asami… this was the guy who killed your father— who caused you an inhumane amount of pain. You’re not seriously defending him?”

“No! No… I just wouldn’t want it to happen to me,” the older woman shuddered. “He… he deserves it.”

Opal led her to the edge, feeling Asami pull her close and jump. Her heart leapt, and though she knew that she could use a vortex of air to cushion her fall, it was not needed. Like Mary Poppins with her umbrella—they floated down until their feet touched the ground.

“Zaheer was kind of obsessed with making sure he never felt the earth beneath him again,” Opal casually commented.

Asami shook her head, “I’m not aiming to be a guru. I just needed to stop Lieutenant… and I let go of… her—the rest was in the fate of the divines.”

“O-Opal? Is that you?” a voice echoed from down the cavern.

“Kuvira!! Thank goodness, are you alright!!?”

The Metalbender limped forwards—clearly still injured from the explosion and the fall. A wounded Kuvira fell into her sister’s arms, slumping all her weight against the Airbender and forcing Opal to let out an “OOF!!”

“Thank the gods you’re okay,” Asami murmured, joining the hug.

Kuvira pulled away slightly, “I just saw you two float down here, what the hell?!”

Evergreen eyes widened as Asami Sato let out a laugh—freely moving through the air and spinning around the room; sending little puffs out to detect the vibrations, lest she accidentally fly into a wall.

“You’re amazing,” Kuvira murmured in wonder. “Both of you.”

Asami’s feet touched the ground and she stumbled a little. Opal grabbed her arm to steady her as the former engineer’s face fell a little, a few tears spilling from her eyes. She leaned against Kuvira, burying her head in the Metalbender’s neck and choking out a sob.

“Was it quick?”

“Was what quick?” Kuvira asked, confused.

“Korra’s death…” Asami whispered, her fingers digging into Kuvira’s hoodie as tears stained the craggy ground beneath their feet.

“Who died?” a voice called from the other end of the cavern, the sound of rocks shifting around to try and find an exit. “Kuvira, I know you need to take a break—but we gotta… get… out… of… here…”
The Avatar trailed off as she slowly walked into the light, clutching her ribs and staring at the trio with disbelieving cerulean eyes. Asami turned away from Kuvira and reached out into the void—her fingertips resting on Korra’s face, tracing over a broken nose and a split lip. A mud-caked face. In excitement—the realization that her wife was alive—Asami’s feet lifted up from the ground and she hugged Korra tightly, so that they were both floating in the air.

“You… can… fly…” the stunned Avatar murmured.

“Sorry,” Asami shrugged apologetically, “If you didn’t want me to let go of my Earthly Tether, you shouldn’t have died.”

“I’ll keep that in mind,” Korra whispered, burying her head into the blind woman’s shoulder.

Kuvira looked up at the hole in the cavern roof, “So what happened to… you know who?”

Opal bit her lip, “It’s hard to explain.”

“What? What do you mean?”

“We’ll need to show you,” Asami nodded.

One by one, the ex-heiress carried them up through the tunnel, flying up through the crumbling ruins and dropping them off where the Lieutenant was sitting down, still mumbling to himself. His cheek was pressed into the damp stone and his eyes were focused on the tiny puffs of air occasionally leaving his fingers.

“I don’t believe this… what did you do to him?” Korra asked, leaning down and staring into his eyes.

“I Energybent him,” Opal explained nonchalantly.

Kuvira noticeably took a step away from her sister, “I’m never pranking you at dinnertime again, I promise. No more salt in your tea or hot sauce in your dessert, I swear!!”

“I suppose… we don’t need to kill him…” Korra trailed off sadly.

“What? I thought your connection to Kyoshi was severed!!” Asami laughed teasingly.

The Avatar shrugged, “I was kinda hoping to finish what I started… but this is a lot more… legendary. Like… dude… you energizer!!”

“Korra can words,” Kuvira sighed, picking up the Lieutenant and slinging him over her back.

“Are you sure you can carry him? What about your leg?” Opal asked cautiously.

The Metalbender laughed, “This is worth it.”

“Dumbass showoff,” the Energybender muttered.

It turns out that the other two were in a great deal of pain—so much that Korra had to go into the Avatar State to do any sort of major Bending. Eyes glowing a blinding white that lit up the caverns (okay, maybe not for Asami), she produced a slab of earth and transported the girls back towards the
“Are you okay?” Opal asked in her head, her fingers intertwined with Asami’s as Kuvira and Korra Earthbent them closer and closer to the Equalist base.

“We won,” Jinora’s voice sighed encouragingly. “Those who didn’t flee were… well… let’s just keep it at ‘the battle is over’. I don’t want to think about the amount of death that happened.”

“Yeah… yeah, we won,” Opal whispered back.

Once they’d arrived at the factory basement, Suyin and Lin helped Korra and Kuvira out— carrying them up the stairs of the abandoned manufacturing plant… where the rest of their little army was located. Captain Fai hoisted the muttering Lieutenant over his shoulders— not particularly caring if the Equalist’s head hit the walls on the walk outside.

Opal ignored the sight of Saikhan and Bolin solemnly burying dead bodies in a mass grave with Earthbending. Asami ran into Hikaru’s arms, a bit of blood trailing down from a cut on the Firebender’s forehead. The Waterbender, Eun, was knocked out from three Equalist glove shocks, but she’d be fine. Aunt Kya was going to need a cast for her arm— but she merely sauntered on up and gave the Chief of Police a long kiss (simultaneously publicizing their relationship). Korra gave Mako and Bolin both a very long, silent hug— turning and collapsing into Tenzin’s arms, who proceeded to pick her up and carry her aboard the awaiting Zaofu airship.

All of the Airbenders were otherwise fine, hanging out in the trees and waiting for orders from their leaders. Speaking of which…

Someone’s arms slithered around Opal’s waist— and she leaned into the touch, finally feeling safe for the first time in… well… years. It was over, and she turned around; giving Master Jinora the best kiss of her life. The younger girl whimpered a little into the kiss, clutching at the back of the Beifong’s head and whispering something about how she’d “never ever ever ever ever let Opal out of her sight again”.

“That’s going to make chores difficult,” the older girl giggled, kissing her lover over and over. Again and again.

They’d done it. They’d finally won.

End of Part Five

Chapter End Notes

Badass women! get your badass women here!!

Leave comments!!
(p.s. someone should totally draw the last two chapters cause I really want to see blind flying Asami and badass Gayfong Energybending)
Chapter Summary

“True love is finding your soulmate in your best friend”

— Faye Hall, My Gift to You

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

A Few Weeks Later:

A wonderful sense of tranquility had passed over Republic City— the triads were back to extorting (interestingly, the amount of Nonbending members joining the thugs had increased, but it wasn’t something Lin Beifong couldn’t handle), Probending tickets were at outrageous prices and it was rare that you’d get good seats, and elections were being made for the first ever President of the United Republic— you had to choose between two complete idiots and a man whose words seemed awfully honeyed for someone who cared deeply for the common citizen.

Controlled chaos. It felt great.

Korra rolled over and wrapped her arm around her wife— lightly kissing Asami on the nose. Her Soulmate mumbled something about running over a handsome Firebender on her moped and snuggled further into the Avatar’s arms.

Still lavender-speckled, the apartment that they’d bought together after they’d returned from Zaofu had remained in good shape all these months later— albeit a little dusty when they first moved back in.

“I’ll take… care of that… all you need to… do… is show up… so… it’s a date?” Asami mumbled in her sleep, nestling further into Korra’s chest and unconsciously kissing her on the cheek.

“Sure, Sams. It’s a date,” the Avatar chuckled.

Eventually, she needed to pee— lightly pushing Asami away and pressing a kiss to her forehead. After she’d used the restroom, the growling in her stomach signified that eggs were to be scrambled and pancakes were to be flipped.

But first…

Korra turned on her computer and clicked the “On” button atop the webcam. Her hair looked like a rat’s nest and there was a coffee stain on her sleepshirt from two weeks ago, but the viewers never cared.

“Good morning Republic City!”

Asami let out a groan.
“Say hello, Mrs. Sato!!”

Another groan, and a pillow was thrown at the camera.

“Well, now that that’s over with— I wanted to talk about this really weird dream I had last night. So, like, Spirit Portals. Still with me? What about a Spirit Portal directly in downtown Republic City? Huh? Eh?! Yeah! Dude! It’d be so cool!!” Korra said excitedly, looking into the webcam.

“NOOOooooo!!” Asami groaned. “The last thing we need is more things blown up!!”

“Oh, it wouldn’t blow up anything!” Korra scoffed, looking away from the camera and at her wife—who’s head was covered by a nest of blankets.

“After Harmonic Convergence the city was covered in vines— and those Spirit Portals are on the other side of the world!!” Asami mumbled into the comforter. “Can you imagine how many vines you’d create by making a portal DOWNTOWN!!?”

“Come on, it’d be fun! All we’d need is a lot of energy to redirect… like a giant laser beam pointed at my face!”

“UGGGHHH!!” Asami groaned, tossing another pillow at Korra’s head.

The Avatar shot a mischievous glance towards the camera, and jumped out of her office chair with a puff of wind. Unfortunately— Asami sensed the vibration and effortlessly dodged the attack, floating out of the way and letting Korra fall onto the bed emptyhanded.

The former engineer then wrapped Korra up in blankets at the speed of lightning and pushed her off the bed; the Avatar looking like a mummy as she fell.

Floating down to the chair and staring at the camera (not that she knew exactly where to pretend to look), Asami let out a laugh and listened as Korra tried to get out of the tangle of eiderdowns and sheets. A muffled shout was heard as the Avatar only made her situation worse by jumbling herself up in towels and clothes that she’d thrown on the floor.

“Gets her every time,” the blind woman chuckled, finding the “OFF” button on the webcam and clicking it. “Sayonara Republic City.”

The comment section five hours later:

Ayeayespirit33: I still don’t think that she can fly. It’s an optical illusion or an animation trick. There was only ever one guy to fly, right? And he was some Guru dude.

(794 likes and 160 replies)

THEBOULDERISAWESOME: Asami Sato is so inspirational— taking down the Equalists and discovering Airbending after being blind? You’re my hero!! Will you marry meeeeee? Pretty please?!!

(25 likes and 3 replies)
**Ivegotmyeyeonyou420:** You left your underwear on the floor, where everyone can see it. Nice Water Tribe panties, Korra. See you at dinner.

(3000 likes and 682 replies)

Korra smiled at the last comment, making a mental note to spar with Kya after family mealt ime on Air Temple Island and beat the shit outta her. She sat down on the couch and passed Asami a beer.

“Thanks, love. Were you listening to the radio program at all?” the Airbender asked, her hands tracing over the braille on a special book Lin had given her (something that’d been laying around at the Police Headquarters for some reason).

“No, what’s up?”

“Steelworks is announcing a plan to rebuild Harmony Tower—the last project that the Council is commissioning before disbanding and handing over the reins to the future President.”

Korra smiled; *Steelworks Diligences* was a company that Baatar and Kuvira had started up a few weeks ago—with a big loan from a certain Matriarch—that hired Benders of all types and a huge force of Nonbending engineers to help design and rebuild parts of Republic City that’d been destroyed in the past ten years. Asami had provided her services as a consultant, but was otherwise enjoying her days off—having dispersed Future Industries.

Asami leaned up against Korra, pressing a kiss to her cheek and snuggling into the crook of her neck.

“We did good,” the ex-heiress smiled.

“Yeah. We did good.”

________________________________________________

“You ready? One, two, three… wheeee!!” Hikaru cheered, carefully tossing Dequan into the air.

Republic City Park was full of parents, kids, dogs, and turtle ducks. The sun was shining and for the first time in her whole life; Hikaru felt safe.

“I swear to the gods, don’t throw him so high!!” Bolin nervously chided.

“Oh, he’s fine. Isn’t that right, De? Mommy’s got you!!”

The next toss, Bolin let out a grumble and plucked his son out of the laughing Firebender’s arms. Dequan looked up at his dad with a happy gurgle—chubby little arms poking at a stubby black beard. Bolin made a few babbling noises and cradled the baby closer—whispering and mumbling the way only a parent does to their kid.
Suki was currently having fun gliding over the pond with a stave—her feet trailing over the rippling water. Her sister absolutely excelled at her newfound ability, and Hikaru couldn’t help but feel as though Opal was right; Suki was always meant to be an Airbender.

The Firebender sat down at a bench, Bolin curling up next to her. Dequan squirmed around in his arms, and Hikaru took her son to swing him back and forth—singing her Grandmother’s favorite song at a low, soft volume.

In the middle of the song though, Bolin cupped her cheek and passionately kissed her.

“Mmmmm… someone’s feeling lusty.”

Her fiancé gazed at her with loving eyes, “You’re just so beautiful and special, you know that?”

“You’re beautiful too,” Hikaru smiled, kissing him again.

“EEEEEEEEWWWW!!!” Suki called from across the pond, turning and gliding over a flock of turtleducks.

The couple rolled their eyes and continued cuddling on the bench, enjoying the morning sun and the wonderful sense of tranquility.

“Mmmmmmm… that tickles.”

Opal was straddling Jinora’s hips—giving her Soulmate the massage of her life. Her fingers dug into all the knots in her lover’s back; not that there were a lot, being a fit and healthy woman, but Opal’s fingers were working wonders.

Jinora let out a groan when the older girl’s knuckles pressed down into a spot above her hips.

“You’re tattoo is so beautiful… you’re so beautiful,” the Beifong whispered, pressing a kiss to a patch of blue on her Soulmate’s spine.

This earned her a happy sigh from the younger woman, who squirmed around a little—her eyes closed in relaxation and bliss, and a wide smile plastered on her face.

“Where’d you learn to do this?”

“My mom. Apparently the Terra Triads would do massage after fights to help speed the recovery process of injuries and keep themselves rejuvenated.”

“The more you know,” Jinora chuckled, letting out another groan. “That feels so good.”

Suddenly, the weight of Opal’s hips left her own, and the younger girl felt herself being flipped around. The Beifong climbed back on top of her and began kissing her passionately.

“I love you.”
“I love you too.”

Pale fingers, nimble and long, reached up and disrobed Opal’s shoulders and torso— lips following in their place. Jinora’s teeth found a sensitive point on the older girl’s jaw and she nipped and sucked until the other woman was forced to suck in a harsh breath of air in excitement.


“Meelo, I swear to god!” Jinora groaned, flopping back down on the mattress.

Red-faced, Opal scurried to throw her robe back on just as none other than an embarrassed Baatar Jr. opened the door.

“Oh… hey there Junior.”

The elder sibling adjusted his glasses with a blush, “Sorry… it’s just that dinner is ready and they wanted me to come get you and… um… sorry, I’ll leave you two to… um… yeah…”

Kuvira, Opal, and Asami all sat together at a table— telling jokes and swapping bites of their meals. A bottle of sake passed between them and the younger of the Beifong sisters could definitely feel a buzz in her head, leaning up against the ex-heiress and giggling a little as Jinora sat down into her lap.

“I love family meals,” Asami hummed as Kuvira hiccuped from the alcohol.

“Miss Enlightened judging all of us? Hmm?” the Metalbender whispered loudly.

“Hey! That’s Mrs. Enlightened to you!” Korra called from across the room.

“Let us please keep our voices down, ladies,” Tenzin sighed, rubbing his brow and letting out a sigh.

A daily flight at sunset was always Opal’s favorite part— taking Korra, Asami, Jinora, and even Hikaru (who could fly with Firebending) out for a spin. She would permanently be a little envious of the blind woman’s ability to effortlessly float around, but then Jinora would dance her around in the skies.

And she couldn’t be anything but proud of herself when she remembered that she’d been the one to give Asami her Airbending in the first place. So that was that!

It seemed that, with the familiar warmth of the sun, Hikaru had no shortening of energy. She impressively propelled down, weaving between buildings and twirling around with a laugh— Korra trying to outtrace her to no avail.

“You’re too good!” the Avatar complained.

