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AVATAR
THE LAST AIRBENDER™



TOPH BEIFONG'S METALBENDING ACADEMY



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TOPH BEIFONG'S METALBENDING ACADEMY



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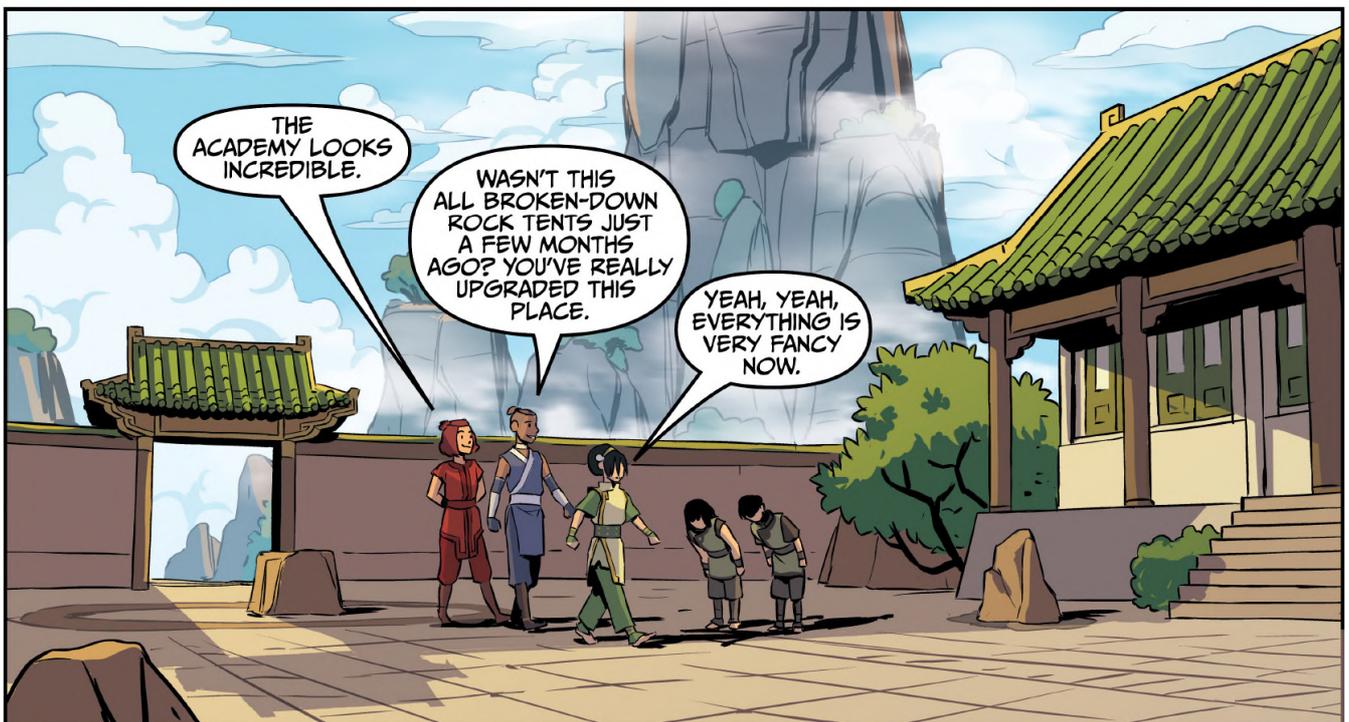
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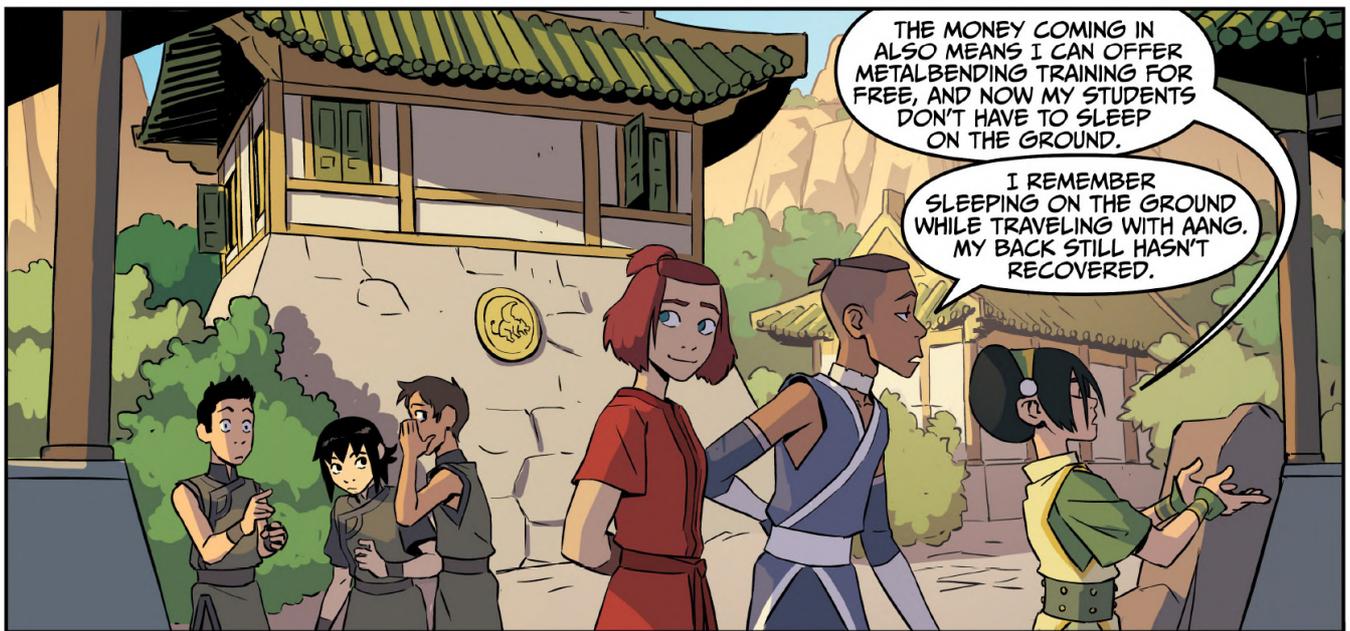
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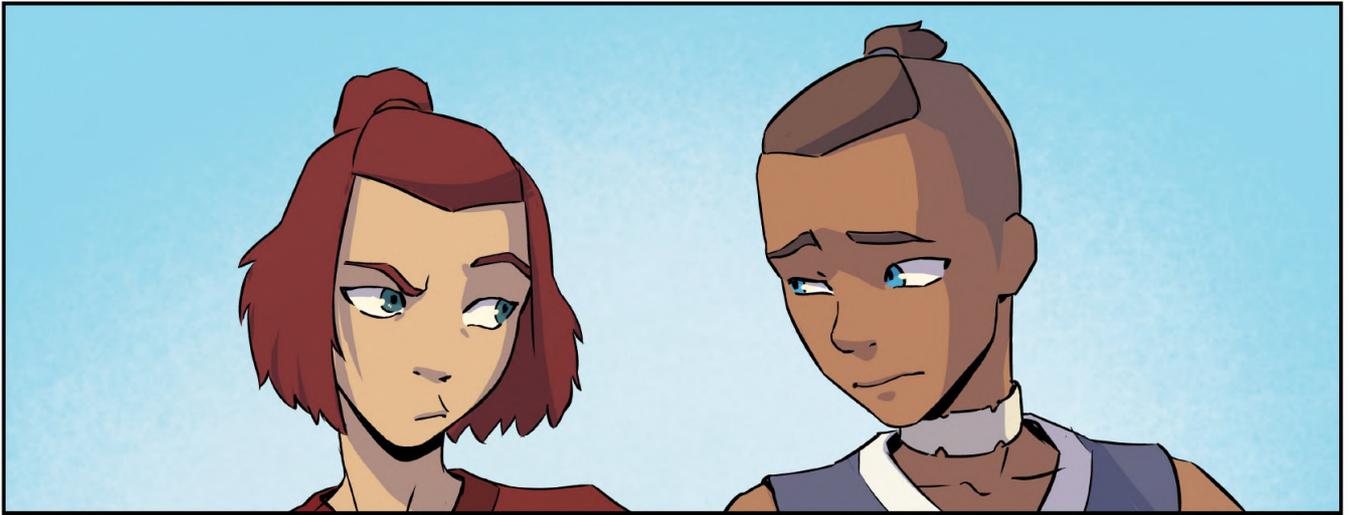