“Gotta keep up, Glowstick, if you wanna impress your girl!!” Hikaru laughed from somewhere in front of a skyscraper.
“Asami can literally fly— how is Korra going to impress her?” Opal called out.

“Oh, she finds her ways,” the blind woman mused, lazily gliding among a flock of birds.

“Should’ve trained with the Kyoshi Warriors, Korra!!” the Firebender called out as Korra nearly crashed into the Police Headquarters.

“Not… a bad idea,” Asami mused.

“You know, we could all take a trip and go see some of the Earth Kingdom— visit Mom in Zaofu, the other Air Temples?” Opal offered.

“It would be nice to take a Spiritual Pilgrimage, especially since they’ve rebuilt the Northern Air Temple after Zaheer’s attack,” Jinora called, twirling around a little as Korra grabbed onto Hikaru’s foot— singeing her chestnut hair a little and laughing loudly.

“Caught you!”

“Not quite!!” Hikaru cackled as Korra smacked into Town Hall— no doubt startling the clerks who worked on the seventh floor.

Opal rolled her eyes, flying up and angling her glider just right so that she could press a kiss to Jinora’s mouth before diving down and helping her grumbling friend of an Avatar off the roof. Needless to say, Korra’s ego was a little wounded on the flight back to Air Temple Island— until Asami swooped down on top of her cousin and dived them both into Yue Bay with a giggle.

Controlled chaos felt wonderful.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry I didn't update yesterday!! I was cheering on my old robotics team at an FRC competition!! But now I'm back!! With fluff!!

The last chapters are going to be cool-down chapters to relieve you of the angstyness

Leave Comments!!
Home is Where the Fans Are At

Chapter Summary

"Do you really think friendships can last more than one lifetime?"

- Toph Beifong

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Finally— took you fucking long enough,” Opal grumbled, pressing a warm mug of coffee into Asami’s hands.

Kuvira gave her a scoff, “We set a date years ago… things just kinda came up!!”

“When?” Korra asked, turning a page in the newspaper and not noticing Meelo pour salt into her tea.

“Three weeks at Zaofu— Junior and I are going to leave in two days. I gotta buy train tickets,” Kuvira sighed.

“No need, we can just take Juicy and Pepper to Zaofu,” Jinora offered.

Kuvira winced, “I have a fear of heights.”

“Is it just seeing the ground beneath you? Cause that was my problem until… well… you know,” Asami chuckled, taking a sip of coffee.

“We were already going to go, Kuv, just suck it up and pack your bags,” Opal laughed.

Bolin and Hikaru sat down, the Lavabender feeding his son a bottle of baby formula.

“What do you guys say? Wanna go see a wedding?” Korra asked, taking a sip of tea and nearly throwing up.

“Oh, I’m sure it’ll look great!” Asami encouraged cheerfully.

“Yeah! I— why do you feel the need to do that?” Kuvira pouted.

There’s nothing quite like letting the wind freely toss your hair around, as a Flying Bison carries you through the clouds. Baatar was taking a snooze, and Kuvira was firmly tucked into his chest—
whimpering a little and refusing to glance at the Earth a mile below. Hikaru, Mako, and Bolin were currently trying to entertain themselves with a game of Pai Sho; occasionally losing pieces to the wind. Asami was currently holding Dequan as she listened to Jinora and Suki cloud-gazing—Korra and Opal navigating the Bison.

“That one looks like a banana!” Suki pointed.

“Be sure to take a photo so that Huan has a reference!” Opal laughed from the front of the Bison.

“How close are we to the island?” Asami pondered.

“Not close enough,” Kuvira muttered from Baatar’s jacket.

Asami passed Dequan over to Suki, who handled him carefully as she leaned back against Hikaru’s legs and took a nap. The Firebender’s long dexterous fingers ran through short black hair as the sounds of Pai Sho tiles clicking against the board rang through the Airbender’s ears. Jinora and Suki continued pointing out shapes of clouds in the sky—and Baatar mumbled something about how “there are no bananas in the sky” and what strangely sounded like “there’s a sun and a moon and a coconut cream pie”.

“What a family,” Bolin mused, putting down another tile.

“That’s an illegal move,” Hikaru sighed.

“Not in the street version,” her fiancé pointed out.

“It is indeed an interesting strategy to play by different rules than your opponent—though some politicians think differently,” Asami mused, her fingers fiddling with Hikaru’s.

“The Lieutenant certainly thought so,” Mako commented.

“Prepare for a landing!” Korra called from Pepper—who was carrying all of the luggage.

If anymore possible, Kuvira’s grip on Baatar tightened. A few tiles went airborne, lost to the atmosphere as Opal dove Juicy down towards the island. Suki grabbed her glider stave and excitedly dove of the Sky Bison—leading the strange progression down towards the destination while the ragtag family chuckled at her enthusiasm.

“Huka! I’m going to ride the Unagi!” Suki called out, diving towards the bay.

“I wouldn’t do that if I were you!” Hikaru warned, looking up from her baby boy.

Asami shook her head and jumped off the side of Juicy, sending out a large puff of wind and pinpointing her little cousin—swooping down faster than a falcon and swerving Kiki out of the way just as a large spout of water shot towards them. A large bellowing could be heard as the giant sea-serpent dove back down into the bay.

“I thought you’d promise to be responsible,” the blind woman laughed, pulling her cousin back towards the main land.

“Hey! I wasn’t going to get hurt!” Suki argued as they reached the village at the same time as the Bison.
“Hikaru! It’s been so long!” one of the elderly women warmly greeted, pulling the Firebender in for a hug.

“Avatar Korra!”

“No way, is that the old Fire Ferrets team!?”

“I heard he’s a Lavabender!”

“An Airbending Master! We haven’t had one here since Avatar Aang!”

The inhabitants of Kyoshi Island cordially greeted the group, allowing them to unpack their bags and head up towards the big building at the top of the town. Korra formally bowed in front of the statue of Kyoshi—though when no one was looking she stuck her tongue out at her past life. If Aang taught her anything, it was to have a bit of fun!

Asami felt Hikaru’s fingers thread through her own—pulling her along up the hill while the others stayed and talked to the townspeople. There was a clatter, the sound of an elderly man letting out an “oof!” as Suki rushed to hug him, and Asami felt her breath catch in her throat.

Hikaru turned to face her, “Relax. It’s going to be okay.”

“Have you… have you told him about me?”

“Well, I didn’t want to give him a heart attack when his oldest granddaughter showed up out of the blue,” the Firebender chuckled.

Asami pushed through the curtain and heard a soft gasp.

“I can’t believe it…” Yat-Sen whispered.

The blind woman sighed through her nose and walked forwards, tears already threatening to slip from underneath the cloth covering her eyes. She reached out and let a wrinkled hand grab her own, pulling her into a strong hug that faintly smelled like her mother used to. Jasmine. Asami didn’t cry so much as let a deep hum course through her whole body as she leaned into her grandfather’s warm arms.

“Hello Papa.”

“Asami… it’s been years…”

“I know I was never formally introduced to you,” the Airbender whispered sadly, “But… I’d love to start being your granddaughter if that’s okay with you?”

She could feel Yat-Sen choking back a sob as he pressed a kiss to her forehead, leading her over to a pile of cushions on the floor and cradling her close. Hikaru and Suki joined in on the family hug and the grandfather pressed a kiss to both of their heads before turning back and cupping the blind woman’s cheek;

“My goodness, you’ve grown so much from when I saw you last. You’re a beautiful young woman, Asami, and I’m so proud of you for the things you’ve accomplished. I’d… I’d love to have you as part of our family.”

She curled a little more into his arms and let out a happy sigh through her nose. The curtains rattled a little as heavy footsteps approached hesitantly.
“You must be Hikaru’s fiancé?” Yat-Sen asked, sitting a little bit upright.

“Y-Yes sir!” Bolin stammered, a babbling Dequan in his arms.

“Well? Bring him here!” the elderly man chuckled, “It’s not every day you get to meet a great-grandson!!”

With a hesitant laugh of his own, the Earthbender kneeled down and passed over a baby to the grandfather— Asami listened to him quietly trace the infant’s features and whisper to Dequan over and over again.

“He’s going to be a Firebender,” Yat-Sen smiled.

“Oh gods no,” Hikaru sighed exhaustedly, “I have four Benders to worry about now, and you’re telling me that three of them will be able to fly away from me??"

Asami chuckled, “At least he won’t be a Lavabender— you just have to live in an Earthen house!”

“I can make that!” Bolin said enthusiastically.

“A strong boy,” Yat-Sen continued, “Just like his parents… he’s going to have… a good sense of humor but… bad luck with the ladies.”

“Never trust Grandpa,” Kiki whispered into Asami’s ear, “He thinks he’s a psychic!”

“Kiki, he descends from a line of Fire Sages,” Hikaru corrected chidingly, an arm around Yat-Sen, “Be respectful!”

In response, Dequan threw up a bit on Suki’s shirt and the younger girl let out a squeal, jumping up to grab a new tank top. Hikaru and Asami laughed, merely patting the child on the back and telling their grandfather all about how it was that the two cousins came to become family, and equally important— best friends.

_____________________________________________________

“Stay still,” Hikaru chided, swatting one of Asami’s hands away from her face.

“I can’t help it! The make-up tickles!!”

“Please! If Nana could do this every single day at age fifteen through most of her life then you can do it for an afternoon!”

Asami let out a huff as Hikaru applied the beautiful stripes of red that ran across the eyelids and up the sides of the forehead, wincing at the texture of the blind woman’s scarred face. The ex-heiress let out a sigh and sat as still as possible, allowing the Firebender to concentrate.

Hikaru carefully gelled back Asami’s wispy short hair so that a traditional gold band could fit on her head, turning to the mirror and putting up her own hair— smirking out how perfect both their makeup jobs had turned out.
She had the perfect touch.

When she had finished, Asami and Hikaru both looked like proper Kyoshi warriors— wearing the green robes and armor. With a soft smile, Hikaru pressed a pair of objects into Asami’s hands. The Firebender watched as her cousin’s fingers ran over the edges of the metal— trying to deduce what the object was. Asami’s jaw slowly dropped as she realized what it was she was holding.

“But these are…”

“Yep.”

“Hers?” the Airbender asked.

“It’s only fair… I got to keep her sword… you should get the fans. Kiki gets to keep the shield when she turns fifteen,” Hikaru shrugged.

“Wow…”

“Well don’t just stand there! Come on— let’s go get you your trainer!”

“You’re not going to train me?”

“I had someone a little different in mind.”

Hikaru led the newly inducted Kyoshi Warrior to a cottage down a dirt path— smoke rising from the chimney. Her heart leapt, they would both be home. Perfect.

Three knocks on the door and a pair of excited, wide, and enthusiastic brown eyes greeted her.

“HIKARU!! IT’S BEEN FOREVER!!” Liling, her best friend from high school, laughed as the two girls pulled into a tight hug.

“Hey there, Lily… is your grandma here?” the Firebender laughed.

“Yeah, she’s just taking a nap— let me go get her!”

Asami turned to Hikaru, “Is this an elderly lady? Shouldn’t we let her sleep?”

The Firebender laughed, “Oh trust me… this is one energetic old lady! In fact— she once took over Ba Sing Sei with two other girls!! Best friends with Nana!!”

None other than the head Kyoshi warrior, answered the door— giving Hikaru a long hug and turning to the blind woman, putting a hand on her shoulder without saying a word. The acrobat led them inside and continued beaming at Asami. With a dawning sense of realization, the Airbender was beginning to realize who she was sitting across from.

“I… I can’t believe it… you’re… you’re…”

“I’ve been waiting for this day for a long time,” Ty Lee sighed, taking a sip of tea. “Now… you’re going to forget everything those silly Equalists taught you. Let me show you a thing or two about actually Chi Blocking someone!!’’
Chapter End Notes

awwww :)

Leave Comments!!
"My best friend is the man who in wishing me well wishes it for my sake."

- Aristotle

"Training you is a lot easier than the others," the elderly woman mused, moving Asami’s arms higher up.

"Why is that?" the blind woman asked kindly.

"Well… for most of them— it takes weeks just to have the fan become an extension of themselves; to respect the metal for the tool that it is… but everything you do already has to be an extension of yourself. Your Airbending. Your fighting. You use your skills as tools to live."

Asami smiled, dodging an attack and using the metal fans to successfully disarm Ty Lee. Her hand reached up to wipe her brow off— and then she remembered that she had makeup on, and that it would smear everywhere.

"Alright… I want you to aim your fans at this dummy across the room— project your Airbending through the fans."

"Would that really work?" Asami asked skeptically.

"Oh yes," Ty Lee mused. "Kyoshi moved an entire island simply Airbending with her fans. Though I cannot say the same for dear Suki… that being said, she did manage to whop Zuko’s little ‘honor bun’ with them on several occasions. Gave him a few bruises and showed him who’s boss."

"You mean when he attacked the island?"

"No. When she was his bodyguard."

"Oh," Asami chuckled.

She straightened into an Airbending pose, sending out a quick puff to discern Ty Lee from the straw dummy across the room— a deep breath and pow!!

Air flew not out of her fingertips, but out of the metal fans in an immensely powerful strike— not only sending the dummy flying out the window of the training room, but also knocking over clay jugs and bags of feed.

“A little sloppy… your aim will improve with practice,” Ty Lee said cheerfully, bending down and collecting the pieces of a jug.

“I’m so sorry!"

“It’s alright dear, sometimes we don’t know our own strength— I remember accidentally taking
down a dozen Firebenders within thirty seconds, all because I thought that they were going to hurt my best friend!”

“Boiling Rock?”

“You know your history,” Ty Lee mused.

Asami smiled, helping the old woman pick up the scattered objects and quickly floating through the window to retrieve the dummy. She hung the target back across the beam and picked up her fans.

“Remember— it’s an extension of yourself; meaning that if your aim is even a little bit off… your strikes will you loose and sloppy.”

“Sorry, hard to aim, you know,” Asami joked, waving a hand up and down in front of her face.

“Oh, that never stopped Toph— just keep practicing until you get it right!”

Ty Lee laughed, poking Asami in the back, hard enough that the blind woman fell over.

“Oops! See what I mean? Sometimes you just don’t know your own strength— but I wasn’t even looking and my aim was correct! Fighting is more than relying on your eyes!” the old woman cheerfully said.

Asami stood back up with a groan, rubbing the part of her spine that’d been Chi Blocked— while it wasn’t the same as meeting her grandmother, she was enjoying training with a famous warrior…

Ty Lee was a little bit… eccentric though…

The Airbender smirked in determination— sending out another puff of air, detecting the dummy… and…

Puff!

“Perfect!” Ty Lee exclaimed, as the target went sailing out the window; none of the other objects in the room touched upon.

Asami smiled, turning and reaching out— allowing the world-famous Chi Blocker to pull her in for a hug.

“It seems strange,” the blind woman whispered.

“What does?”

“Well… I took an oath of nonviolence when I joined the Airbenders… and yet I want to keep improving with these fans— do you think that’s wrong?”

Ty Lee sighed;

“All I ever wanted to do was perform in the circus when I was young… and then Princess Azula recruited me to become, for lack of a better term, ‘one of the bad guys’. When I was imprisoned… with the other Kyoshi Warriors, I realized that there are no boundaries between the nations… there are only the people that mean harm to the innocent civilians of the world. You are the wife of the Avatar, and within a few years you may be an Airbending Master yourself. Airbenders swear to only use violent means to defend themselves, or others who are defenseless… you must learn to utilize these tools to do what is right. No more and no less, as is your culture’s way.
“Think of violence like fire— on the one hand, it may be used as a tool to rid the world of a tyrant like the Lieutenant… on the other hand if you do not control it… it will destroy everything. Use these fans to control your own fire, lest you let the chaos of the world surrounding you imbalance the world that is within you.”

Asami bit her lip, and then gave the woman a respectful bow, “Thank you, Master Ty Lee.”

“Of course dear. Come! Let us return you to your friends— I fear that Metalbender desperately wishes to travel to Zaofu; teenagers and their hormones!”

“Ma’am, she’s nearly thirty!” Asami smirked skeptically.