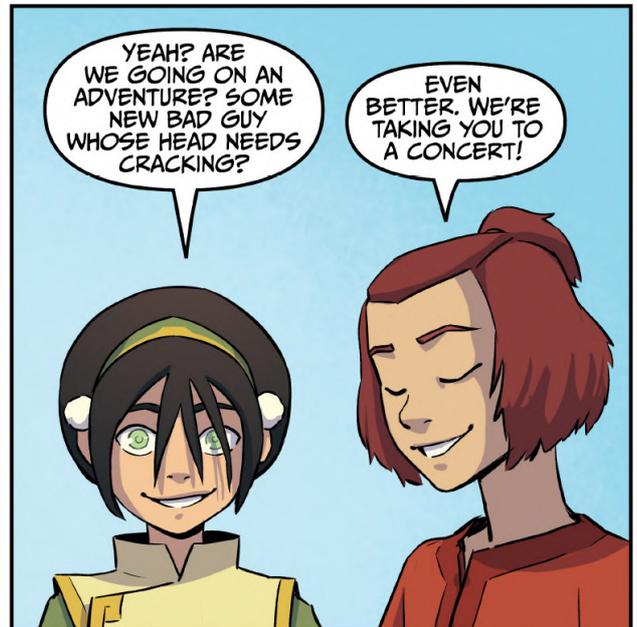
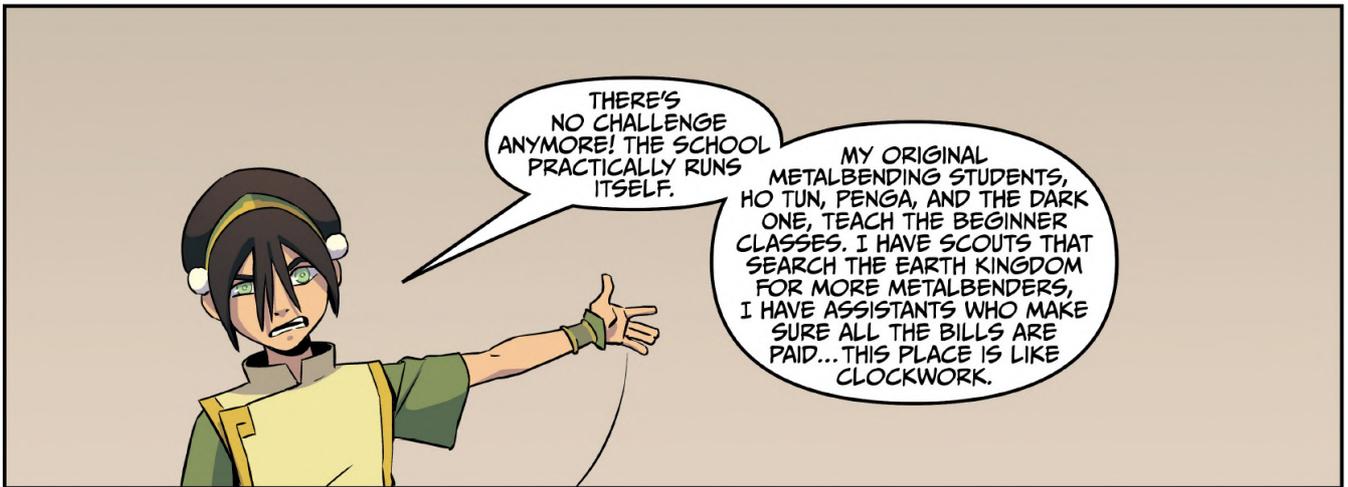














WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT THIS CONCERT, ANYWAY?



BEFORE WE MET YOU, KATARA, AANG, AND I GOT STUCK IN A CAVE NEAR OMASHU.

OKAY.



IT TURNED OUT THE CAVE WAS ACTUALLY A SECRET TUNNEL. THERE WAS A SONG ABOUT IT, SUNG BY A GROUP OF WANDERING MUSICIANS, WHO WERE ALSO TRAPPED IN THE CAVE THAT WAS ACTUALLY A SECRET TUNNEL.

AND THOSE SAME MUSICIANS WENT ON TO FORM THE MOST AMAZING BAND, WHOSE MUSIC IS TAKING THE EARTH KINGDOM BY STORM. AND SOKKA AND I HAVE TICKETS FOR US TO SEE THEM TONIGHT!





HEEY, I'M CHONG,
THAT'S LILY, AND THAT'S
MOKU, AND TOGETHER
WE'RE TRUSTFULLY
IN LOVE.



AND TONIGHT
WE WANNA INVITE
ALL OF YOU TO
TRUST...FULLY
IN LOVE.

WHICH
IS ALSO THE
NAME OF OUR
BAND.



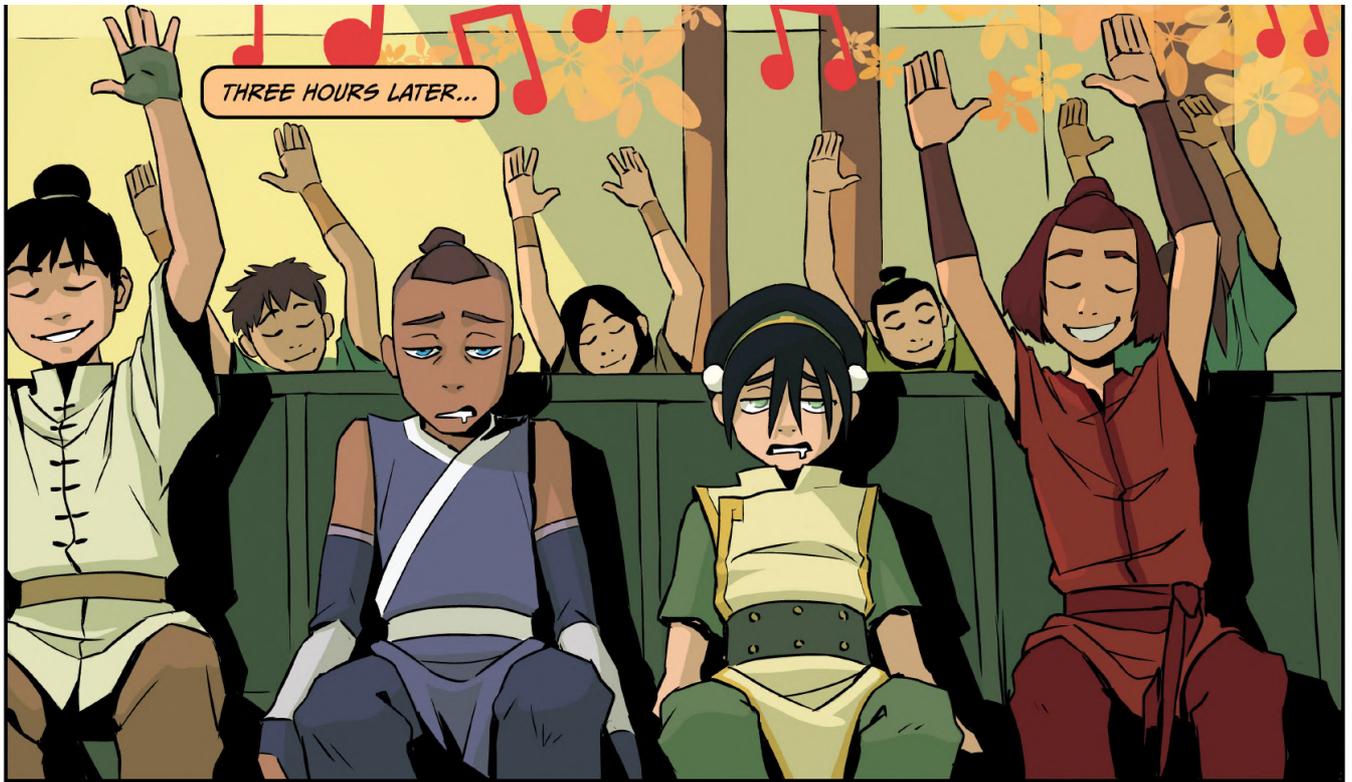
EEEEEEEEEEEEEE

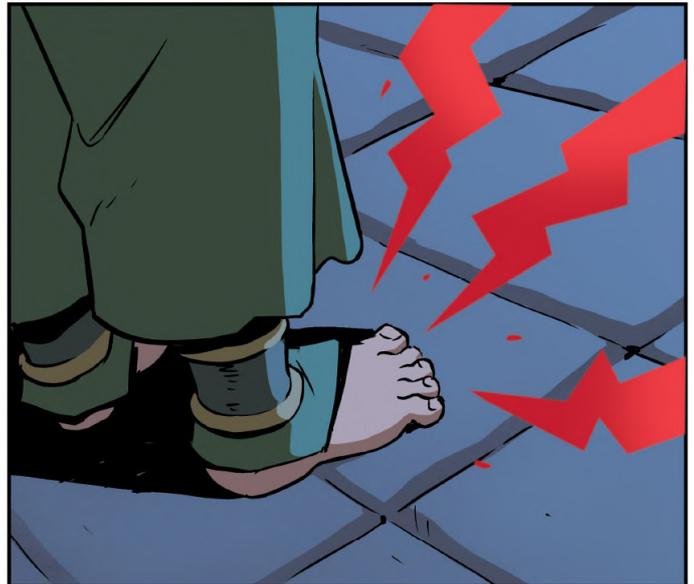
WELL, THIS IS
TERRIBLE.

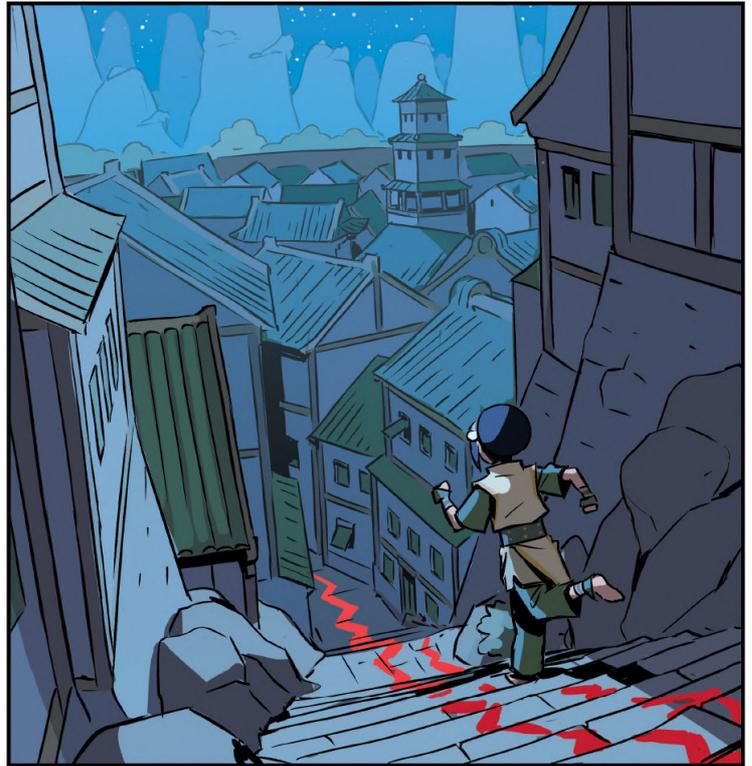


OKAY, THIS IS A SONG I
WROTE ABOUT A LITTLE DUDE
THAT I MET A LONG TIME AGO,
A DUDE WITH AN ARROW
ON HIS HEAD.

I KINDA
FORGOT THE
WORDS TO THE
SONG, BUT THE
CHORUS GOES
LIKE THIS--









FWOOSH
WOOSH



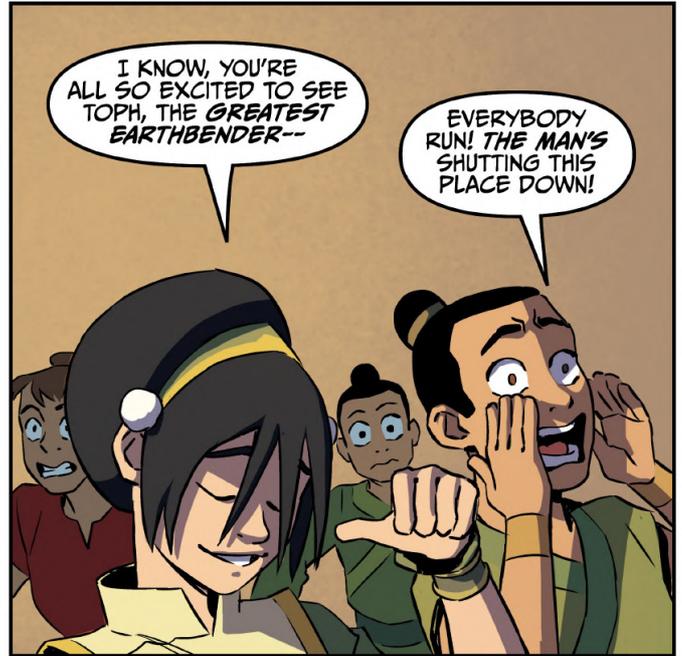
AN
UNDERGROUND
BENDING
TOURNAMENT!













NEXT MORNING.



GOOD MORNING, SIFU TOPH!

YEAH, YEAH, LET'S GET THIS WEEKLY REPORT OVER WITH.



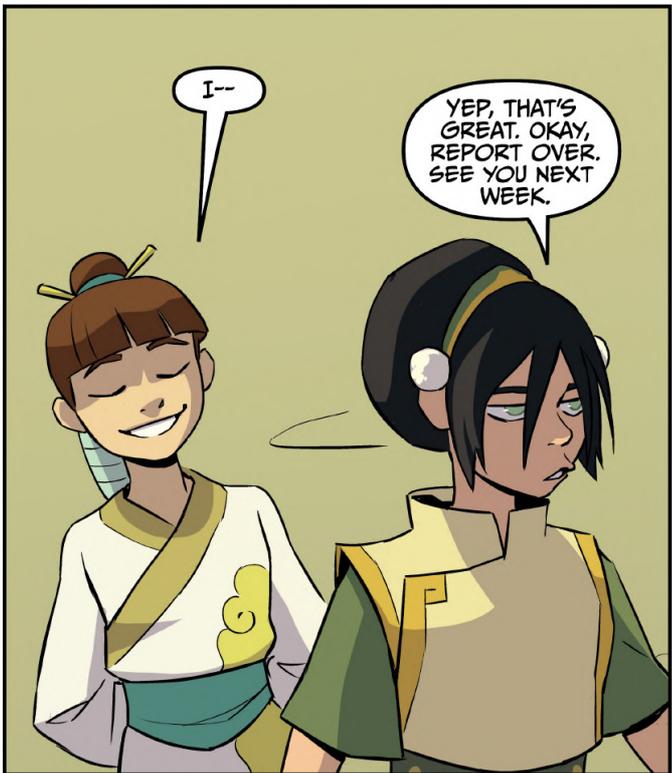
UM, WELL, I'VE BEEN HELPING THE BEGINNER STUDENTS GET IN TOUCH WITH THEIR DEEPER EMOTIONS--

GREAT. THE DARK ONE, YOU'RE UP.



I HATE TEACHING, SO I'VE BEEN AVOIDING MY STUDENTS AND SENDING THEM ON TEN-MILE HIKES--

SOUNDS GOOD. PENGGA?



I--

YEP, THAT'S GREAT. OKAY, REPORT OVER. SEE YOU NEXT WEEK.



SIFU TOPH! IF YOU DON'T MIND ME SAYING SO, YOU SEEM A LITTLE... GRUMPY?

MORE SO THAN USUAL, I MEAN.



I'VE BEEN WORKING SO HARD WITH THE BEGINNER METALBENDERS! I TAUGHT THEM ALL THE BENDING FORMS YOU TAUGHT US WHEN WE FIRST CAME TO THE ACADEMY, AND YOU WOULDN'T LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT IT!

I HATE IT WHEN PENG'S EMOTIONS ARE THE SAME AS MY OWN.

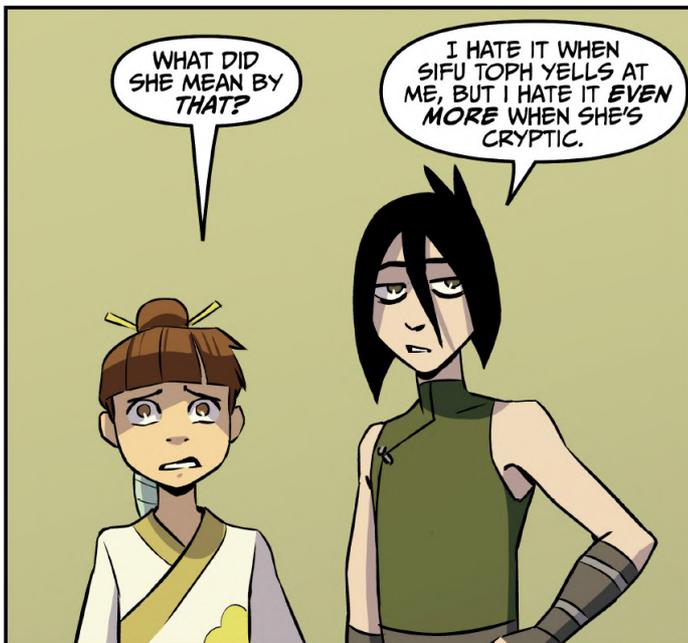


IS THE ACADEMY IN TROUBLE, SIFU TOPH? IS THAT WHY YOU'RE SO UPSET?

NO! EVERYTHING'S FINE! EVERYTHING'S PERFECT. EVERYTHING'S SO...RESPECTABLE.



THAT'S THE PROBLEM.