“And you wouldn’t believe how much scandalous behavior my friend Sokka found himself in at that age!” Ty Lee laughed.

Needless to say, the ride from Kyoshi Island was peaceful— most of the Krew electing to take naps as Juicy and Pepper carried them through the skies. It was Jinora and Suki’s turn to steer the Bison; the younger girl following the Airbending Master as the group flew through the skies.

“You ever wonder if we were destined to be friends?” Bolin asked, staring up at the sky. “Like, all of us together— in every Universe?”

Kuvira bit her lip, “I don’t know… there’s a Universe where I’m not a good person.”

“I mean, even then— whatever it was that you did, I’m sure I’d forgive you!” Bolin said cheerfully. “Really?”

“Sure! You’re Kuvira Beifong! Master Metalbender! I mean, if Avatar Aang can forgive Fire Lord Zuko for trying to kill him a bajillion times— whatever it was your other life did is probably forgivable!!” the Lavabender happily mused, cradling his baby boy.

“It’s alright, I know that… that Universe isn’t real,” Kuvira laughed.

“How can you be sure? You said you went back into the Fog of Lost Souls and met her,” Asami retorted doubtfully.

“I know it’s not real… because in that Universe… Opal was straight.”

“What?! OH GODS NO!!” the Energybender exclaimed across the sky from the other Flying Bison.

Korra chuckled and took a bite of her sandwich— they’d decided to have a picnic up in the air to shorten the amount of time that they were traveling and looked over at her wife, who was playing with Dequan;

“I think… we all will always be friends in every Universe. Say that Zaheer and the Red Lotus had succeeded and captured me as a kid… I probably still would’ve found you guys. Would I have been
lost? Yeah, and maybe even for a really long time. Maybe your Great Uniter phantom… well… hopefully we’d all forgive you— even if it took years.”

“We’re all platonic soulmates,” Bolin reasoned, an arm slinging around Kuvira and pulling her into a hug and giving her a nuggie (messing up her long black braid). “Meant to be besties in every lifetime and every alternate reality!! Even if we try to kill each other sometimes!! I mean, look at Hikaru and Asami!! Hey, honey!! How many times have you tried to—”

“Bolin?”

“Yeah?”

“No,” Hikaru warned sternly.

“Right. Sorry.”

“Thanks for the reassuring words,” Kuvira sighed with a smile, giving Bolin a high five. “You guys really are my… um… ‘platonic soulmates’.”

Korra smirked, her fingers fiddling with Asami’s as the morning sun threatened to carry her away into a warm afternoon nap. She curled up against her wife and let out a happy sigh— the Airbender’s legs intertwining with hers. The Avatar pressed a soft, loving kiss to the blind woman’s lips and—

“Get a room,” Kuvira murmured.

“Oh I’m sorry, which one of us can push the other off with Airbending, and which one cannot fly?” Korra asked, her head tilting upwards to challenge a pair of widening evergreen eyes.

“Ahem… carry on,” the Metalbender huffed, sticking her tongue out at the Avatar.

This earned her laughter from all around the Flying Bison, and Kuvira resolved to put her headphones in and tune out her teasing “platonic soulmates”.

Korra smiled— Bolin was a little foolish and sometimes his mind was wandering elsewhere… but this time he was right; they really were meant to be together. In every lifetime. In every scenario. No matter how hard it would be for all of them to come together… there would be a way.

There would always be a way.

_________________________________________________________________

“Oh my goodness! You’ve gotten taller!!”

“Mom, it’s only been a few weeks,” Opal said sheepishly, allowing herself to be pulled into a hug from her mother.

“You know what? I think it’s that Energybending!” Suyin continued, “I swear you’re looking taller!!”

“Hey! We’re taller too!” Kuvira objected, while Baatar laughed from the side.
The Matriarch chuckled, bringing in her two soon-to-be-wed children in for a long hug, kissing the both of them on the top of the head and resting her chin on Junior’s shoulder.

“I love you both so much,” Su whispered.

Kuvira’s grip tightened, her forehead resting against her adoptive mother’s.

“We love you too,” Baatar hummed, patting the Matriarch’s shoulder affectionately.

“Come on, everyone is likely hungry— and Chef prepared a terrific meal for all of us!!” Suyin smiled, tugging all three of her children along.

“Mmmm! This is the best salmon I’ve ever tasted,” Korra exclaimed, digging into her terrific dish.

“I’ve always been fond of Chef’s kale wraps,” Opal smiled, feeding one to Jinora.

“How’s your bean burger?”

“Great!” Asami answered, taking a scalding hot bite and smiling at Suyin.

“Wait… is this still alive?”

“Of course not, Mako, just eat your dinner— what are you, twelve?!”

Kuvira smiled at the ragtag family all enjoying their meals; well… some more than others. Hikaru and Bolin were currently at the end of the table feeding Dequan— the parents lost in their own little world. Suki was playing with her food (some Airbenders are a little more reluctant to take on the vegetarian lifestyle than others), and Mako was poking and prodding his squid as though it might come alive at any second. Asami and Korra were currently chatting about Steelworks Diligences to Baatar and Suyin. Wing and Wei were teasing Opal about the hickey that Jinora had left on her neck, and Huan was sulking in the corner with his meal.

With a sigh, she took a sip of sake and leaned back in her chair, looking over at Captain Fai— standing at attention three feet away with his hands behind his back.

“You enjoying being back home, Fai?”

“Yes, Captain Beifong,” he nodded.

“Call me Kuvira,” she corrected. “We’ve known each other for so long.”

He’d been trained by Kuvira, though he was older than her— having been recruited after the Red Lotus attack. She’d been the one to show him the ropes when he was first transferred from the United Forces, a prodigy at bending and military tactics. Eventually, he’d risen to become her second-in-command; and one of her most trusted soldiers. As a result, a natural friendship had formed between them.

Captain Fai smiled and nodded, “We’ve had a skirmish in one of the outlying villages, but other than that it’s been the usual quiet.”

The Metalbender took another sip of her drink, “The usual quiet is all we could ever ask for, after all that these kids have been through.”
“Well then perhaps the gods are in our favor these days, Captain Beifong.”

“Kuvira,” she corrected again with a sigh.

Old habits are always the hardest to break.
Chapter Summary

"You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams."

— Dr. Seuss

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“Are you sure I look okay? You think green was a good idea? I mean, I know it looks traditional and all but I think I should’ve gone with black—”

“Baatar, I swear to the gods, you look fine,” Korra sighed, adjusting his bowtie.

“Right. Right. It’s silly of me to worry, I mean I’m sure it’ll look fine, right? Right?”

“It’s just wedding nerves,” the Avatar mused as she slapped his hands away from fiddling with his collar. “You’ll be fine.”

“Married. Married! I can hardly believe it! And we still haven’t picked out a honeymoon location!” Junior frowned.

“Just go to Ember Island.”

“Everybody goes to Ember Island!! Where did you go?”

Korra stuck a white lotus flower into the breast pocket of his green suit, “We didn’t have a honeymoon—we needed to return to the City and help take care of the Equalists.”

“Are you going to go on one?” Baatar asked nervously. “I mean, if you guys don’t then why should we have to go on a honeymoon?”

The Avatar let out a sigh and sat down in the chair next to her, “Asami said that just spending time together and feeling safe was more than enough. Why don’t you ask Kuvira what she really wants? I’m sure that she’ll have a spot picked out by the time you get to the vows.”

“Right. The vows. Right.”

“Do you not want to get married, Baatar?”

“Hmm? No? No! Of course I want to be married to her! She’s a perfect woman! I love her with all my heart!”

“There’s nothing to be nervous about then,” Korra hummed, standing up and giving the engineer a long, reassuring hug. “Be brave for your future wife.”

“Alright. Brave for Kuvira. I can do that,” he smiled, returning the hug and blushing a little when the Avatar kissed his cheek.
“Why the fuck are you so nervous? Get over yourself!” Asami laughed.

“Hey! You’re supposed to be peaceful and kind and passive enlightened Airbender!” Kuvira retorted, nervously glancing in the mirror and twirling a strand of black hair around.

“Relax! If a dank-lillyweed-smoking-hippie is meant to be with the constable-with-a-stick-up-her-ass, you’re meant to be with the love of your life,” the blind woman chuckled.

Kuvira rolled her eyes, realized that Asami couldn’t see the gesture, and instead blew a raspberry at her friend.

“Easy for you to say, you got married the night after she proposed— we’ve been engaged for five years!! I swear that’s the plot of a movie or something!! What if in that time he decided that he doesn’t love me romantically or maybe my butt isn’t right or what if he’s really intimidated because I can do all this crazy shit with my Metalbending or—”

A puff of hair sent her veil flying over her head, interrupting her speech. Asami stood and gave Kuvira a long hug, rubbing her hands up and down the former Captain’s back in a soothing pattern.

“It’s going to be okay.”

“You sure?” the Metalbender whispered.

“Yeah.”

“Okay.”

Asami listened as Kuvira walked back over to the counter and applied a little bit of make-up; though not much because let’s face it— she’s Kuvira. Her fingers reached out and fiddled with the bouquet that Kuvira would walk down the aisle with. It smelled wonderful… but it reminded Asami of the last time she held a bouquet of roses.

“Do you miss your father?” Asami asked with a sigh.

She could hear Kuvira turn and felt a hand on her shoulder— covering it with her own. The Metalbender’s fingers intertwined with her own.

“Every single day. What about you?”

“I miss him a lot… but I think he found peace, and I’m just glad he died comfortably. The life we’d led before all of this… we were both honestly expecting to die out on the battlefield,” the Airbender admitted sadly.

Kuvira pulled the blind woman up for another, stronger hug.

“I think that they’d both be proud of us; you know?”

Asami leaned into the embrace of her best friend— the woman who’d she’d gone through so much
with. From escaping Equalist attacks to embarking into the Fog together, to opening Chakras, to
every damn villain that they’d taken down together. Kuvira and Asami were friends for life after all
this.

“I would hope they’d be… I’m proud of you, Kuvira. Now go out there and marry that fucking
nerd!”

They stumbled out of the room together, laughing all the way down the hallways until they reached
Suyin and the other members of the family (except for the groom, of course).

Korra smiled, looking at the couple standing in front of her, facing each other and holding hands.
Two pairs of green eyes looked into each other lovingly and with determination. Strength.

The Avatar took a deep breath and allowed her voice to project through the room;

“Strength is found in the buildings that hold together cities, the mountains that hold together the
skies, and the land that holds together the seas… but there is nothing stronger than the bond between
soulmates.

“There is a connection between every living being on this planet— every pocket of energy. The
Universe is a spider web that we walk across to find new beautiful sources of learning. It is believed
that enlightenment is simply learning what nature has to teach us— and these two young souls have
learned from nature that their enlightenment is found within each other. And so we are here today to
witness and celebrate the connection of strength between these two souls; who have found each
other in lifetimes over and over again. It is the will of the gods, or perhaps the Universe, or…
perhaps it is simply the powerful force of love— a thousand fold the magnitude of any Bending Art.

“And so it is with hopeful hearts that we declare this bond eternal— and as we seal you together in
this lifetime, we wish you luck in finding each other in the many to come. In every youth, in every
adulthood, may you find each other. Baatar Beifong the Second… do you take this woman in eternal
bond, now and forever?” Korra asked with wide cerulean eyes.

“I do,” Baatar sighed with a happy smile.

“Kuvira Beifong, do you take this man in eternal bond—”

“You bet your ass!”

The audience chuckled, and both the groom and the bride blushed a little, but Korra stifled her
laughing to continue.

“Established as the Bringer of Balance— I couldn’t be more proud to declare these two in an eternal
bond of love and friendship. Soulmate or not, all humans deserve the happiness that you two have
found within each other. You may now kiss.”

Instantly, Kuvira’s arms shot out as she pulled Baatar into a fierce kiss. He murmured a little in
surprise; then closing his eyes and lifting her up a little with joy.

The crowd clapped profusely, and Korra caught a glance of Suyin bawling her eyes out as Lin
(who’d arrived before Team Avatar via plane) rolled her eyes. Even good old Toph had showed up — insisting that she’d only come for the refreshments. The Master Earthbender didn’t seem to be paying attention, however, picking at her toes (much to Lin’s dismay). Huan was sketching the scene on a pad of paper, Wing and Wei were thumb wrestling and oblivious to the newlyweds. Opal was sitting next to Jinora— holding the younger girl’s hand and looking up at the altar with absolute pride.

Asami and Hikaru were sitting next to each other— the Firebender whispering and describing the scene in detail to her cousin, who had somehow managed to angle her face just right, so that it looked as though she was staring directly at Korra. There was a smile on the blind woman’s face, and it set Korra’s heart aflutter. Bolin was cradling Dequan, trying to keep the baby as quiet as possible. Suki, on the other hand, was absolutely asleep, drooling a little as her head rested on Mako’s shoulder.

“I love you,” Kuvira whispered to Baatar, with tears dripping down her eyes.

“I love you too, you goofball.”

The Metalbender threw the bouquet of flowers into the cheering audience, laughing hysterically when none other than Detective Mako caught it— blushing a little and tossing the roses to someone else as quick as a flash of lightning.

The reception was crowded and stuffy and a little too loud for Korra’s liking— but seeing Kuvira and Baatar stumble around as a professional dancer tried to move a fumbling engineer was totally worth it.

“Gods— the food isn’t even that good,” Toph sighed, walking up to the Avatar and punching her in the arm. “How are you doing, Twinkle-Toes?”

“Married.”

“Raava, you’re all worse than the Gaang. Got the Avatar State back, kid?”

“You bet your ass. Oh hey, I forgot to mention— apparently Opal and Jinora have met Aang and Roku a few times in the Spirit World, so if you ever wanna meet up with your old pal…”

“I’m not going to the Water Tribes. Ever. I can’t stand the cold, and I can’t see anything with all that ice!” the old woman huffed.

“So meditate?”

“I… I didn’t consider that. SMART THINKING, TWINKLE-TOES!!”

With that, Toph punched Korra swiftly in the gut; forcing the Avatar to double over in pain as the Greatest Earthbender in the World ruffled her short chestnut hair in a playful manner and walked away— likely going to bother someone else or cheat at the wedding games that Zaofu traditionally held after ceremonies.

“You okay?” Asami chuckled. “I heard that grunt from across the room.”

“It’s fine,” Korra groaned, standing up straight and rubbing her abs, “It’s how she shows affection.
Have you talked to her?”

“I have. She said that Opal was ‘one smart cookie’ for coming up with the Air Vibration Trick. Says that she should get her tattoos.”

“That’d be something.”

Asami smirked and found Korra’s hands, “Dance with me?”

“Sure thing, love.”

Scooching past Hikaru and Bolin, Jinora and Opal, and the couple of the hour— the wives managed to find a nice spot to sway around. Korra pulled Asami close and pressed a kiss to her cheek.

“You look wonderful tonight.”

Asami blushed a little and twirled a piece of Korra’s chestnut hair in her fingers, letting her digits slide up a little and trace the outline of the younger woman’s ear, down to her jaw, resting underneath her chin. The Airbender let out a small, content sigh through her nose and pulled Korra’s face closer; allowing their lips to press together.

“You spoke beautifully up at the altar,” the blind woman whispered with a smile.

“Once you’ve trained with Tenzin and Jinora for a decade— you come up with that stuff on the spot pretty quickly,” Korra shrugged, grinning a little as she watched Baatar step on Kuvira’s toes for the fourteenth time that night.

Su managed to drag her mother out for a dance— and though the elderly woman was no Aang, she did reluctantly let her daughter spin her around; laughing a little when Opal tugged her Aunt Lin into the group. Both Chiefs of Police looked a little chummy at the prospect of all the merriment in the room— but Suyin and Opal cared little.

“One big ragtag family,” Asami sighed, shaking her head as she listened to Toph try and walk away— only to have Wing and Wei join in on the mischief.