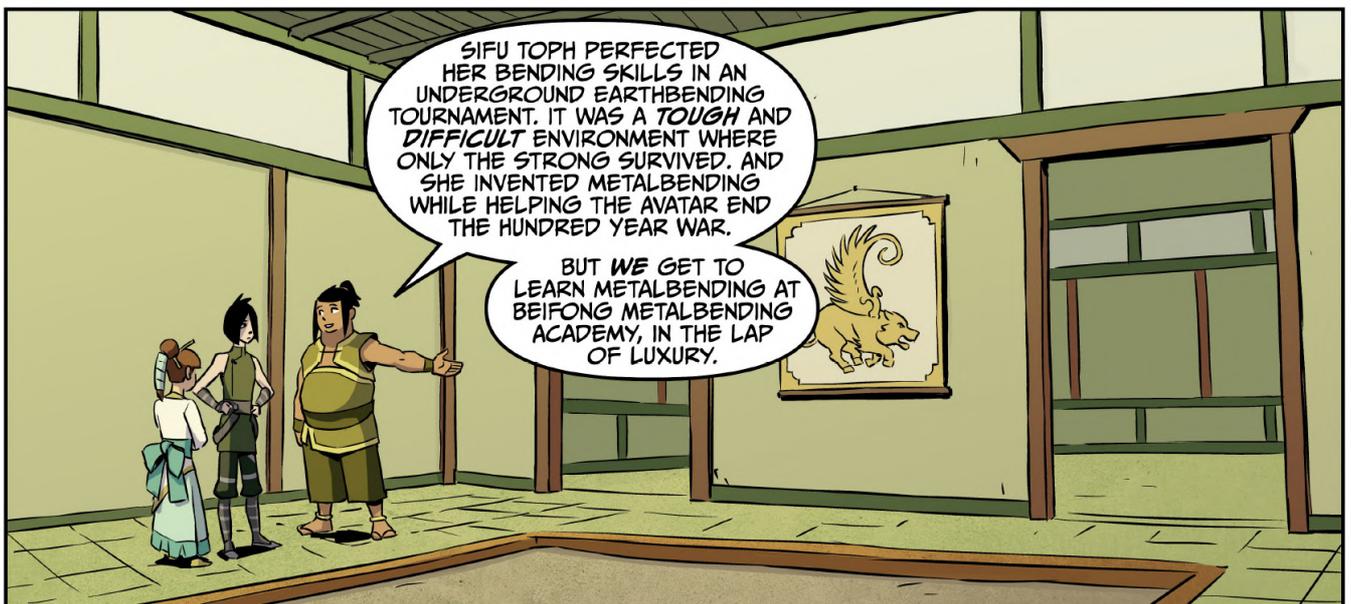
WHAT DID SHE MEAN BY THAT?

I HATE IT WHEN SIFU TOPH YELLS AT ME, BUT I HATE IT EVEN MORE WHEN SHE'S CRYPTIC.



IS SHE UPSET BECAUSE THE ACADEMY IS SO DIFFERENT FROM HOW SHE LEARNED BENDING?

DIFFERENT? WHY WOULD SHE CARE ABOUT THAT?



SIFU TOPH PERFECTED HER BENDING SKILLS IN AN UNDERGROUND EARTHBENDING TOURNAMENT. IT WAS A TOUGH AND DIFFICULT ENVIRONMENT WHERE ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVED. AND SHE INVENTED METALBENDING WHILE HELPING THE AVATAR END THE HUNDRED YEAR WAR.

BUT WE GET TO LEARN METALBENDING AT BEIFONG METALBENDING ACADEMY, IN THE LAP OF LUXURY.



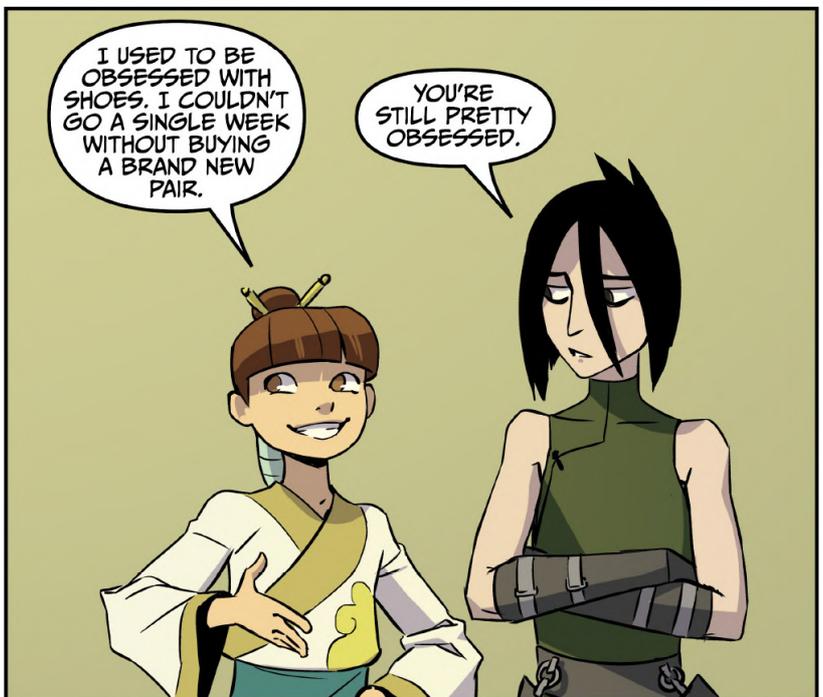
THE ACADEMY'S HARDLY LUXURIOUS! I ONLY HAVE TWO CLOSETS FOR ALL MY CLOTHES.

AND WE DO GET YELLED AT A LOT. MOSTLY BY HER.

BUT THE ACADEMY IS STILL A SCHOOL, NOT A BRUTAL BENDER FIGHTING RING! IT'S STILL A PLACE WHERE WE CAN LEARN IN RELATIVE COMFORT.



AND BECAUSE OF THE ACADEMY WE'VE GROWN SO MUCH, HAVEN'T WE? REMEMBER WHAT WE WERE LIKE WHEN WE FIRST CAME HERE?



I USED TO BE OBSESSED WITH SHOES. I COULDN'T GO A SINGLE WEEK WITHOUT BUYING A BRAND NEW PAIR.

YOU'RE STILL PRETTY OBSESSED.



NOT AS MUCH AS I USED TO BE! IT'S BEEN A WHOLE MONTH SINCE I BOUGHT A NEW PAIR!

WHATEVER.



AT LEAST I'VE CHANGED A LITTLE! YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL! YOU STILL HATE EVERYTHING!



NO, I DON'T. NOW I **TOLERATE** THINGS, RATHER THAN HATE THEM.

LIKE YOU TWO. I **TOLERATE** YOU, I DON'T HATE YOU.



OH, THE DARK ONE, THAT'S SO WONDERFUL TO HEAR. **THANK YOU!**

...UM... YOU'RE WELCOME.

OR WHATEVER.



I'VE CHANGED TOO. WHEN I FIRST CAME TO THE ACADEMY, I SAW DOOM EVERYWHERE.

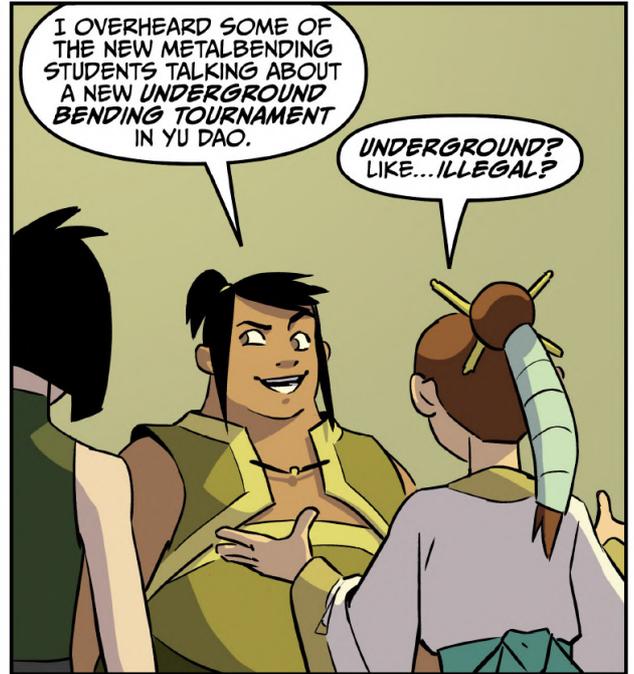
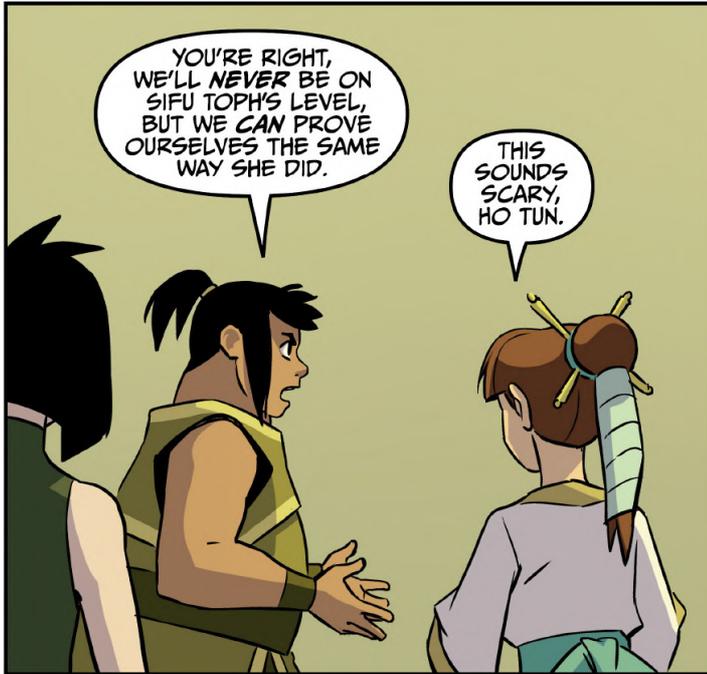
NOW, I HARDLY SEE DOOM AT ALL!

BUT WHY IS SIFU TOPH MAD THAT WE'VE LEARNED BENDING IN A DIFFERENT WAY THAN SHE DID? SHE'S THE ONE WHO **STARTED** THIS SCHOOL, AFTER ALL!



WOULDN'T IT BE WONDERFUL TO PROVE TO SIFU TOPH THAT HER ACADEMY STUDENTS ARE AS TOUGH AND CAPABLE AS SHE IS?

... WE'RE **REALLY** NOT, THOUGH.













POWERFUL EARTHBENDER LADY, WHY ARE YOU SO POWERFUL, BUT ALSO SO SAD?

CRRSH



I'M NOT *SAD*! THAT'S STUPID! WHAT WOULD I HAVE TO BE SAD ABOUT? PEOPLE RESPECT ME SO MUCH THEY RUN AWAY WHEN THEY SEE ME!



KIDS FIGHTING IN AN UNDERGROUND BENDING TOURNAMENT SEE ME AS SOME KIND OF ENEMY.

I'M GOING TO MAKE THE EARTH KINGDOM AUTHORITIES MAGICALLY APPEAR AND SHUT DOWN EVERYONE'S FUN!



DON'T THEY KNOW I WAS THE BLIND BANDIT? I USED TO BE JUST LIKE THEM!



I'M PROUD OF BEIFONG METALBENDING ACADEMY, BUT WHY DOES MY LIFE THERE FEEL SO...ROUTINE? WHY DO I FEEL LIKE MY BENDING ABILITIES AREN'T BEING CHALLENGED? I'M NOT INVENTING NEW BENDING TECHNIQUES OR SAVING THE WORLD, I'M JUST TEACHING BENDER KIDS HOW TO DO THEIR STANCES, DAY AFTER DAY.



MEANWHILE, THERE ARE KIDS OUT ON THE STREETS OF YU DAO DISCOVERING BENDING TECHNIQUES I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE. LAST NIGHT, A KID DID SOMETHING THAT LOOKED LIKE HE'D COMBINED FIREBENDING AND EARTH BENDING.

IT WAS AMAZING.



THAT USED TO BE ME. BUT NOW I'M THE BENDER ESTABLISHMENT.



I GET IT, POWERFUL EARTH BENDER LADY.



BACK IN THE DAY, ME, LILY,
AND MOKU USED TO PLAY
OUR MUSIC BECAUSE IT WAS
WHAT WE DID, MAN. WE
WERE ALL ABOUT THE
LOVE. THE LOVE OF MUSIC.



BUT THEN THE LOVE
BECAME SOMETHING
ELSE. IT BECAME A
WAY TO EARN A LIVING,
AND THAT CAN MESS
WITH THE LOVE, MAN.

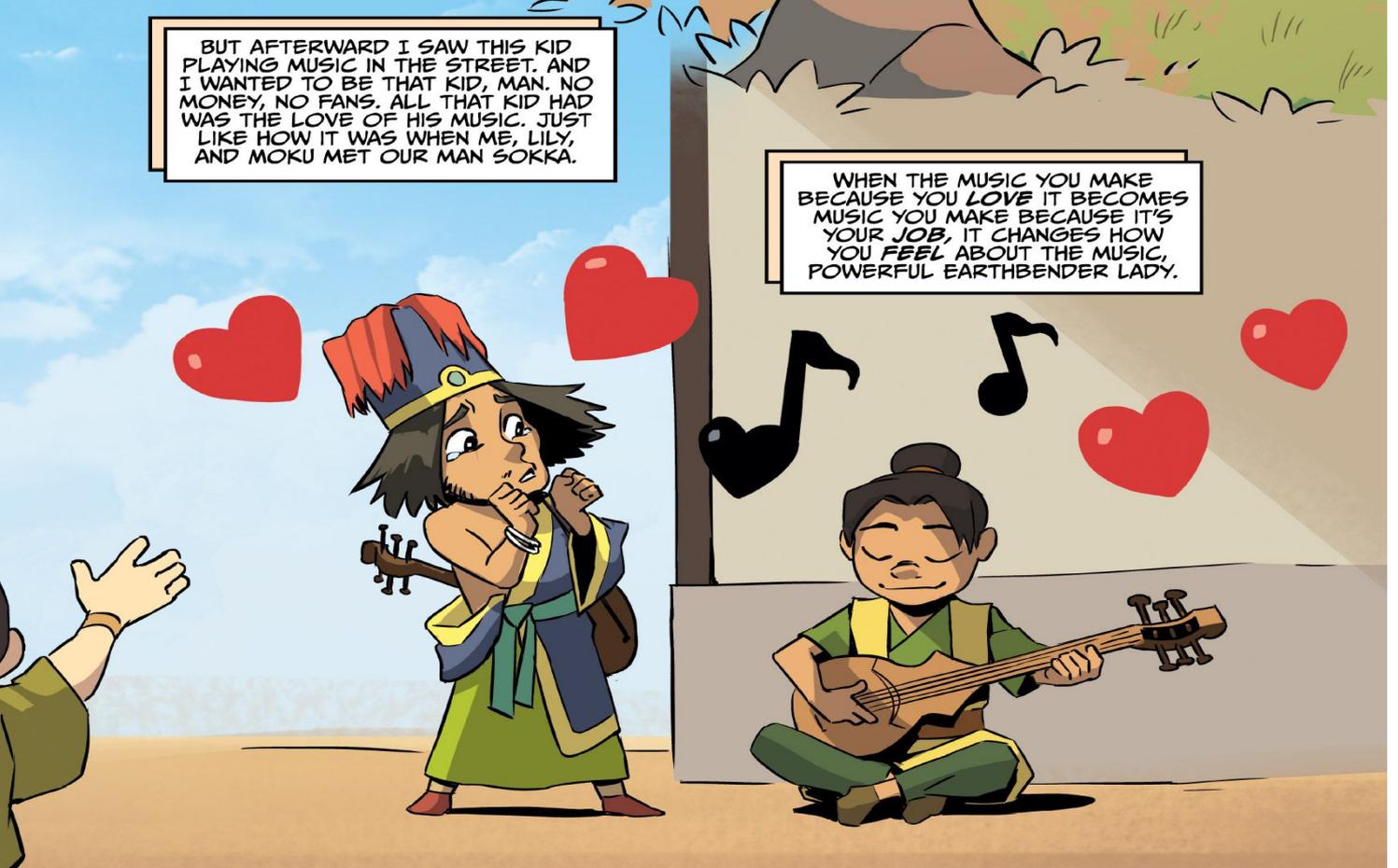


LAST NIGHT WE PLAYED
OUR MUSIC FOR HUNDREDS
OF PEOPLE IN THIS CITY.
IT'S AWESOME WE GET TO
TOUCH SO MANY HEARTS.



BUT AFTERWARD I SAW THIS KID PLAYING MUSIC IN THE STREET. AND I WANTED TO BE THAT KID, MAN. NO MONEY, NO FANS. ALL THAT KID HAD WAS THE LOVE OF HIS MUSIC. JUST LIKE HOW IT WAS WHEN ME, LILY, AND MOKU MET OUR MAN SOKKA.

WHEN THE MUSIC YOU MAKE BECAUSE YOU LOVE IT BECOMES MUSIC YOU MAKE BECAUSE IT'S YOUR JOB, IT CHANGES HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THE MUSIC, POWERFUL EARTHBENDER LADY.