“Oh, if she really didn’t want to dance with them— no one could force her. I mean, even the floors are made of metal; if she minded the antics she’d just escape through the floor,” Korra smirked. “Though… she doesn’t have much of a social life these days, being stuck in the swamp and all…”

“A curse on each and every one of you!” the elderly woman called out, as Su spun her around in a hug.

“She’s having fun,” Korra mused.

“I hope so. It seems like a nice venue— I’d hate for her to wreck it,” another voice interjected.

Korra looked over; Kuvira and Baatar had given up dancing and instead were watching their family dance the “Original Beifong” around with amusement.

“You guys decide on a honeymoon location yet?” Asami asked.

“We’re going to go to Gaoling— Grandma’s old house. If we time our vacation right… maybe we can watch Earth Rumble LXXXV!” Baatar nodded.

“That sounds like a good honeymoon,” Korra mused.
“Maybe you can enter and win, Kuv,” Asami joked.

“Not a bad idea. Thank you. Both of you,” the Metalbender whispered sincerely— bringing both of them in for a strong hug.

“For what?”

“Teaching me how to live. I don’t think I was really doing that before I met the two of you. And… it feels really wonderful now that I know how,” Kuvira admitted with a grateful smile, using Asami’s shoulder to wipe away a tear dripping down her cheek and sniffing a little.

Korra smiled and pulled Baatar into the hug as well. The four of them remained in the embrace as couples danced around them— the worries of the world lost and gone in that moment.

Chapter End Notes

awwww!! Beifong clan gathering, i.e. trying to get Toph to participate in healthy family activities.

Leave Comments!
Chapter Summary

“Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them.”

— Dalai Lama XIV

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

One Month Later:

“I can’t believe this.”

“Believe it,” Kuvira said with a smile, her hands resting on her hips as Asami’s fingers traced over the 3D model.

“How much is it going to cost?”

“Don’t worry about that— President Raiko wants this new building put into action… which means I’m going to have to find some art, but I’m sure Fire Lord Izumi has enough shit in her palace, and King Wu’s agreed to donate some of his inheritance to get us started. Hikaru and Ty Lee also want to put up a Kyoshi Exhibit to bring in attraction.”

The blind woman engulfed her best friend in a big hug; dozens of emotions— mostly a great deal of gratitude— passing through the embrace.

“Thank you,” Asami whispered.

“I know how much it means to you and Korra,” Kuvira sighed with a smile, tightening her arms around the Airbender and leaning against her weight.

“I love you.”

“I love you too, Asami. Come on… let’s rebuild an Art Museum.”

“Good morning!” a voice called cheerfully from the hallway.
Jinora cracked an eye open and glared at her impending girlfriend— who’d interrupted a meditation session. Opal bent down and captured her lips in a kiss, however, and Jinora couldn’t stay all that mad. She tugged on her soulmate’s sweater; the Energybender sitting down cross-legged with a giggle.

“How are you doing?”

“Well, I was meditating.”

Opal nodded, “Boring shit aside, how are you doing.”

She rolled her eyes and punched her lover in the arm playfully, “It’s boring, but important.”

“I never said it wasn’t! Do you… do you wanna go for a flight? Or perhaps… some other… activity?”

A smirk escaped Jinora’s usually stoic expression, and she allowed her girlfriend to pull her into another, longer kiss. Opal moaned a little into her mouth and it set Jinora’s insides aflame. She quickly straddled her lover and used Airbending to close the door.

“Mmmm… I know that we’re not a culture much for possessions,” Opal started, “but…”

“But what?” Jinora murmured, her lips on her soulmate’s neck.

Olive eyes with a fire to them suddenly met hers— full of lust. Hands reached up and yanked on Jinora’s hair just enough that she gasped, tilting her head back and allowing the Beifong full access of the Airbending Master’s collar.

“We’re not much for possessions, but you’re mine,” the Energybender shushed with a smirk.

Jinora couldn’t really think straight from there on out.

Fortunately, ‘twas too early in the morning for siblings or acolytes to interrupt the duo.

Opal’s back was exceptionally muscular after so much time spent alone or fighting Equalists— and the thought of how much emotional pain her soulmate had gone through forced a tear to escape Jinora’s eyes as her fingers traced over various dips and curves along smooth skin. At least they were in a sense of peace, no matter how temporary.

“That tickles,” a muffled voice murmured.

The younger girl didn’t say anything, only pressing kissed along Opal’s spine. Perhaps… soon… there ought to be blue imbued in this soft, heavenly skin. The thought of giving her soulmate her tattoos stirred something sensual and spiritual within Jinora.

“I love you so much,” Jinora murmured— her lips reaching the small of Opal’s back.

A happy sigh echoing through Opal’s lungs caused her body to hum and vibrate a little, eliciting a giggle from the younger woman. Jinora’s hands reached downwards, her fingers pressing into soft flesh and causing Opal’s hips to squirm in excitement.

“I hope you’re not planning a round two— I don’t think I could keep so quiet a second time,” the
older woman whispered.

Jinora sighed and flopped down onto her soulmate’s back, her stomach fitting perfectly along Opal’s spine. Their fingers intertwined and the Airbending Master pressed kisses to the back of her lover’s neck.

“Can I ask you something?” Opal whispered.

“Of course!”

“Well… it’s just… when I left… when I was gone— I know that I was in a lot of pain and I wasn’t wandering around with the right purpose… but maybe we can try it again?”

“How do you mean?”

“Just the two of us— just…”

“Going.”

“Yeah. Just going.”

“Everywhere?”

“Suki and Asami and the Lieutenant… well… not so much the last one… but the other two had me thinking… what if I’m meant to give other people around the world Airbending? Spreading culture? Giving this gift— this tool— to the people whose energies I’m tethered to? And unlike Harmonic Convergence… they could have a choice; they wouldn’t have to become an Airbender if they didn’t want to!

“Jinora… would you travel the world with me? You said you wanted to see all the Air Temples and make a pilgrimage… could I come with you?” Opal asked with sincere wide eyes.

The younger girl flipped the Beifong around so that they were facing each other and fiercely pressed kisses again and again to her mouth— her hands possessively gripping Opal’s shoulders and nails slightly digging into flesh with passion.

“Of course!” Jinora murmured into Opal’s mouth. “I’d follow you anywhere.”

“I don’t want to lead you. And I don’t want to walk behind you. We ought to walk side by side. As equals.”

“As equals,” the younger girl repeated with a smile. “Well then, there’s just one thing we have to do…”

“What?”

“I think… It’s time you receive your tattoos.”
Korra’s eyes widened, “Wow! That’s amazing!”

“Yeah! We’re going to build another Art Museum!” the Airbender laughed, leaning into her lover’s arms.

The Avatar danced the two of them around the room— spinning a practically weightless Asami around in circles as tears dripped down from her eyes.

Even though her original goal had been to preserve what already existed… Guru Laghima was partially right— new growth could not exist without first the destruction of the old. And the Equalists had destroyed the building that she’d loved so much… but now was the time to allow a phoenix to be born from the ashes. What better a goal than to create something beautiful with the woman she loved most?

“Where do we even start?!” Asami giggled as Korra kept spinning her around.

“I haven’t the slightest idea, but won’t it be exciting to find out?” the Avatar asked with wide and wise cerulean eyes.

“Yeah… yeah, it will,” the blind woman smiled.

They ended on the couch, curled up together as Korra pressed a multitude of kisses to Asami’s cheeks, to her forehead and a long, happy kiss to her mouth.

“You’re the best wife I’ve ever had.”

“I do hope that I’m the only wife you’ll ever have,” Asami warned sternly, but playfully.

“Well then you don’t have to worry one bit, Mrs. Sato,” Korra laughed, kissing her on the forehead again. “You’re the only one for me.”

Asami wrapped her arms around Korra’s neck, and the Avatar knew that she’d said the correct thing.

It would seem that Korra’s mischievous adventures had no end— for a week later she found another project cross her path. In the form of a young girl.

The lass had soot covering her face and rags for clothes; Korra instantly knew that something was very wrong with her. The Avatar knelt down in front of the young girl, who was clutching her stomach and gave Korra the pout that children give mothers when sick.

“What’s wrong?” Korra asked, one of her hands on the girl’s shoulder.

“My tummy hurts,” the girl whimpered, tears sliding down bloodshot eyes.

This was one of the neighborhoods that’d been attacked by Equalists— whole buildings reduced to rubble and dogs picking at scraps in the ash. Many homeless occupied the area, and Korra had visited to see if she could help.

It seemed this girl needed her help more than most.
“Can I take you to a hospital?” Korra asked.

The little girl shook her head, “They won’t want me to leave.”

“Who?”

The girl pointed at a group of scruffy men huddling around a barrel— a little flame could be seen keeping them warm in the cold April night. One of them flashed Korra a grungy stare, and her muscles instantly tensed up.

“Do they hurt you?” Korra muttered to the girl.

“They feed me.”

“But do they hurt you?” the Avatar repeated, her eyes threatening to glow white in anger.

The little girl didn’t answer, and Korra knelt down— slowly lifting up the hem of the rags that passed as clothes. A long purple and black bruise stretched across the eight-year-old’s stomach, and Korra’s blood boiled.

“Go find somewhere to hide; I won’t be long,” Korra whispered.

Silver eyes widened as the lass understood the warning, quickly scurrying around a wall— peeking out just enough to see Korra flash her a quick thumbs up.

“So you hurt little kids?” the Avatar shouted at the middle aged bums, who looked up from their fire, obviously startled at the outburst.

“What’s it to you, skank?”

“Oh you shouldn’t have said that,” Korra muttered, running towards them.

They moved to point scavenged pistols at her, but she easily Metalbent them out of the way, encasing their feet in earth and punching the ringleader— a greasy-looking man who now sported three or four more holes in his teeth. The other two bums instantly cowered as best they could before her.

“Beating children is just fucking sick,” Korra snarled.

“Please! Just let us go and we won’t do it again!”

“If is,” the Avatar huffed. “I’m not stupid enough to believe a promise like that.”

She whipped out her phone and called up Chief Lin, smirking as she watched three pairs of eyes widen— realizing that their days of scumbagginess were over. Within minutes, Mako and Lin were pushing the men into a van— all of them trying to unsuccessfully weasel their way out of the arrest. To no avail, assholes.

Korra walked behind the wall, where the little girl was staring back at her with those enticing silver eyes.

“The police are going to need to see those bruises… but how about we get you someplace warm?”

Hesitancy flashed across the girl’s face, and Korra realized that this little one would obviously not trust any adults after what she’d been through. The grown woman let out a small sigh through her nose and patiently knelt down on the ground.
“I know that you’re scared… but I’m the Avatar— I promise to keep you safe.”

Silver eyes widened, “Really?”

“Really really.”

A small pale hand reached out, and Korra took it. Together, the duo walked towards Mako’s police cruiser and rode back to her apartment.

“You’re kidding me. I asked you to get ice cream and you brought home a kid?” a bemused Airbender asked with a smile— fetching a bowl to pour the girl some soup.

Korra blushed as she rubbed the back of her neck in embarrassment, “Sorry.”

The blind woman shook her head as she set the bowl in the microwave, “What’s her name?”

“Uhhh…."

“You didn’t even think to ask before you brought her home?”

“Well she’s not very talkative!”

The girl was sitting in the living room, currently wrapped up in a blanket while Mako tried to keep her entertained— which went about as poorly as you’d expect. He was at a loss for what to say and looked pleadingly at the pair of wives arguing in the kitchen.

“Go and ask her, then,” Asami whispered in amusement.

Korra walked up to the couch, and Mako took this as his cue to go and help the Airbender with her cooking— not that the former engineer needed any help.

“W-What’s your name?” the Avatar hesitantly asked, sitting down on the cushions.

“Chena.”

“That’s a familiar sounding name… but you don’t look Water Tribe.”

“Mummy was from Republic City, but Dad was from the South,” the girl answered quietly. “But after the Equalists… I’ve been on my own for a while…”

Korra bit her lip. The moment of truth.

“Chena… would you like to stay here? You’ll be safe— the Police and I will make sure of that.”

Silver eyes looked up and the girl shifted around in her blanket. Something told Korra that Chena trusted her, after what the Avatar had selflessly done in taking down the girl’s abusers. With a smile, the girl nodded. Korra put a hand on her shoulder and gave it a small, reassuring squeeze.

“Just wait till you meet Naga.”

“Naga?”

“Our Polar Bear Dog.”
Chena’s jaw dropped, and Korra had never felt more excited for what possibilities awaited. What futures might unfold. She knew not; and yet she couldn’t wait to find out.

“Gods,” Asami whispered to Mako, “Now I have two kids to take care of.”

Chapter End Notes

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW

Leave comments!!
Parents - Part 3

Chapter Summary

“Was it the act of giving birth that made you a mother? Did you lose that label when you relinquished your child? If people were measured by their deeds, on the one hand, I had a woman who had chosen to give me up; on the other, I had a woman who’d sat up with me at night when I was sick as a child, who’d cried with me over boyfriends, who'd clapped fiercely at my law school graduation. Which acts made you more of a mother?

Both, I realized. Being a parent wasn't just about bearing a child. It was about bearing witness to its life.”

― Jodi Picoult, Handle with Care

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Hey there,” Korra whispered, climbing up the metal ladder and joining the girl on the roof of the apartment complex. “You hiding from anyone in particular?”

If possible, Chena curled up into an even smaller ball— her knees tucked into her chest as she watched the city horizon.

She didn’t speak, and Korra merely sat down beside her.

“Well, I’ll go tell Asami and then how about we leave in half an hour?”

A shrug.

Korra sighed softly through her nose and stood up, brushing her pants off. The Avatar turned and climbed back down the ladder— pausing to look at the little girl. Chena’s chin was resting on her knees as she looked at the horizon. This must all seem so strange to her, and Korra was reminded of how isolated she felt as a child.
Climbing back through the window, she saw Asami attempting to do some yoga stretches.

“How am I supposed to talk to her?” Korra sighed.

“Give her space.”

“But I want us all to connect, I want to get to know her. I want her to get to know us and trust us.”

Asami turned and hugged Korra, wrapping her arms around her wife and sighing into her neck.

“How about Kuvira?”

“What about her?” the Avatar asked.

“Well… she knows more than us about living on the streets and being a victim of abuse… she can probably talk to Chena more than we can.”

Korra blinked and sat down on the couch, pulling out her phone.

Avatar Korra: Hey, any chance you can come visit Air Temple Island in the next hour or two?

Metalgirl: Why, what’s up?

Avatar Korra: I think Chena needs someone to talk to who shares… you know… her experiences.

Her inbox was empty for a few minutes, and as Asami zipped up Chena’s new coat and gave her a warm hat to wear… Korra began to wonder if she’d accidentally offended Kuvira. What if she’d just fucked everything up and—

Metalgirl: Sure, sorry— I had to clear up my schedule for the day, but I should be able to come and talk to her. I understand completely.

Korra let out a sigh and offered a hand to Chena, who hesitantly took it and held on as the trio walked down the hallway, riding the elevator to Asami’s car. Korra had finally passed her Driver’s Test, albeit she was not the smoothest Danica Patrick on the racetrack.

“You’re going to love it, Chena. The Airbenders are all so kind and thoughtful— and the Sky Bison are amazing to look at!”

“And listen to,” Asami smiled with a roll of her eyes.

Chena didn’t say anything, only leaning up against the car door and looking out the window. Korra felt a pang in her heart at the prospect that… that they were not reaching out to this girl.
Kuvira walked along the courtyard when she realized that something was a little off. Willing her concentration to focus on vibrations through the ground, she tapped her foot to “see” the people around her.

Strange.

The girl that Korra had taken in… she had something hidden in her hand, stuffed into her pocket.

A trinket?

No… one of Tenzin’s special amulets from his study.

Surely he wouldn’t give something so precious away like that…

The girl might’ve stolen it.

Kuvira walked up to Korra and Asami, giving Chena a respectful bow and asking the pair of adults if she could have some time alone with the girl. Silver eyes made eye contact with her own evergreen ones, and Kuvira could see a knowing look in the little girl’s gaze.

“My name is Kuvira,” the Metalbender said, introducing herself.

“Chena.”

“Well… can I ask you something?”

“You just did,” the little girl shrugged, looking out at the horizon of Republic City.

Fair enough.

“I was wondering… why you took that little amulet from Tenzin’s study?” Kuvira asked, her expressions soft but inquisitive.

Chena’s eyes widened, and the hand in her pocket noticeably stiffened. The Metalbender gently pulled on the girl’s wrist until her palm was facing upright—the gold gleaming in the sunlight.

“I’m sorry,” the girl whispered, refusing to make eye contact.

“I’m not mad at you, and I don’t think any of the others would be, either,” Kuvira gently whispered. “I’d just like to know why you took this?”

A tear noticeably rolled down the little girl’s cheek, and Kuvira’s heart broke. She’d been there. She’d stolen from neighbors and friends before she’d been taken in by Suyin. Trinkets and bits of food, or perhaps a yuan or two when her real parents weren’t looking. Stealing was a distraction—and Kuvira knew that Chena used theft as an outlet for whatever she was feeling on the inside.

“I didn’t think anyone would notice it missing,” the silver-eyed girl whispered.

A hand reached out and rested on Chena’s shoulder, and the lass looked up into Kuvira’s kind evergreen eyes.

“If you truly need something from any of us—please just ask. Nobody here is going to hurt you, or
make you feel bad ever again.”

“I know.”

Gently, Kuvira took the amulet out of Chena’s hands and placed it in her own pocket to give to Tenzin later on. She kneeled down in front of the girl and held out her left palm. Silver eyes widened as Chena looked at the long, jagged pink scar that ran across Kuvira’s hand, from the muscle of her thumb up to the bottom of her pinkie.

“I was beaten by my parents. A lot. My father gave this to me when he was drunk— yelling that I was worthless and all sorts of horrible things. I know what you’ve been through… and I want you to know that you can always talk to me. Korra and Asami are wonderful— but sometimes it’s hard to talk about this kind of pain with someone who hasn’t been through it.”

Chena reached out, her index finger tracing the little scar. There was a heaviness in the lass’s eyes and it took every ounce of Kuvira’s will not to go down to the Police Station and give those bums a harsh walloping. The Metalbender told her everything— from the mines she’d been forced to work in as a kid, to her neighbor spying on her bending a bit of steel, to running away from her parents.

“What happened?”

“Eventually, I found someone who took me in and loved me. She’s my new mother now.”

“So… Korra and Asami are my mommies now?”

“If you want them to be, Chena.”

On the ride home, Chena held Asami’s hand— and the two wives realized that something Kuvira had said to the girl had clicked. Maybe they could have a chance at… establishing some healthy communication?

They could only hope.

“Do you care what style I make it?” Asami asked with a soft, caring smile.

“No.”

“Alright then. I’m just going to brush your hair first— it might hurt.”
“Okay.”

Carefully, the blind woman ran a brush through slightly stringy hair, as Chena sat on the floor in front of the couch, patiently allowing Asami to work. Judging by the texture—the poor girl’s hair was damaged from living out on the streets. From neglect.

“How could human beings willingly treat her like this? Korra should’ve knocked out a few more teeth,” Asami thought with a frown.

The brush snared on a tangle, and the little girl stifled a whimper.

“I’m sorry!” Asami whispered, removing the brush and slowly working apart the nest with her delicate fingers and a small spray bottle of water.

“It’s okay.”

This girl was clearly used to repressing her pain.

“Would you like a haircut?”

“Ummm…”

Asami giggled, Chena sounded a little nervous at the prospect of a blind woman giving her a haircut. The former engineer held up a hand in protest.

“Oh no! Not from me, dear! I can get Korra to do it, or we can go out and get it professionally done!”

There was a small sigh of relief from the girl and she leaned back against Asami’s legs—allowing the Airbender to continue brushing her hair.

“I haven’t had a haircut since Mom and Dad died from an Equalist attack.”

Asami stiffened.

What if she’d been… by some extent… responsible?

Hikaru’s voice, from a fateful day so long ago, floated around in the back of her head.

“As long as you wear that mask, you’re responsible for every single Equalist crime that’s gone down.”

Asami knelt down and took Chena’s hands in her own;

“I’m so, so sorry that they killed your parents. I… I was once an Equalist— and I tried to hurt innocent Benders.”

She could almost hear the girl’s heartbeat speed up.

“What changed?” Chena asked hesitantly.

Asami sighed, feeling the little girl’s hands playing with her own. She felt the truth swirl around in
her throat— pleading to escape; thinking of everything that she’d ever gone through and how much harm she’d caused the world all in the name of Nonbenders. In the name of her mother. How much she’d lost versus how little she’d gained from her pursuits.

And when she’d finally accepted a life of peace… for the first time in twenty-four years she’d started to actually live again.

“I realized that I’d much rather feel love in my heart than pain. I went through a lot— suffered a great deal— before I realized that the people that I used to hate were actually the people I love most in this world. I promised never to hurt another innocent human being again, but to defend those who truly need my help, as an Airbender. I let go of unprovoked violence… and I allowed peace to flow through my heart and soul.

“You deserve to know about my past— I promised that I would never lie to anyone, ever again. It took so much, but every single day I try to right my wrongs. I ask the world for forgiveness. Sometimes I don’t receive it… and I’ve certainly experienced my fair share of karma… but I will never again hurt people like I used to.”

“Does Avatar Korra trust you?”

“You can just call her Korra, sweetie. And… yes. I genuinely think so.”

“How do you know?” Chena asked.

Asami sighed a little through her nose, “When you love someone enough— you put forth trust in each other. I promise to trust you, too.”

She could sense that Chena was lowering her head in shame, “I stole something today.”

“I know.”

Kuvira had told them about it before leaving the island, a hint of concern in the Metalbender’s voice.

“Does that mean you guys won’t love me? Because… I did something untrustworthy?”

“In… in a life of regret— you’re the one thing I look back on that makes me smile. I just want you to know, I’m so proud of you, Asami. You are the greatest thing I ever created. I know we’ve had our crash landings as a family… I know that we’ve spent more time lying to each other than we have spent telling the truth… but I love you more than anything else. I said it before and I’ll say it again— I’m so proud of you, sweetie.”

Asami pulled Chena into a sudden hug. “We will always love you, no matter what. We’re family now, and a family learns to love each other, even after they do bad things… do you want to be a part of our family?”

The girl leaned into the hug, burying her head in the Airbender’s chest, “Yeah.”

“Don’t worry… Korra and I are never going to let anyone hurt you ever again.”

“I know,” Chena whispered, hugging Asami tighter.

Asami reached up and cradled a tangled mess of hair, pressing a kiss to the top of Chena’s head and
closing her lifeless eyes— only feeling warmth and hope in her heart from that moment on.

Chapter End Notes

Feels!! Feels in the fanfiction!!

Thought you ought to know *faints*

Leave comments.
“Don’t confuse the teacher with the lesson, the ritual with the ecstasy, the transmitter of the symbol with the symbol itself.”

— Neil Gaiman, Stardust

“That tickles!”

“I can’t help it! Your hair is really thick— and this razor is pretty damn flimsy!” Jinora argued, carefully trying to shave Opal’s head.

“Beifong woman have the best hairstyles thank you very much!”

“I don’t doubt it,” Jinora whispered, pressing a kiss to Opal’s now bald head. “It’s a cute look on you, ya know that?”

She saw the older girl blush a little in the mirror and it set Jinora’s heart aflutter— of all the possible outcomes she’d imagined when they’d first started dating… this was the one she knew that she’d love the most. Giving this spiritual experience in such a personal way… it was rather beautiful.

“You two lovebirds make me sick,” Ikki sighed, readying the ink over in the corner.

The catch; thanks to the new tradition that the Air Nomads had set up— not Jinora, but Ikki would be giving Opal her tattoos… of course, that didn’t mean the older sister couldn’t supervise. Another few strokes and a careful trim behind her ears… and…

“Done!”

“Wow… it’s cold,” Opal grimaced.

“Tell me about it,” Ikki sighed— her hair hadn’t even remotely begun to grow back.

Awkwardness silenced the room as Ikki carefully began working on Opal’s body— and Jinora’s eyes never left her soulmates while her younger sister delicately dyed her Soulmate’s skin. Each time the needle struck Opal’s forehead, Jinora felt her own face twitch a little in pain.

Remembrance of the day she’d received her own tattoos flooded her head.

The aching.

How long it took.

Feeling such nervousness.

“You’re so brave,” Jinora whispered, pressing a soft kiss to Opal’s cheek, and squeezing a hand that would soon be tinted azure.
The Beifong let out a small sigh through her nose and bit her lip as Ikki’s tools began moving down her neck. Overall, the arrow on her forehead had been well done, without any mistakes— always a worry. To save her soulmate from any embarrassment, Jinora had spent many hours training Ikki how to tattoo someone— lest Opal have a Baby Bison tattooed on her skin.

“Halfway there,” Ikki whispered calmly, too distracted by her responsibility to fire off in her normal chatterbox talk.

“Good,” Opal sighed with a slight whimper.

Her hands were shaking a little from being dyed with the blue ink— and Jinora carefully reached out, cupping her cheek. There weren’t a lot places on Opal’s body that weren’t tender from the tattooing process, but the Beifong indeed leaned into the touch with a warm smile.

“I love you,” Jinora whispered, ignoring her sister rolling her eyes while dying Opal’s spine.

“I love you too.”

“Ow… jeez…”

“Is the pain finally getting to you, Little Miss Stoic?” the younger laughed.

“The top of the feet, sweetie!”

“Hey! At least your feet smell nice! Can you imagine how horrible it’s going to be when Meelo finally gets his tattoos done?” Ikki huffed. “Quit squirming, we’re almost done!”

“Can we get something to eat before the ceremony or something?”

“You’re supposed to be physically cleansed, so no. But we can grab a bite as soon as it’s over,” Jinora apologized. “If it makes you feel better— I haven’t eaten anything.”

“No, it doesn’t— what if you like faint on stage or something?!”

Jinora rolled her eyes; they’d been in the ritual room for a long while, almost six or seven hours— Ikki taking her time and going slow with the process (I suppose there’s a first time for everything). The whole day, they’d been fasting as per tradition; and Jinora merely let her discomfort shrug off as she played with Opal’s fingers.

“DONE!!”

“Ikki, quiet voices— this is a sacred ritual for our people.”

Instantly, removing the tools and looking at her handiwork, Jinora’s sister fired off at her million-mile-an-hour-mouth;

“Oh they’re so beautiful— I should open up a tattoo business! Dude, let’s do like a flower shop tattoo parlor duo combination cause you could just look up at the flowers and draw them all over people and who doesn’t want flowers all over and you’ve already done this so we could totally have a partnership the only problem is that Dad would want us to share so we’d have to give Meelo a job
but he can be the janitor and do all the stinky work— OH!! We could also hire Mula to help us out because he really likes flowers I mean that’s all he practically does on the island although he’s really good at brewing tea hey how come he’s an Earthbender why don’t you just bend his energy so that he’s an Airbender instead wait can you actually do that I mean I know you’re good at Energybending and all but do you think you can do that would that count as your Airbending trick for getting your tattoos what even was your trick cause I mean you came up with that sensing vibration trick but you based it off your grandmother’s way of Earthbending and Asami uses it more than you so does that even count or—"

“Once you’ve lived for her for long enough you sorta just tune it out,” Jinora sighed, helping her lover up and giving her a robe.

Finally clothed, Opal clung to the fabric like it was a lifeline, “I don’t know what’s worse… that or the Twins and Huan. And Kuvira and Baatar groping each other under tables. At least you’re out of the house before they realize the whole birds and the bees’ shtick.”

“What, sex? I totally know what sex is, Opal, that’s what you and Jinora do all the time when you think nobody can hear you and—”

“IKKI! SHUT UP!!” Jinora screeched, her face bright red.

“Today we have gathered to celebrate the anointment of Master Opal Beifong. She has not only surpassed all of our Airbending Tests, but has gained the ability to change the world through Energybending— the only non-Avatar human being to be able to perform such a feat.

“Opal selflessly pacified a force of evil without employing means of harm or destruction—upholding the very core of our beliefs. Avatar Aang would be proud of her use of Energybending to disperse a potency of malevolence. Not only did she prove her capability as an Airbender and an Energybender… but Opal proved herself as a being of truth and compassion— sparing a terrorist’s life while bestowing the justice that he’d wreaked upon himself.

“These actions prove, if nothing else, that Opal has leaned our wisdoms, employed our teachings, and has taken the necessary steps in becoming an Airbending Master. May you always seek peace and bestow your love upon the world— spreading guidance and harmony to all you meet.”

Jinora carefully pulled back the hood that covered Opal’s tattooed head, and her soulmate stood— looking up at the crowd.

Applause filled the room, echoing through the halls and shaking the Air Temple to its core as faces lit up in excitement. The fourth Master in almost two centuries.

Though the room was filled with Acolytes and Airbenders… friends and family of the both of them… her sister and her father standing proudly to the side… in that moment there could only ever be Opal and Jinora, in love and at peace.

“I adore you,” Jinora whispered.
Opal turned and gave her Soulmate a tight, loving hug— and she reciprocated the gesture (nearly bursting into tears). Around them, Airbenders carefully and spiritually Bent the smoke of incense. Tolling rang through Jinora’s ears as the smoke resonated the chimes above their heads, but at that moment it mattered little; she was too busy pouring out every fiber of her love into the hug— smiling as Opal whispered a million declarations of love, over and over, into her ears.

She decided that the blue mixed rather well with Opal’s skin tone— and brought out her absolutely beautiful olive eyes.

Indeed, the azure tattoos illuminated the room when the dancing began, after the ceremony.

“You’re the most beautiful woman in the world… you always have been and you forever shall be,” the younger Airbender whispered.

Opal blushed a little, but didn’t say anything, only allowing Jinora to twirl her around as soft music played in the background. Others were dancing to the melodies of instruments, but they were dancing to the rhythm of their own heartbeats— one entity.

“I’m very fortunate, aren’t I?”

 Somehow, she knew that the question was about more than just tattoos and ceremonies.

“Yes you are, Opal Beifong. And don’t you forget it.”

“Never in a million years,” the older girl hummed, twirling Jinora around into a dip.

Right then and there, Jinora stood up straight and rested her head on Opal’s chest, breathing in a relaxing scent of cinnamon and closing her eyes. The Beifong wrapped her sore and newly decorated arms around Jinora’s shoulders and let sky blue fingers weave through short brown hair.

She could’ve fallen asleep right then and there, lost in Opal’s comfortable arms.

“I’m so proud of you,” Jinora murmured, once they’d retired to bed for the night.

Opal let a few tears escape the corners of her eyes and buried herself further into her soulmate’s bosom, reveling in the feeling of safety and coziness and affection.

“You’ve worked so hard to find love within yourself, love surrounding you. You’ve overcome everything the universe has thrown at you, Opal. I can feel hope in your heart and compassion in your eyes. Tranquility in your soul.”

“I’ve fallen for a poet,” the Beifong mused.
“And she’s fallen for you.”

“Over and over. In every lifetime.”

“In every lifetime,” Jinora repeated, kissing Opal’s newly tattooed forehead.

“Jinora…”

“Hmm?”

“I was… I was in such a dark place… and you pulled me up and told me to fix my own problems… you never coddled me… you never showed me anything but strength and determination… thank you so much…”

Soft lips pressed against each other in the darkness, and slight whimpers escaped gasping mouths. Hands gripped each other and teeth grazed at sensitive spots as both apologies and whispers of forgiveness floated through the air.

It is well known of course, even in the deepest corners of the Universe, that one will never fix a broken object if they leave it alone to crumble and rot— but fortunately Jinora and Opal would always be there to fix each other… to encourage redemption and enlightenment…

To love one another.

Such as all Soulmates should.
Chapter Summary

“I can't control the wind but I can adjust the sail.”

— Ricky Skaggs

"You’ll keep in touch this time, right?" Kuvira asked hesitantly, fiddling with her sister’s hands.