THAT'S A GOOD POINT, CHONG. IT'S WEIRD THAT IT'S COMING FROM YOU, BUT IT'S STILL A GOOD POINT.

WISDOM CAN COME FROM UNEXPECTED PLACES, TINY BUT POWERFUL EARTHBENDER LADY.



UM, NOW WILL YOU HELP ME GET HOME TO MY COMFY BED? I DON'T WANNA BE CHASED ANYMORE.

THE FANS... THEIR LOVE IS SO SCARY.

SURE THING, FOLLOW ME.



YOU'RE MY HERO, POWERFUL EARTHBENDER LADY.

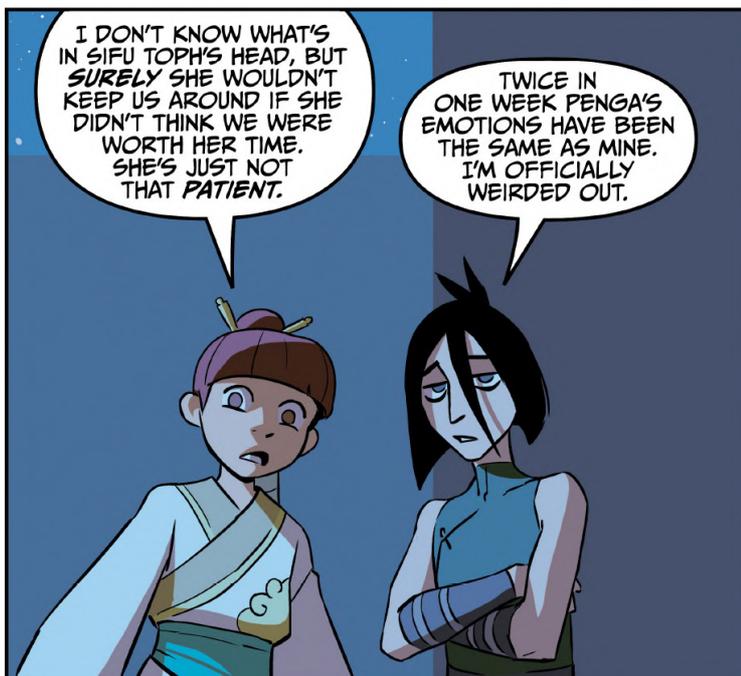
YEAH, I KNOW IT.





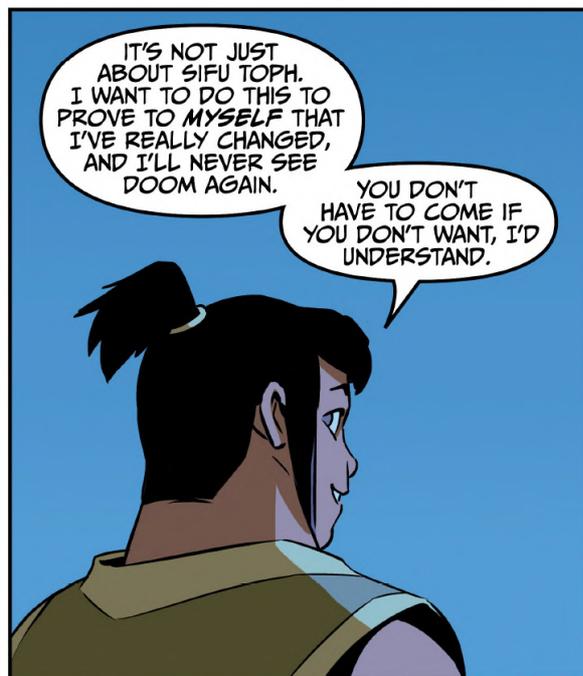
FACE IT, HO TUN, THIS IS RIDICULOUS. SIFU TOPH DIDN'T ASK US TO DO THIS.

I KNOW, BUT THIS IS THE SIMPLEST WAY TO PROVE TO HER THAT WE'RE WORTH ALL THE TIME SHE'S SPENT TEACHING US, INSTEAD OF TRAVELING THE WORLD AND HAVING ADVENTURES.



I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S IN SIFU TOPH'S HEAD, BUT **SURELY** SHE WOULDN'T KEEP US AROUND IF SHE DIDN'T THINK WE WERE WORTH HER TIME. SHE'S JUST NOT THAT **PATIENT**.

TWICE IN ONE WEEK PENG'S EMOTIONS HAVE BEEN THE SAME AS MINE. I'M OFFICIALLY WEIRDED OUT.



IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT SIFU TOPH. I WANT TO DO THIS TO PROVE TO **MYSELF** THAT I'VE REALLY CHANGED, AND I'LL NEVER SEE DOOM AGAIN.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME IF YOU DON'T WANT, I'D UNDERSTAND.



MY BLEEDING POET'S HEART WON'T LET YOU DO THIS BY YOURSELF.

WE'RE BEIFONG ACADEMY METALBENDERS, AND WE NEVER LEAVE A FRIEND BEHIND.



THANKS, YOU GUYS.



I FEEL IT TOO! IT'S A *GOOD* VIBRATION.

SHH. I NEED TO LISTEN.



SLIGHT DETOUR, CHONG. SORRY.

BUT MY COMFY BED AND PILLOWS ARE WAITING FOR ME!

YOU CAN GET HOME ON YOUR OWN. THE FANS ARE PROBABLY GONE.



WAIT FOR MEEEE!





HERE IT IS.

IT'S CERTAINLY NOT RESPECTABLE. HOW'D YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THIS PLACE?



THE DARK ONE TOLD ME ABOUT IT.

IN MY SEARCH FOR POETIC INSPIRATION, I HAVE WALKED MANY DARK PATHS IN ANOTHER LIFE.



OKAY, MY LOSER UNCLE TOLD ME ABOUT IT. HE PLACES BETS ON BENDER TOURNAMENTS SOMETIMES.



HO TUN, I'M HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT PROVING OUR WORTH TO SIFU TOPH. WHY DON'T WE JUST GO HOME?

NOW I'M HAVING THE SAME EMOTIONS AS THE DARK ONE! HE'S RIGHT, IT IS WEIRD.



THIS IS A LEVEL OF GRITTISS THAT EVEN I, MY SOUL STAINED WITH DEEPEST EBON, AM LOATHE TO PARTAKE IN. I SEE NO POETRY IN THIS.

GUYS, WE'RE METALBENDERS.



NO MATTER WHAT OTHER BENDERS THROW AT US, WE'LL BE ABLE TO TAKE THEM.









CHONG,
WHAT'S GOING ON?
ALL I CAN SENSE ARE
FRAGMENTS FROM
UP HERE.

IT'S A
WAREHOUSE FULL
OF ANGRY PEOPLE,
MAN. ALL VENTING
THEIR ANGER OUT
ON THE WORLD.

THAT ONE
GUY IS WEARING
A TERRIBLE HAT.
IT'S JUST THE
WORST, MAN.



ARE YOU
SURE ABOUT
THIS?

IF I WIN
THE FIGHT, WE'LL
HAVE ENOUGH MONEY
TO BE SET FOR
MONTHS.



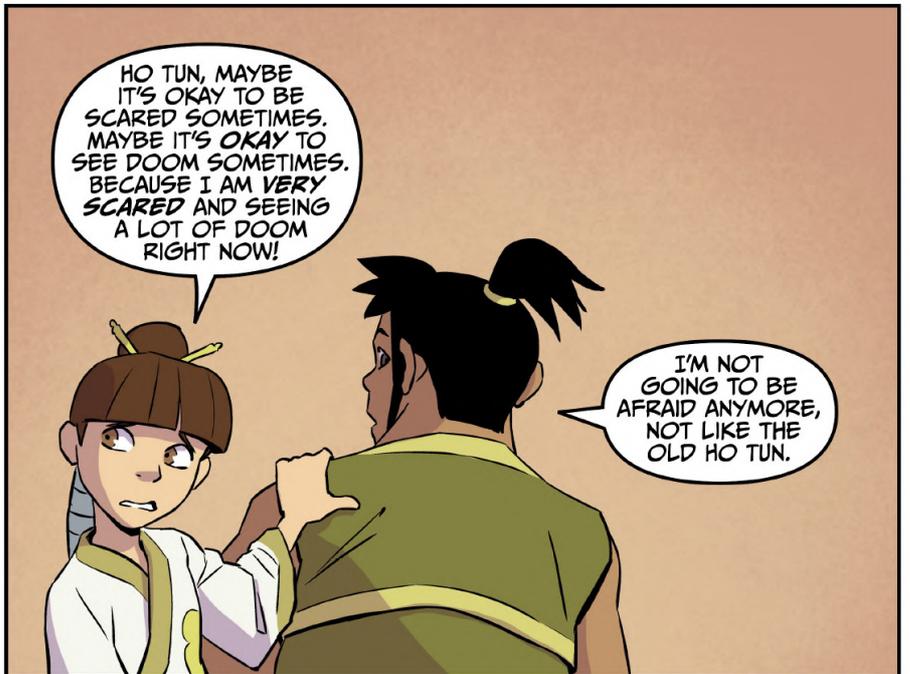
SUN, BE
CAREFUL. DON'T
LOSE CONTROL
LIKE YOU DID THE
LAST TIME.