Opal’s eyes met hers and she pressed their foreheads together— closing her olive eyes and reaching up to cup her sister’s face.

“Of course. Sometimes I’ll be able to call… but mostly writing. We want… we want to go everywhere. Help people.”

Kuvira smiled, and Opal saw a few tears threatening to spill over. Together, the two sisters moved into a long, strong embrace— swaying a little on the spot to the jazz playing on the radio. Opal could feel the Metalbender trembling a little, as though she were struggling not to burst into tears. With a smirk, eyes closed, she reached up and gave Kuvira a hearty pat on the back.

“You’ll take care of your husband for me? Make sure Baatar doesn’t blow himself up?”

“I promise,” Kuvira whispered, her voice muffled in Opal’s shoulder.

The Airbender let out a small sigh and leaned the side of her head against Kuvira’s for a few moments longer, before pulling away and allowing her sister to press a long kiss to her forehead.

“I love you.”

“I love you too.”

Opal fiddled with the ropes and lines— she wasn’t sure quite what to do with the boat, but Jinora’s Water Tribe ancestry did not come without many sailing lessons from her Aunt Kya and Uncle Bumi. Nevertheless, she tied a line around a cleat just like her Soulmate taught her, and walked back up the marble steps to say goodbye to friends and family one last time.

The salty humid wind felt different on her now bald scalp, and she silenced a shiver before it might tremble her shoulders.

“We love you so much, sweetie,” Pema whispered, clutching onto Jinora like a lifeline.

“May you find so much wisdom on your travels,” Tenzin murmured with a smile, stroking his dark beard and smiling proudly.

Jinora moved to give her father a long hug as well— Opal could feel their energies soaring through the atmosphere like rockets or shooting stars. Master Tenzin raised a weary and wrinkled hand to
ruffle his daughter’s hair… it made Opal miss her own father something terrible.

Perhaps… she might meet his reincarnation in her travels.

That would be something to look forwards to; and she didn’t doubt its possibility— for if she’d learned anything… it was that destiny had the strangest and most beautiful ways of unfolding.

Tenzin’s silver eyes gazed into her olive ones, and the Leader of the Air Nation gave her a low, respectful bow. She reciprocated the action for half a moment, and then felt strong arms swoop her into a hug— the old man resting his bearded chin on the top of her newly tattooed head. Shocked for a few seconds, Opal relaxed and leaned into the hug.

“Take care of my baby girl,” the Master whispered.

“Of course,” she murmured, closing her eyes and pressing her face into fine silken Air Nomad robes.

“I trust you, Opal Beifong. We all do— change the world and make our culture proud.”

Her cheeks went a little pink and she smiled at his encouragement, stepping away from the embrace and dipping into another respectful bow out of habit.

“I guess you’re really leaving,” Korra sniffled, her usually tough demeanor faltering.

“Kor— you’ve been the most amazing friend a person could ask for,” Opal whispered, pressing a kiss to the Avatar’s forehead.

“And you were the coolest roommate in the world, I’ll always remember how awesome your blueberry pancakes tasted.”

“I left the recipe with Baatar,” the Energybender whispered.

Korra threw her arms around Opal and picked her up, swinging her around in a circle, “YOU’RE THE BEST PERSON EVER!!”

Bolin, Hikaru, Mako, and her Aunt Lin also came up— giving her big hugs and whispering words of love and encouragement. For the first time in her life… Opal felt like she was doing the right thing. A path to travel down that actually made sense.

Something was different when Asami walked up.

“Thank you,” the blind woman whispered.

“For what?” Opal chuckled.

She already knew the answer, though.

Asami softly smiled, raising her hand and allowing a small cyclone to twirl among her fingertips— traveling in a circle around her hand, as though it were a ladybug crawling around on her palm.

“For giving me this gift… I cannot express the magnitude of my thankfulness. I don’t think I ever
would have understood my pains and sorrows. I wouldn’t have learned change like this.”

“You’d already gone through some pretty drastic stuff,” Opal pointed out.

“True… but you allowed me to grow.”

Without a moment’s hesitation— Opal threw her arms around the ex-Equalist, pulling her in for a strong hug and smiling when she felt Asami embrace her with the same ferocity. Their Energies… tethered.

They’d vanquished a great evil.

Together.

“And thank you, Asami. For… for inspiring me to help others. The greatest spiritual teachings are simply good friends learning from one another,” Opal whispered wisely.

“So it seems,” the other woman laughed.

“Asami?”

“Yeah?”

“You’re going to make a wonderful mother, and you make Korra so happy… you motivate people… I know what it’s like to feel guilty over past decisions… but you’re going to have a good life from now on, okay?”

The corners of the blind woman’s mouth curled into a smile, and she nodded with hope in her eyes.

“Just make sure to listen to your own words, alright?” Asami asked, giving Opal another pay on the back.

“Wow.”

“What?” Jinora asked, carefully navigating at the helm.

“It looks so small.”

“Air Temple Island?”

“Yeah… the statue of Aang just keeps shrinking and shrinking,” Opal observed.

“We can always meditate and visit him, whenever you want,” Jinora chuckled, sheeting in a line and allowing the wind to speed them along— out of the bay.

The Energybender smiled, sitting down and giving her Soulmate a long, loving kiss. Her lover’s fingers reached up and cupped the back of Opal’s neck— pulling closer and touching sore, newly inked skin. With a whimper, she leaned into the kiss even more and rested her hand on Jinora’s
thigh.

Wind rattled the ropes and sails— prompting the boat’s skipper to return her attention to navigation.

“You’re going to sink us with that shameless behavior,” Jinora teased, leaning back into her seat and fiddling with the tiller. “Go sheet in the jib!”

“Aye, aye, Captain!”

She heard Jinora chuckle and out of the corner of her eyes, she saw a head shake in amusement. Calloused, tough hands pulled in a line and the sail at the front of the boat tightened— tipping the boat just enough that they began to speed up even more than before.

“Fair winds and calm seas,” Opal pompously called to the skies.

“That’s how I like it,” Jinora chuckled. “Although, an Airbender doesn’t run out of wind if she doesn’t want to.”

“No, I wouldn’t suppose so,” the older girl laughed.

Opal sat down in the wooden seat and leaned up against her Soulmate, who draped an arm around her shoulder— their fingers intertwining as they watched gulls fly overhead.

“Where are we headed first?”

“I haven’t the slightest idea.”

“Sounds perfect.”

“Airbending Masters? Oh, but of course you may stay in our town— wait just one moment please! Otaku! Get in here you little… just one moment, please,” the Mayor apologized, bowing profusely.

Somewhere around eleven p.m., they’d landed at one of the smaller Fire Nation islands— several of the old, toothless fishermen pointing them to the village palace for food and shelter. Indeed, tattoos and Air Nomad robes seemed to widen eyes and brighten moods up. Nobody wanted to turn down such an endangered culture.

“I didn’t realize that this was a perk,” Opal whispered with a giggle.

Jinora rolled her eyes, “Indiana Jones would try to put us in a museum— so rare are our people. Us Masters even more so; we’re practically tourist attractions.”

A young boy appeared at the door with a slightly groggy expression, “Right this way, ma’am’s.”

The two women looked at each other with skepticism and then back at the boy, following hip through the village palace to a guest wing— where he tried to show them to two separate rooms.

“Erm, no— we’ll be sleeping in one bedroom,” Opal huffed with a raised eyebrow.
“What, like lesbians?” the boy blurted.

Jinora rolled her eyes and shut the door in his face. The shadow in the crack of light indicated that he was a little too dumbstruck to move from his place for a few moments— and then shrugging and trudging back to bed.

“I suppose we have to get used to that,” Opal sighed.

Jinora flopped down on the bed, “Well… traveling with you is worth it— at least he’s not a pervert who wants to get off watching us.”

“You don’t know that there aren’t security cameras.”

“Honestly, at this point I don’t care— what are they going to do, publish photos of us in tabloid magazines? I’m too tired to care. Now come here…”

A pale hand mischievously flicked the lights off, and Opal found herself being pulled towards the bed— any concerns of teenage boys spying on them flying out the window.

“I must say… I wasn’t expecting two Airbenders to join us for breakfast,” a young woman commented, flashing a curious look at her father, the Mayor, for answers.

“We’re Nomads— we stopped here for the night and were fortunate enough to cross the path of your father’s kindness,” Jinora said carefully.

The young woman, of Fire Nation descent with brown hair and golden eyes, shrugged and passed them plates. The boy from last night, Otaka, began serving the family and guests— dressed in a proper servant’s uniform rather than the pajamas that he’d been wearing when they’d arrived in the dead of night.

“Thank you again for giving us a place to stay for the night,” Opal smiled.

The Mayor scarfed down a few forkfuls of food before giving them a nod, “We’re always happy to meet Airbending Masters!”

“Yes… haven’t had any visits since after Harmonic Convergence,” the golden-eyed girl commented, her spoon swirling around her bowl. “Whisked our Airbenders away without a moment’s hesitation.”

“Arata! Do not use that tone with our guests!”

The golden-eyed woman stood and sauntered out of the dining room with a sneer.

“What’s wrong? Whatever we did, I’m terribly sorry it has caused this conflict,” Jinora apologized.

The Mayor sighed and waved her off, “It’s not something you directly caused… my other child, Saburo, joined the Airbenders of the Western Air Temple. Ever since… Arata’s always been slightly jealous.”

“She’s a Nonbender?” Opal asked, looking at Jinora with a glint in her eyes.

“Well… yes…”

“Would you excuse us? I think I might find it energizing to have a talk with your daughter,” the Beifong smiled innocently, setting down her napkin and wandering out into the garden.
“So you want to be an Airbender?”

The golden-eyed girl turned with a raised eyebrow, “Says who?”

Opal shook her head, “I can sense it… your energy is awfully bright, you know that?”

“What would you know about energy?” Arata scoffed.

The Beifong couldn’t stop laughing, only putting a hand on the brown-haired woman’s shoulder. A glare like the one this other woman would’ve scared the old Opal, but now she was too entertained to find herself afraid.

“You don’t have to join the Air Nomads… certainly no one’s forcing you… but I think your brother might love to see you train alongside him at the Western Air Temple.”

“Wait… are you serious? You can actually make me an Airbender? What are you, a Lion Turtle?”

Opal shrugged with a sly grin, “The next best thing.”

Golden eyes widened, “I… um… alright…”

“Relax. Kneel down and close your eyes.”

Atara dropped down before her with a curious expression on her face— waiting for something to happen. Opal gently rested her thumb on the woman’s forehead and allowed tethered Energies to swirl around.

Needless to say, the Mayor sent the two girls on their way with two months’ worth of supplies and a hundred stammers of gratitude.

“Where to next?”

“Only destiny knows,” Opal laughed.
Silver Eyes

Chapter Summary

“I died as a mineral and became a plant,
I died as a plant and rose to animal,
I died as an animal and I was Man.
Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?”

― Rumi

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Some Time Later:

Town by town, they wandered. Eventually, they sold the boat and began wandering by foot—the way Opal had after the attack on Zaofu. Every step of the way, they held hands.

One by one, Nonbenders became Airbenders—with the mere press of a thumb. Every single person was given the decision—and every time the answer was yes; too poor to feed themselves, or perhaps they needed Airbending to help with farming. Many who were given the gift chose to become Nomads, like Opal and Jinora—inspired by their stories of traveling. Many left to seek the Air Temples, broad and hopeful smiles painted on their faces.

She could not bend every energy she came across—only those she was tethered to. Perhaps this was the will of the Universe; a way to keep her powers in check. Those who glowed, standing out in crowds, beckoning to her like lighthouses in a fog.

Age mattered not—from the frail old woman with a wise smile on her face to the bright eyes of a young toddler, his weary parents unsure of Opal’s legitimacy as an Energybender. Many of the people who became Airbenders were roughly their own ages; people who were just beginning to come to crossroads in their lives.

People who needed the winds of change.

Race mattered not—they wandered from the Fire Nation to the Northern Water Tribe down to the Earth Kingdom. There was always someone who needed the gift of Airbending, no matter the color of their skin or the blood running through their veins.

“This is delightful,” Jinora smiled, taking a bite of the vegetarian Khao Soi that a young farmer had cooked for them.

“Oh, but of course,” the teenage Earth Kingdom boy called from the kitchen—currently using his
newfound Airbending to cool down a steaming hot plate of vegetables. “I always love cooking for others.”

“The Air Nomads work as a community to grow crops… they really do need people with farming experience… and I’m sure that they would love to have you experiment with different dishes,” Opal said enthusiastically, taking a bite and nearly moaning at how amazing the food tasted.

The boy’s green eyes sparkled with hope, “This is such a blessing… not many people have been buying my harvests, and I can’t afford to keep the farm for much longer… but… if what you say is true… then I would love to join.”

Jinora’s heart soared and she felt tears welling in her eyes. To not be the one of the only Airbenders in the world… the change that her culture was going through… it was truly wonderful.

Opal took out a map and let him lean over her shoulder, “The nearest temple is here— the Northern Air Temple. It was attacked a while back and destroyed, but the Air Nation worked tirelessly to build something new out of the rubble.”

The boy nodded, “Whatever help they need, I’d be glad to give it.”

“Wow. The air is so clear here,” Opal mused, looking at each tiny white dot in the sky and allowing herself to sense their energies.

Stargazing was completely amplified out in the middle of the forest, their backs against warm dirt ground, legs intertwined as they stared at the heavens in wonder. Tonight was apparently a meteor shower as well—and the older girl truly hoped that they would get to witness a few whizzing comets burn through the atmosphere. She wondered if she’d be alive when Sozin’s Comet returned… it couldn’t hurt to make plans, and there was no one she would rather witness it with than Jinora.

“I used to climb the roof back on Air Temple Island… but the Republic City horizon was too polluted to see anything— when we finally began searching for Airbenders, I’d spend nights out on the deck of the ship. Just watching the stars above me,” Jinora smiled.

Opal took her lover’s hand, allowing the younger girl to feel the energy of the cosmos with her—every planet, every star, every galaxy. And yet they were connected to the dynamisms surrounding them; trees and shrubberies and all the little sorts of creatures that come out at night. The feeling of flying through the Universe with Jinora and yet never leaving the ground was one of incredible magnitude—feeling her heart race in her chest and planets crash into each other billions of miles away in another galaxy.

How wonderful it felt to be able to even sense all the vitalities in the Universe… how could she have lived twenty-one years of her life without this wondrous ability.

“We are one,” Jinora whispered, to no one in particular.

And yet it seemed as though the whole world were listening.
Opal wondered if…

Could she?

Her mind fell partially blank— partially concentrating on the energy of the mortal world and… whatever might be… beyond. Past one’s life, and into the next; she thought of reincarnation and where a soul might end up… if she might sense a tethered being’s rebirth.

Of all the souls she’d found herself connected to in this life time… every soul she’d Energybent…

The farmer boy from a few days ago.

Every villager she’d come across in recent travels. Humble peasants who needed the gift of Airbending to feed themselves and their families, people who were more than happy to begin a life of a nomad and search for enlightenment…

The Fire Nation girl, Arata.

The Lieutenant.

Suki.

Asami.

Samsara.

Beyond her past life… beyond the World of the Spirits… into another lifetime, severed from Korra and Raava… Opal felt the energy of a young baby girl— somewhere in the Southern Earth Kingdom… her dear friend and ex-lover had been reincarnated…

Silver eyes…

“I know where I’d like to go to next,” she whispered softly, her eyes still closed.

“Southern Earth Kingdom… Samsara,” Jinora murmured back.

Of course, she’d forgotten that their hands were still intertwined— that whatever energy Opal detected would be sensed by her Soulmate as well. She turned her head just so, that she might look into brown eyes by the light of the moon.

“You sure?”

“Yes.”

“Well then… we’ll make our way that direction,” Opal smiled, pressing a kiss to her lover’s lips.

They spend the rest of the night cuddling and staring up at the stars— no longer trying to sense any energies, but instead merely gazing like lovey-dovey teenagers. Jinora’s hand rested on her thigh, and the older girl peppered kisses along her Soulmate’s jaw as they watched meteors fly back and forth in the night sky— as though the gods were having a food fight among the stars.
A Week Later:


A weary looking woman, who’d obviously gone through pregnancy recently, answered the door—a small bundle in her arms as she looked up at the two girls with tired green eyes.

“Can I help you?”

Opal and Jinora looked at each other, and then back at the woman—bowing respectfully.

“We just… we wanted to meet your child.”

Startled, the mother gave them a long, inquisitive look… deciding that they were trustworthy. She shifted closer, unwrapping the bundle just enough that they could see a small face poking out—indeed, silver eyes full of cheerfulness gazed back up at them. No more than seven or eight months old… which meant…

“It’s her,” Jinora whispered.

Opal nodded, feeling something soar through her heart.

Joy.

“What do you mean, it’s her? I knew the next Avatar was going to be Earth Kingdom, but I didn’t think you could find her so quickly—how did Avatar Korra die?” the mother instantly questioned with raised eyebrows.

“No, no, no, no! Avatar Korra is still alive… your daughter is the reincarnation of someone else—a friend of ours,” Jinora explained.

“Oh… well… is that all you needed?” the mother asked, wishing to continue with her chores.

“May I just… really quickly?”

With a nod of approval, Opal reached forwards and cradled the little baby in her arms; feeling a sense of tranquility when a tiny little mouth broke into a smile—as though this infant knew *exactly* who she was playing with. Teeny fingers tried to pull onto her hand; as though this child wished to hold onto Opal forever.

“Enough of that silly rubbish,” the Beifong chuckled, slowly and gently breaking free from the little babe’s grasp.

The infant girl whimpered a little bit when she couldn’t see Opal’s face.

She knew unerringly who the two Airbenders were.
Her voice had been too quiet for the mother to hear, but she was sure that Jinora had been paying attention— warm brown eyes giving her a sympathetic gaze as the mother returned her child to the crib and bid them goodbye. The two women walked down the dirt path and adjusted their travel bags— hiking down the highway road that led away from the small Earth Kingdom village.

“I hope that… you found a moment of clarity,” Jinora whispered.

“More than that, I think. Thank you.”

“Of course,” the younger girl smiled, taking Opal’s hand.

Pale fingers ran along ebony knuckles in a soothing circular pattern, and the Beifong woman let herself finally feel at peace— as though all of her life had tumbled together into a puzzle… fitting together to create a clear picture. On the cosmological scale, in such a minute period of time so much had changed. So many entities had caused her pain… namely herself. But out of the wounding of her soul and Chi… she’d discovered so much about herself— gaining new skills and revelations.

Jinora.
Korra.
Kuvira.
Asami.
Bolin.
Hikaru.
Bao.
Tenzin.
Her mother.
Aunt Lin.
Kya.
Samsara.
The Lion Turtle.
Aang and Roku.

Thank-you letters didn’t seem like enough to all the people who’d helped her out… mere words weren’t satisfactory. Dozens of people had selflessly inspired her to be… herself. Besides— how would she give a thank-you note to a Lion Turtle?

She’d find a way to express her gratitude.

Nothing stops a Beifong woman.
Opal had become more than just a human being… she’d become a person, balanced within and striving for balance throughout the world surrounding her. As an Airbender should strive to do; she would bring her love and wisdom to whoever might ask… demanding nothing in return… with a beautiful and kind beloved at her side.

Perhaps… what wrongs she’d committed… they would always be prevalent, not as consequence, but as a reminder to be whole, to be complete— not to base her decisions solely on the emotions of others but also on the reasoning and judgement that the Air Nomads had honed. To employ logic and humanity together in action. To take to her decisions as she might take to flight— allowing the world to swirl her around as the wind spun her glider through the sky.

To be a leaf?

Or to stand one’s ground as a rock?

Neither.

To move as a creature, in equilibrium with the environment surrounding her— whether Mortal or Spiritual. Physical element or a living being. To adapt. To evolve. To grow.

Opal Beifong.

Master Airbender.

Energybender.

Daughter of Suyin and Baatar.

Sister to Kuvira, Junior, Huan, Wing and Wei.

Lover of Jinora.

A free woman.

A small weight had found itself on her shoulder, and she looked over— Aina the Leafy Spirit was patiently snuggled into her collarbone; ready for whatever the trio might find themselves in. Opal reached up and gave them a scratch on their leafy green ears, laughing when the Spirit hugged her whole head.

“Where to next?” her Soulmate asked, pressing a kiss to the Spirit’s cheek.

She turned her gaze, staring into a pair of proud chestnut colored eyes and nearly drowning in the euphoria of Jinora’s love. Her heart skipped a few beats at the mere prospect of going out and seeing the world with this woman. To temples, to mountain ranges, to remote villages where they’ve never even heard of Avatars and Spirits. To the stars and back with this girl.

“To help; and whomever might ask for it,” Opal smirked.
Fingers interlaced, feet took confident steps down the dirt road— and for once in her usually calamitous, ridiculous life… everything seemed right.

Chapter End Notes

Leave comments :)

P.S. Maybe you caught it... But the last words opal whispered to the infant were the first words Samsara said to opal and jinora in the tree of time #goingonafeelstrip
To Bolin the Curator

Chapter Summary

“After all, isn't the purpose of the novel, or of a museum, for that matter, to relate our memories with such sincerity as to transform individual happiness into a happiness all can share?”

― Orhan Pamuk, The Museum of Innocence

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kuvira looked at the building in front of her, hands on her hips, with a pride that she’d never felt before. She’d created something… she’d never done that before.

Baatar kissed her on the cheek, “It’s magnificent.”

“You designed it.”

“But you built it— give yourself a pat on the back, Kuvy.”

She rolled her eyes and turned, sinking into his arms with a long, happy sigh. He chuckled and buried his face into her shoulder— both of their green eyes closed. With an amused hum, she realized that he was scratching her back, just how she liked it.

“Come on… let’s go inside… we’ve still got a lot of work to do,” Baatar smirked.

“Actually— our work is done. The rest is up to the Tweedledee and Tweedledum.”

“Mmhmm,” he hummed with a raised eyebrow. “Come on!”

She laughed as he excitedly pulled her inside the building, past tall glass double doors. Light streamed in through skylights— illuminating the marble flooring and the beautiful wooden walls. Layered metal crafted by Korra and herself created stunning shadows along blank canvases— the modern art section had been filled up very quickly by enthusiastic college students and young adults throughout Republic City.

The issue— a lack of historic relics… though she had a funny feeling someone would be taking care of that problem…

“Okay, Mommy, now we need to add a nose,” Chena instructed, her brow furrowed in an absolutely adorable way.
“Hmm… let’s see… how about this?” Korra asked, holding up a stick.

“That’ll work!” the little Waterbender smiled, snatching the piece of driftwood from her mother’s hand and sticking it into the sandy snowman that they had been sculpting.

“What are you going to name him?” Asami asked, sunbathing a few feet over in the sand.

“Um… Fluffy Toboggan!!” Korra smiled excitedly.

“No, it’s gotta be something sandy-sounding!” Chena argued, her hands on her hips as she studied her work of art.

Asami sat up and carefully walked over to Korra— slinging her hand around her wife’s waist. Chena continued her attempt to fashion a wig for the sand sculpture out of seaweed, and Korra pressed a kiss to the Airbender’s temple.

This was what fun felt like.

“I’ve got it!” Chena exclaimed eagerly, “Shelly Coral!”

Asami laughed, bending down and searching through the sand with her fingers until she found a slightly broken clam shell— straightening up and passing the piece to her daughter, who excitedly pressed the shell into the beach sculpture’s bosom.

“Sorta like a sandy Iron-Man,” Korra smirked, pressing a kiss to the top of Chena’s head.

“She’s beautiful!” Asami giggled.

“Mom!”

“What? I’m just making an assumption!” the blind woman grinned.

In a very Toph-like way, Chena playfully punched Asami’s arm— then tugging both of her parents along the shore.

“Can we go swimming?”

“You didn’t bring a towel,” Korra frowned.

“Sweetie, you control three separate elements that can dry us off,” Asami reminded her.

“Oh yeah… SURF’S UP!!”

Korra picked up a squealing Chena and ran into the water— the blind woman floating in the air to dive in; relishing the sudden cold of the water. She felt her daughter grab onto her and swam up to the surface of the bay.

The three battled in a splash-off as Asami tried to tackle her wife in the water— she should’ve known better than to challenge two Waterbenders in their element, though. She soon found herself being blasted in the face over and over, her mouth and nose filling with saltwater.

“Uncle! Uncle!” she laughed, falling over and sitting in the foot-deep section of the bay.

She heard sloshing as Korra picked up Chena and walked back up to the beach— both of them soaking wet and cackling like hyenas.
The moment her wife had set down their daughter, Asami managed to lift Korra up— setting the Avatar on her shoulders as the family walked back to the pier; leaving Shelly Coral to stand guard over the tide. Korra’s warm fingers tangled into Asami’s short wet hair and Chena’s hand clasped hers like a magnet to a fridge.

This was what fun felt like.

“Sweetie, you’re going to burn your hand if you do that,” Hikaru sighed, shifting the weight of a squirming Dequan in her arms.

“Reeeeeeelllllaaaaxxxxx, I got this,” Bolin smirked, adding a bit more oil to the frying pan.

The Firebender winced as a large flame burst up in front of her fiancé’s face— singeing his beard a little as he let out a startled “whoops!” Shaking her head, she handed off Dequan to Suki and budged her lover away from the wok.

“Alright, so maybe Mako always cooked this recipe, but I figured it couldn’t be that difficult,” Bolin whined sheepishly.

“How about you start on the drinks, then?” Hikaru laughed, kissing his cheek as she properly began cooking the stir fry.


“Kiki, will you get that?”

The Airbender excitedly shot over to the other side of the room, wrenching the door open and giving a shy Chena a playful hug. Together, the two of them raced into Suki’s room to play video games— Korra and Asami walking into the apartment and exchanging hugs with Bolin and Hikaru.

“I’m glad they get along— ever since Gyeong left Republic City, she’s been without a best friend,” the Firebender smiled, her arms still wrapped around her cousin’s shoulders.

“Korra, why is there so much sand in your hair?” Bolin asked curiously.

“Oh, whoops! You said I got it all out!” the Avatar accused to her wife.

Asami shrugged, waving her hand up and down in front of her eyes, “I honestly don’t know what you were expecting.”

Bolin and Hikaru laughed— the former pulling the sand out of Korra’s shoulder-length chestnut hair with Earthbending and flicking it out the window (the family had opted to move into a waterfront house with the Probending winnings— one with much more room for the kids). Korra stuck out her tongue at Asami and Hikaru playfully slapped the Avatar on the arm.
“Come on, then, we need someone to set the table!”

Dequan crawled across the floor and Asami picked him up with a small chuckle.

“How’s my favorite little boy?” the blind woman whispered— nudging her nose against his.

In response, the infant gurgled and clasped both of the Airbender’s cheeks in his stubby little hands. She blew a raspberry and Dequan laughed as she sat down on the couch with him. Hikaru smiled at the scene as she doled out food onto plates.

_Knock. Knock. Knock._

“Bo, can you get that?”

The Earthbender opened the door and was instantly engulfed in a hug from Mako— Kuvira and Baatar squeezing past to hug Korra, Hikaru, and Asami.

Mako kissed Hikaru on the cheek, “How are you doing?”

“Oh you know, being a Probending Coach and a mother of three.”

“Three?” the other Firebender asked.

“Bolin is such a goof that he counts as a kid.”

“Tell me about it!” Asami grunted, as Baatar picked up Dequan and Kuvira jumped into the blind woman’s lap, giving her a long hug.

“He’s getting bigger every day,” Junior grunted, pretending to groan under the infant’s weight.

Suki and Chena ran out into the living room and gave Kuvira a hug (she was, after all, the coolest aunt ever— much to Kya’s dismay). Mako hugged Korra and Asami, giving the Avatar the police news of the day… in his usual boring monotone that rivaled the teacher from _Ferris Bueller._

“Dinnertime!!” Hikaru called out.

Bolin carefully set plates down on the dining table, and the ragtag family scrambled to find seats. Chena and Suki sneakily tried to grab servings from the desert table, only to have their hands slapped away by Baatar.

“Korra, chew your food before you choke and Kuvira has to perform CPR on you _again._”

“Can you pass the Sriracha?”

“Oh Raava, this is amazing— where did you learn to cook like this?”

“Mommy, I have to go to the bathroom!”

Hikaru laughed as she had another sip of sake— this took the rice-cake as the best family dinner she’d ever had. And there would be so many more to come.
“To Yasuko and Hiroshi Sato!”
“Hear, hear!”

“To Shun, Suki, and Yat-Sen!”
“Hear, hear!”

“To Baatar and Suyin!”
“Hear, hear!”

“To Tonraq and Senna!”
“Hear, hear!”

“To the Chief and the Hippie!!”
“HEAR, HEAR!!”

“HIP HIP HOORAY!!”

“OLD LADY LESBIANS!!”

The adults were profoundly drunk at this point, the kids playing video games down in the basement and babysitting Dequan. In fact, the only two who weren’t drunk were Kuvira and Asami (albeit the Airbender was slightly tipsy).

“I guess I’m handing the reins over to you guys,” Kuvira smiled. “We’ve still got a lot of Republic City to rebuild… but we’ll help out with filling up the empty spaces when we can.”

Asami smiled, taking the keys from her best friend and passing them to her cousin— who looked at them for three seconds before drunkenly dropping them on the floor.

“I still can’t believe this.”

“Believe it; you’re officially a curator!” the Metalbender laughed, as her fumbling, slightly incoherent husband pulled her into his lap.

“There’s so much to do— we need someone to manage the museum while we’re gone…”

“How about the Airbenders? You c-could always hire Mmmmula— he llloves culture. And Kai could oooopen a café in the lobby!” Korra slurred.

“Not a bad idea…”

“I can r-run the museum while you’re gone,” Bolin hiccuped, sloppily kissing Hikaru’s hair.

Kuvira and Asami laughed, but then looked at each other curiously.

“Again… not a bad idea…”
“He doesn’t know a thing about running a business,” the Metalbender pointed out.

“You do, though— just keep him in check for us,” Asami huffed with a smirk, taking another sip of whiskey.

“This isn’t a good plan…” Kuvira warned.

“TO Bolin the Curator!! May you supervise and cherish all art!!” Korra called out.

“HEAR, HEAR!!!”

Kuvira sighed and went to go check on the kids, rubbing her brow in annoyance as the adults all laughed together like a pack of hyenas.

_____________________________________________________

The Next Day:

“Have you got everything?” Asami asked, placing a bag in the backseat.

“Sssshhhh… not so loud,” Hikaru groaned, rubbing her head and drinking a sip of coffee.

“Come on, mommy!! We’re going to go treasure hunting!!” Chena squealed impatiently. “We’re like Indiana Jones!!”

Asami picked up her adopted daughter and began singing the movie’s theme song as Korra brought out a few more bags— stuffing them into the SUV that the White Lotus had loaned them. With a laugh, she handed her cousin-in-law two ibuprofen pills and kissed her on the cheek.

“You guys are going to have so much fun,” the Avatar whispered, pressing another kiss to Chena’s forehead.

“Wish you could come with us, Mommy,” the little Waterbender pouted.

“I know, sweetie… I have to stay here and protect the world, okay? Don’t worry— I’m still going to the Air Strip with you,” Korra smiled.

Being a mother and the Bringer of Balance was difficult sometimes, and no doubt had its sacrifices. Still… they’d be alright. Suki called shotgun, using a blast of Air to jump up into the passenger’s seat. Asami tucked Chena into her seat, pulling her seatbelt around and clicking it in. Korra slid in beside her daughter— her wife on the other side. Hikaru slid into the driver’s seat and started the car, blowing a final kiss to a teary Bolin, cradling Dequan in his arms.

“Say goodbye to Pabu!!” she laughed.

“Bye Pabu!!” Suki called out with a giggle.