I
WON'T, DON'T
WORRY.



SUN. THAT'S
THE KID I WANT
TO MEET.







TAKE HIM OUT!

YEAH! CRUSH 'IM!

WUUDD



ALL RIGHT! MAKING COIN TONIGHT!

C'MON! YOU CALL THAT A FIGHT?!

KRAAK



THIS SEEMS LIKE A TERRIBLE PLACE FOR A YOUNG BENDER, MAN. ALL THIS? MAKES ME FEEL SAD THINGS.

THESE KIDS NEED LOVE, NOT WAR.



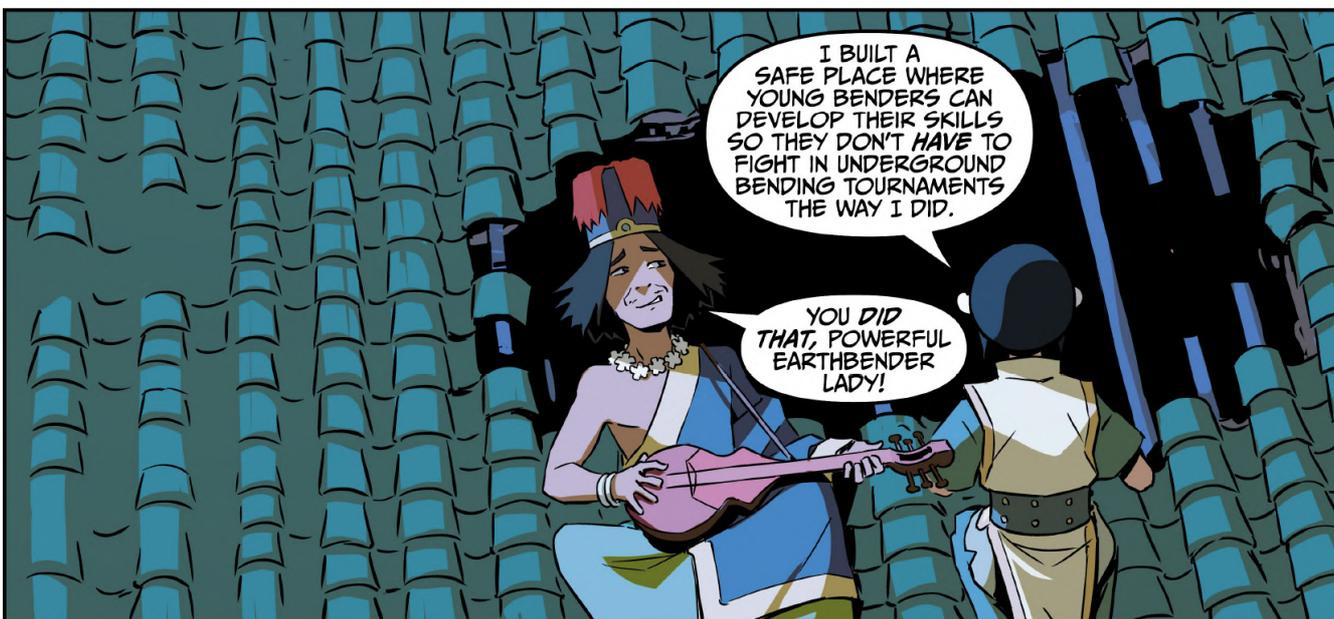
ALL THAT YELLING AND FIGHTING REMINDS ME OF A MUSIC TEACHER I HAD AS A KID. HE WAS ALWAYS YELLING AT ME AND TELLING ME I WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH, AND IT WAS REALLY HURTFUL, YOU KNOW?



YELLING AT KIDS WHO'RE TRYING THEIR BEST MAKES ME SO SAD, MAN.



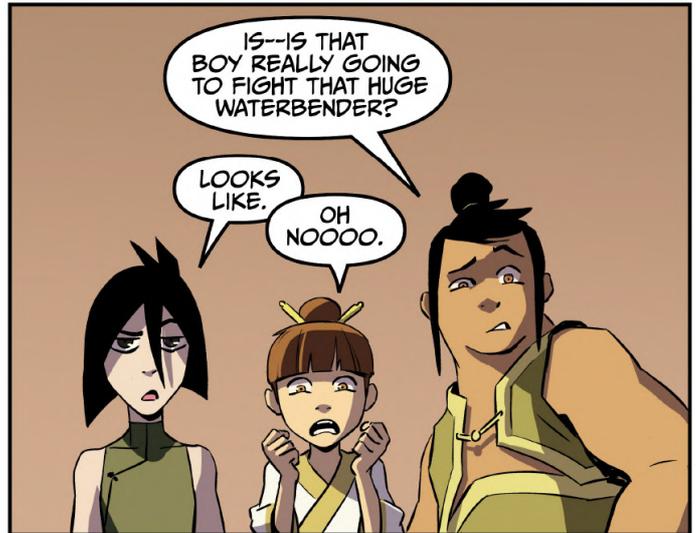
I YELL AT MY STUDENTS. BUT... I ALSO REALLY CARE ABOUT THEM. I WANT THEM TO DO WELL.



I BUILT A SAFE PLACE WHERE YOUNG BENDERS CAN DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS SO THEY DON'T HAVE TO FIGHT IN UNDERGROUND BENDING TOURNAMENTS THE WAY I DID.

YOU DID THAT, POWERFUL EARTHBENDER LADY!





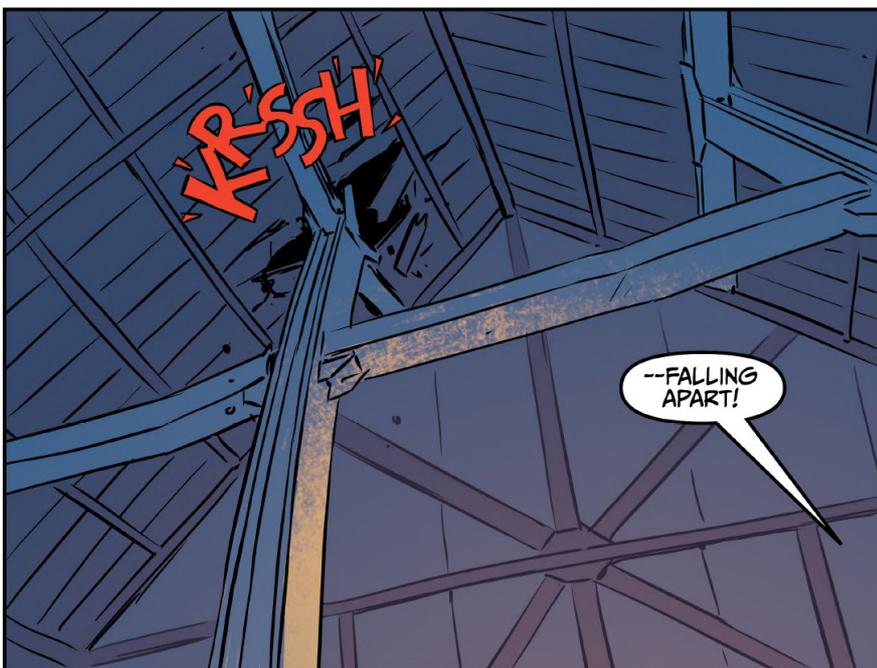














WOW, LOOK AT THAT GIRL WITH THE GOOD SHOES! SHE'S ALMOST AS STRONG AS YOU, POWERFUL EARTHBENDER LADY.

ALMOST.



I'M DOING IT! I'M--DOING--SOMETHING!



C'MON, WE GOTTA GO!

WAIT, THOSE OTHER BENDERS--

WHAT ABOUT THEM?



THEY'RE METALBENDERS! I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE BEFORE.





CREEEAK

WHAMM

WHAT DO WE DO? WE CAN'T HOLD UP THE ENTIRE BUILDING BY OURSELVES, CAN WE?

WE-WE HAVE TO! OTHERWISE PEOPLE MAY DIE!