Several attendants helped them load up the old Future Industries Airship— employees of the Art
Museum and the archeological team. Most of them were graduate students fresh out of commencement; nevertheless, the cousins were happy to have the extra pairs of hands on board.

Korra pressed a kiss against her wife’s lips and smiled as Chena gave her a strong hug, her daughter’s face buried in her stomach. A few tears slipped out of her eyes as she stroked her little Waterbender’s scraggily black hair with a warm smile.

“Be good to Mom, okay?”

“Okay,” Chena’s muffled voice murmured, a tiny head nodding into her hoodie.

“I love you, sweetie.”

“I love you too, Mommy.”

Standing on the deck of the Airship— dubbed The Yasuko— her family waved as the zeppelin began to lift into the air.

Korra’s heart leapt and she waved back enthusiastically— feeling even more tears clot her eyes, blocking her vision of her daughter and wife. Her sleeves instinctively wiped the blotches away… and when she looked back up the Airship had already disappeared into the clouds.

Another employee of the airport offered to drive her back, but Korra couldn’t stop staring at the sky.

“Screw it,” she whispered.

The Avatar tossed the SUV keys to the confused employee and took off at a run.

Her eyes glowed white and power surged through her veins.

Fire erupted from her hands and her feet.

She shot into the air as fast as she could— chasing through the clouds.

Colliding with something orange and yellow, she left the Avatar State and blinked; falling down a few feet as someone grabbed onto her.

“ASAMI!!” she roared with a laugh— her wife managing to catch her.

They floated for a few moments among the clouds.

“I was going to come get you!” the Airbender laughed. “I was going to beg you to come with us!!”

“No need!!” Korra murmured, pressing her lips to her wife’s. “Republic City’s just going to have to deal with it!”

Together, they flew up to the Airship— hand in hand.
Chapter End Notes

awwwww

Leave comments!!
The Tomb of Shayu

Chapter Summary

“Perhaps home is not a place but simply an irrevocable condition.”

— James Baldwin, Giovanni's Room

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Nothing brings the dead back, certainly not spending years trying to exterminate innocent people. Tirelessly working to “avenge” others like you. Hatred and pain. How little it truly accomplishes besides that of fear, misery, and loss for all parties.

She’d been a force of terror.

There was a slight breeze in the engine room from a nearby vent, and Asami felt it wrap around her like a cloth— rustling her short black hair and reminding her of how much has changed.

Because in the end, she has grown. She comes from a background of earth and fire, standing your ground and controlling your energy. She goes through her life like air and water, learning freedom and experiencing change. How fitting that Asami has found balance within all the elements, and the one she loves most in the world knows such elements like the back of her hand.

How fitting that she has become blinded, and yet her eyes have never been more open.

She was once Asami Sato. A princess, destined to rule a corporation. A tycoon-to-be. And she was also full of so much hatred. Hatred that, when she meditates back on it, brings tears to her eyes. Asami Sato spent decades in pain.

Future Industries is lost, like a grain of sand in the Si Wong. But… in its disappearance… smaller businesses finally have the chance to grow, new innovations cropping up instead of the same model of car holding a permanent monopoly over everyone.

But that doesn’t mean Asami doesn’t still tinker around.

Indeed, she was currently playing around in the engine room— showing Chena the different parts of a class eleven Airship motor; not only was her daughter a Waterbender, but also very fond of mechanics. Chena picked at a small part and let out a huff of annoyance at the gizmo.

“This isn’t right,” her daughter mumbled. “There’s something off compared to the diagram.”

“Here, let me feel it… yeah, you’re right… this is missing a metal cylinder— we’re lucky that this is
the backup engine. Don’t worry, it’s not critical. We’ll get it fixed on our next stop,” the Airbender smiled, kissing her daughter on the top of the head.

“Mom!! You’ve got grease on your face!!”

“Do I? I guess I’ll have to wipe it ooooooffffffffffffff,” Asami teased, ruffling her motor-oil stained hands on Chena’s arms.

“Nooooooo!!”

Asami laughed as she picked up her daughter, carrying her out the engine room and down to the dormitories.

“Let’s get you cleaned up,” the blind woman chuckled— leading Chena into the master bathroom connected to her and Korra’s chambers.

After all, there’s nothing an Airbender loves more than being clean.

She’s found a new purpose, a new art. She dances her way through life, not like nobody’s watching — but instead because she finally has people who want to look at her.

More than anything, Asami realized that she didn’t need to be the business woman at the gazebo, or the Kyoshi-warrior version of herself, or that twisted Iron Warrior— none of the phantoms that the Fog of Lost Souls had shown her… she just needed to be herself to find peace.

“Mom?”

“Hmm?”

“Will you sing for me?”

“Sure sweetie,” Asami smiled, turning on the tap and pouring a bit of bubble bath into the tub. She let a small sigh escape her nose and opened her mouth to sing;

“Something in the way she moves
Attracts me like no other lover
Something in the way she woos me
I don't want to leave her now
You know I believe and how”

The blind woman carefully washed grime off her daughter’s face; kissing Chena on the top of the head. When they’d first given their daughter a bath a while back… they’d lifted the poor girl’s shirt
to find not only the bruises from abuse but also ribs jutting out from starving on the streets. Now, her daughter was well nourished and loved, certainly reflecting a glow in her voice as she tried to sing along to her mother.

“Somewhere in her smile she knows

That I don't need no other lover

Something in her style that shows me

I don't want to leave her now

You know I believe and how.”

The Airbender heard a small creak as Korra knelt down beside her, helping clean up their daughter and splashing Asami in the forehead with a sponge— chuckling about how she too was absolutely filthy from hanging out in the engine room. Asami minded little, there was something about water that she’d grown to love in the past few years.

“You're asking me will my love grow

I don't know, I don't know

You stick around and it may show

I don't know, I don't know.”

Eventually, Korra threw a towel around Asami’s neck— claiming that her wife would be in the tub next— and began washing Chena’s hair; the smell of strawberry shampoo filling the air. Jokingly, the Avatar also flicked a glob of shampoo into Asami’s short hair— quickly reaching up and lathering in the goop before the Airbender could stop her, and then dipping down to kiss Asami on the lips.

“Something in the way she knows

And all I have to do is think of her

Something in the things she shows me

I don't want to leave her now

You know I believe and how.”
There’s nothing an Airbender loves more than being clean, but there’s nothing Asami loved more than finally having family.

“Alright… I want this team heading down the West Wing, and you guys can go check out the East Wing— be careful of what you touch, ancient Sun Warriors were fond of tricks,” Hikaru laughed, tugging Asami along as they explored what she assumed was the North Wing.

The Tomb of Shayu, on a remote island in the Fire Nation, was filled with artifacts to bring back home to Republic City— granted permission from the surviving Sun Warriors themselves. Asami spent a good thirty minutes running her hands over the ancient hieroglyphics, feeling the little shapes and dips and curves in the stone with her fingers. Intricate… incredible. And so smooth, as though the sculptor had dedicated his life to this very wall. Perhaps he had.

“Come check out this bust,” Hikaru whispered, her voice guiding Asami across the room.

Her cousin’s warm fingers led hers to a masked sculpture— that of a demon or Spirit— cut from marble. Asami’s fingertips ran over each and every feature. She must’ve been the first person in thousands of years to touch this artifact— wearing latex gloves, of course.

“Amazing.”

“You know, Mom always challenged me to find something better than the Temple of Jiao-Long… I think we have her beat,” Hikaru chuckled, lightly tugging her cousin along.

She heard the *click!* of a camera as some young intern excitedly took photographs of all museum employees discovering artifacts to take back home. Another, smaller hand took hers, and Asami realized that Suki had joined them.

“Let’s see what’s down here!” the youngest girl piped up.

“All right, all right… let me just… get the… door…” Hikaru huffed, attempting to push open a stone door.

Asami helped out her cousin, leaning all her weight against the aperture. Eventually, with a loud groan, the stone slid against the floor and opened up an entrance for them.

“Oh wow!”

“What does it look like?” Asami asked with a raised eyebrow.

“There’s a skylight at the top of the room— place is covered in a few small Spirit vines, so watch your step. Big sarcophagus in the middle… I think we found the Tomb of Shayu, alright,” Hikaru murmured in awe.

“Amazing… Suki, don’t look!”

“What? Just a mummy.”
The blind woman rolled her eyes and let Hikaru lead her through the room— their footsteps echoing as they walked up to the large stone coffin. Asami’s fingers trailed along the stone markings… if she concentrated enough, she could trace the outline of a warrior girl depicted in the entablature’s glyphs.

“Damn,” the Firebender exclaimed in wonder.

“Shall we open her up just yet?”

“No,” Hikaru sighed, “We don’t want to ruin any preservations that might be set in to keep the body conserved. We can have Korra do some seismic sense to get a good look at her— so to speak.”

Asami smirked and walked around the rest of the room, detecting urns and pots with small puffs of air. Wooden boxes were filled with ancient jewelry; rings and bracelets and other gauds. Running her finger along the wall revealed that even more glyphs were carved into the stone here.

“Yeah, we sure as hell beat out our moms,” Asami laughed, her voice echoing through the Temple. “This’ll do them proud.”

_________________________________________________

There is earth in her blood.
Fire in her soul.
Air in her lungs.
Water in her heart.

Every element finds its place in Asami Sato— spinning her around and helping her grow, allowing her to become her own damn person. Sitting on the deck of The Yasuko, she closes her eyes and allows the energy around her to play with her soul; not the same manipulation that Opal Beifong is capable of, but rather simply appreciating the world and life surrounding her. The interns lounging around and discussing plans for their excavation at the Tomb. Suki and Hikaru playing Pai Sho up in the main hall of the Air Ship. Korra and Chena sparring— using the water vapor from clouds. Asami could sense it all.

It’s most peculiar… you’d think that after about a year and then some of having short, windswept hair that she’d be used to it… but Asami was always surprised when she reached up to tie back hair and realizing that there was no need. That there was hardly anything to tie back.

And she certainly woke up every day expecting to see Korra’s cerulean eyes, chestnut hair, and beautiful dark skin. In fact… she wouldn’t even really know what Chena looked like, if not for her wife’s descriptions. Not that it mattered, Asami loved her daughter more than anything in the world. She loved her family so much that sometimes the wind felt knocked out of her lungs just thinking about it.
How much had changed.

Still listening to all the hustle and bustle of the Museum’s archeology team on the Air Ship, alongside her own family, Asami thought of her parents.

Yasuko, who she’d known as perfect and flawless… had chosen to shut out her family for the sake of her husband and daughter. It panged Asami’s heart to think that, had they just lived on Kyoshi Island, she might still have a mother. And yet…

“That’s what your father has taught you to do. The love you have for your mother and the love that Yasuko taught you is… locked away. You’ve been scared to let it out—you’re afraid that if you do… you’ll lose what you have left of her.

“You are loved Asami— by all those around you. Above all… you’re loved by Korra. Immensely. I’m not asking you to let go of your mother; I’m asking you to look inside your heart and accept that… that she’s gone.”

The former engineer had felt the most loss not when her mother had died, but when she’d destroyed her life to seek revenge on all Benders. How funny that, when she’d first kissed Korra— she’d flown into a fit of rage… thinking that she had tarnished her mother’s memory… when in reality she’d committed something much, much worse by shooting Hikaru. That had been the start of an avalanche, really, that’d been the turning point in Asami’s life—the transition from Equalist to refugee to a warrior to a victim to an Airbender to victorious… to a wife and a mother.

And her father… how she lied to him— over and over. Again and again. Shouting at a broken and desolate man in a cell in Zaofu… reuniting with him only to have him ripped away for a final time. At least she’d been given a fortunate chance; to be able to say goodbye to Hiroshi… to have him accept Korra as her wife… in his final moments he’d been nothing but proud of her. He’d truly been a father.

Their ashes had been mixed together— and Asami knew Yasuko and Hiroshi would meet again in the next life… tears dripping down her eyes when she thought of how happy they’d been and how much she loved her parents, even after all the pain she’d gone through.

The blind woman took a deep sigh and allowed herself to sever the guilt once and for all, just like that silly lillyweed smoking hippie had taught her.

All that grief…
All that hatred...
All that regret…

Taking it and letting it flow away like sand in the Si Wong.

And now more than ever, it seemed the easiest thing to do—to let go and let negativity float away and be replaced with… gratitude.
“Spirits…” Asami murmured. “That was… really… really… good.”

Korra softly kissed one of her breasts— her lips soothing a bite mark she’d left behind in her passion and haste to pleasure her wife. Asami was still coming down from a fantastic blissful orgasm, staring up at the ceiling and gasping out of breath as her fingers reached out for Korra’s face.

“I love you,” the Avatar murmured, lips slowly traveling up her neck.

Practice made perfect— she had some damn good orgasms to back that statement up.

With a smirk, Asami lifted her head just enough to meet her mouth with Korra’s, a tear sliding down her cheek as she basked in how soft and indulging her wife’s mouth was— in truth ‘twas a feature that always amazed her. Korra sighed a little into her lips and smooth fingers stroked Asami’s jaw, pulling her even closer into the kiss. The blind woman bit down a little on her wife’s bottom lip and grinned into the kiss when Korra moaned.

Breaking apart, she pressed a kiss to her Soulmate’s nose, “I love you, too.”

“We never did get to have a honeymoon, did we?”

Asami smiled, “I don’t need to see the world to let you know how much I love you.”

“Ha ha ha, shut up,” Korra sarcastically groaned.

Her pale, dexterous fingers reached up to ruffle her wife’s hair— their lips meeting again with giggles in between kisses.

“How about we show Chena the Spirit World sometime? Go through and see the portals, the Tree of Time, have tea with Iroh… and go back down to visit your parents, of course. I’m sure they’d love to teach Chena proper Water Tribe warrior hunting!!” Asami laughed, trying to imitate Tonraq’s deep, manly voice.

Korra let out a hum of approval, “Would be nice to introduce her to her Grandparents… of course that means we have to go back to Kyoshi Island— Yat-Sen would love to meet her, too.”

“There’s always more artifacts to find and temples to explore in the South, and nearby Kyoshi Island,” the ex-heiress whispered. “If you’re willing to put up with boring, nerdy historians and interns.”

Korra kissed her wife on the forehead before wrapping an arm around Asami’s waist and snuggling into her chest— rapidly falling asleep. The blind woman felt lips pressing into her skin curl into a smile on the spot just above her heart. Her hands ran up and down Korra’s smooth, muscular back as her wife let out a long yawn.

“Sami… Sato… I’d follow you to the… end of the world… and back…” the Avatar murmured, slowly letting dreams overcome her.

Asami smiled, pulling the covers over herself and her soulmate and knowing… deep down in her heart and every fiber of her being…

She was finally where she belonged.
Well... I guess it's over.

Thank you to everyone who read this story, everyone who stuck through it to the end!! Thank you to all the critics and commentators who wanted to let me know when I'd wrenched their hearts out (I'll let you in on a secret, I tossed my own damn feels around writing this story, too). Thank you to Silenceabounds for paying for artwork for this wonderful story, thank you to lexitania for being an active commentator and my personal cheerleader, thank you to Katatonyc, who's working on some artwork for Hikaru (yay!), and most of all, thank you to everyone who left Kudos on this fanfic.

I had so much fun writing this story, and I honestly didn't think I could do it... I certainly didn't anticipate writing approximately 230,000 words within two months, and I'm honestly not sure what I'm going to do with all this free time.

Just kidding, I'm going to write. Obviously.

I'm probably not going to do fanfiction for a while, not because I don't have any ideas for literature... but because I need to take a break from the Krew for a while. Rest assured, they were all fantastic characters to write, from Spiritual Demigod Opal Gayfong to the slimy extremist Lieutenant to Ass Kicking Elderly Ty Lee. I had altogether way too much fun writing this story and I'm so happy that you guys enjoyed it.

Lots of Love,
Ziraseal
Here, have some fan art

Chapter Summary

Here's some Hikaru art!!
Lava cinnamon bun official art by Katatonye!!

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