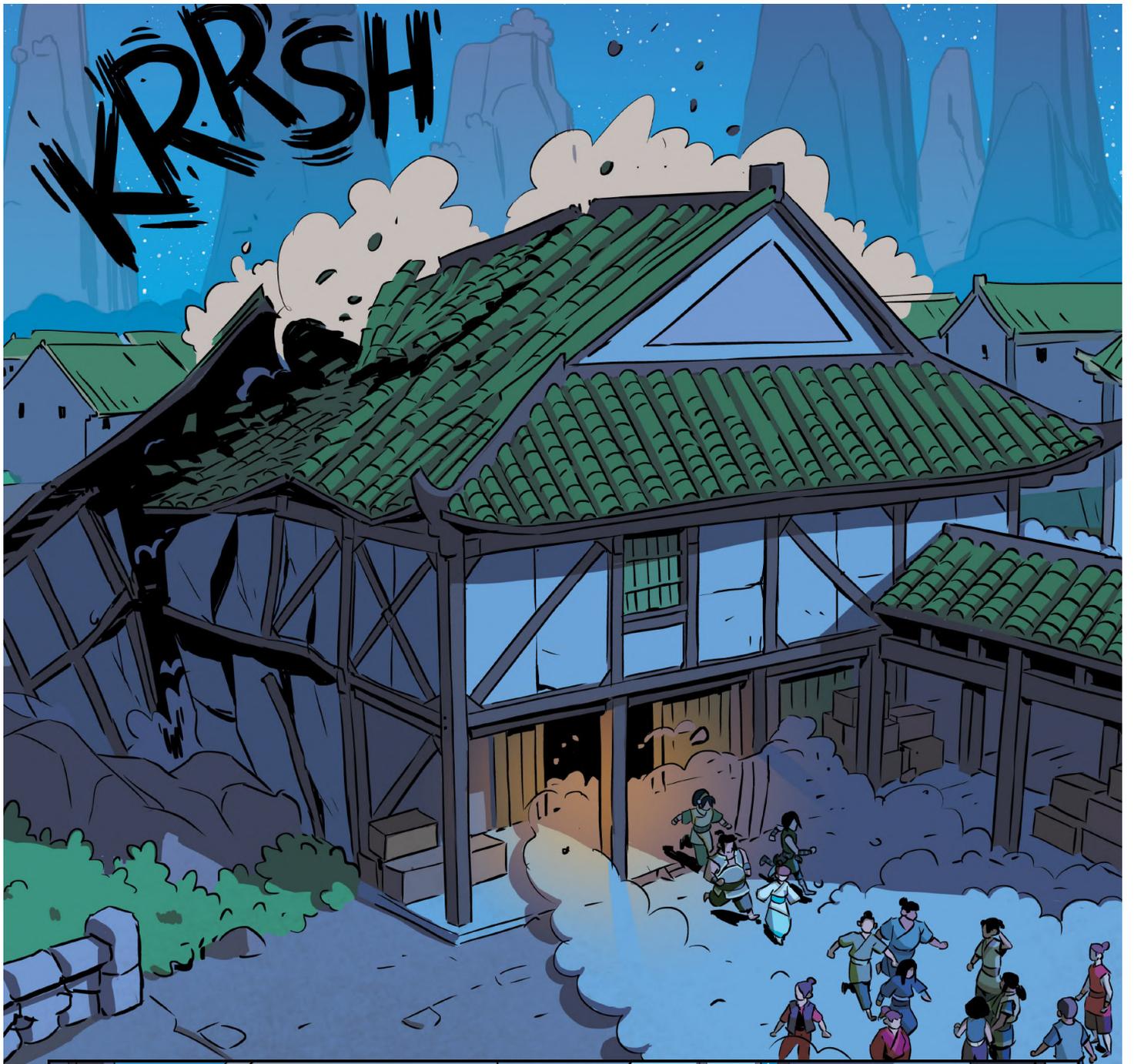
IF WE WORK TOGETHER, I KNOW WE CAN SAVE EVERYONE!

LET'S SHOW WHAT THE STUDENTS OF BEIFONG METALBENDING ACADEMY CAN DO!

RUMBLE











YOUR NAME'S SUN, RIGHT?

YEAH.



I'M SORRY, I TRIED--I JUST NEEDED TO MAKE SOME MONEY.

MONEY'S GOOD, KID, BUT STAYING ALIVE IS EVEN BETTER.

I DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE. THE TOURNAMENT IS THE ONLY THING I COULD DO THAT PAYS.



I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU A CHOICE.

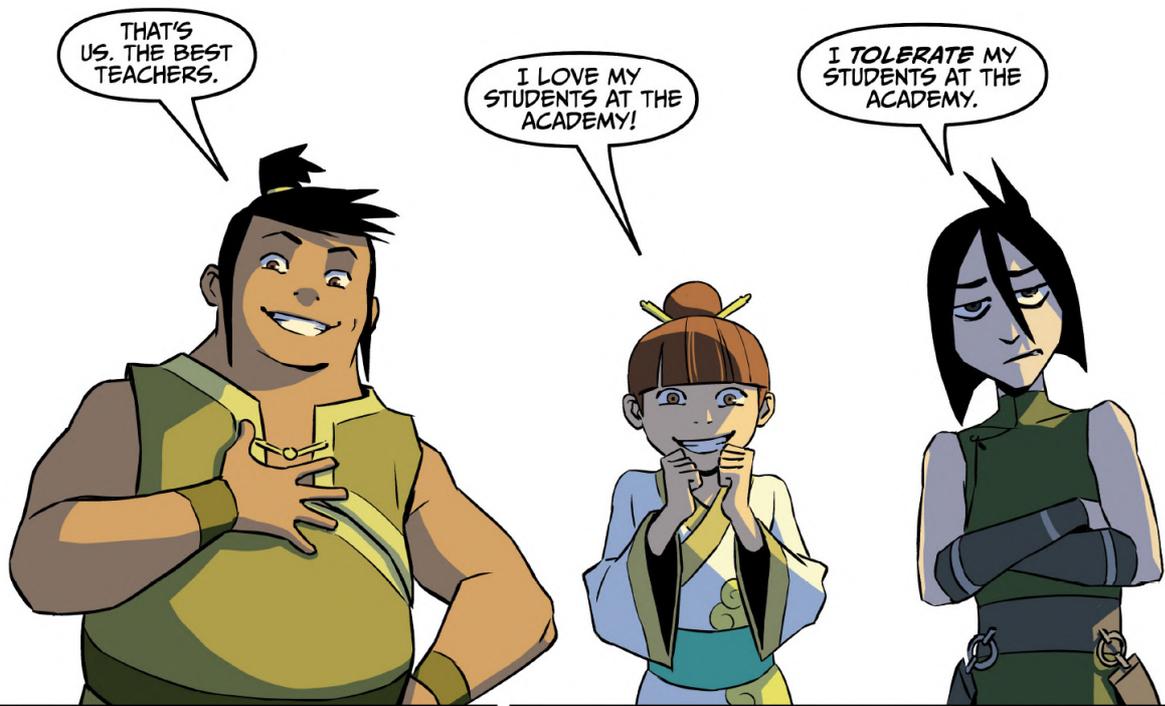
JUST OUTSIDE OF YU DAO IS BEIFONG METALBENDING ACADEMY. IT'S A SCHOOL WHERE YOUNG EARTHBENDERS OF ALL SKILL LEVELS CAN LEARN METALBENDING. MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT'S A PLACE YOUNG BENDERS CAN CALL HOME.



I'D BET NOT EVERY ONE OF YOU IS A METALBENDER, BUT YOU'RE ALL EARTHBENDERS IN NEED OF A PLACE TO BELONG.

BEIFONG METALBENDING ACADEMY CAN BE THAT PLACE, IF YOU WANT IT TO BE.









TOPH! WE
COULDN'T FIND
YOU THIS MORNING,
DID YOU NEED
HELP?



HUH,
I GUESS
NOT.

NAH,
WE'VE GOT IT
HANDLED.



ARE THESE
NEW STUDENTS?
THEY LOOK LIKE A
LIVELY BUNCH.

YEP.
I HAVE A FEELING
THINGS AROUND THE
ACADEMY WON'T BE
QUITE SO ROUTINE
ANYMORE.





THAT AFTERNOON...

IT'S TOO BAD YOU'RE LEAVING YU DAO SO SOON, CHONG. WHERE'S TRUSTFULLY IN LOVE TOURING NEXT?

TRUSTFULLY IN LOVE HAS PASSED ON TO THE GREAT MUSICAL SPIRIT WORLD, KIND BUT FEARSOME KYOSHI WARRIOR.



OH NO! DID THE BAND BREAK UP?

TRUSTFULLY IN LOVE IS NO MORE, BUT ME, LILY, AND MOKU WILL STILL PLAY MUSIC. JUST NOT FOR MONEY, ONLY FOR LOVE.

IT'S THE WAY THAT'S BEST FOR US.



YAAY. MORE MUSIC.

AND YOU, TINY BUT MIGHTY EARTHBENDER LADY, ARE MY GREATEST INSPIRATION. I'M WRITING A SONG ABOUT A SMALL BUT POWERFUL EARTHBENDER LADY WHO IS BELOVED BY CHILDREN EVERYWHERE.



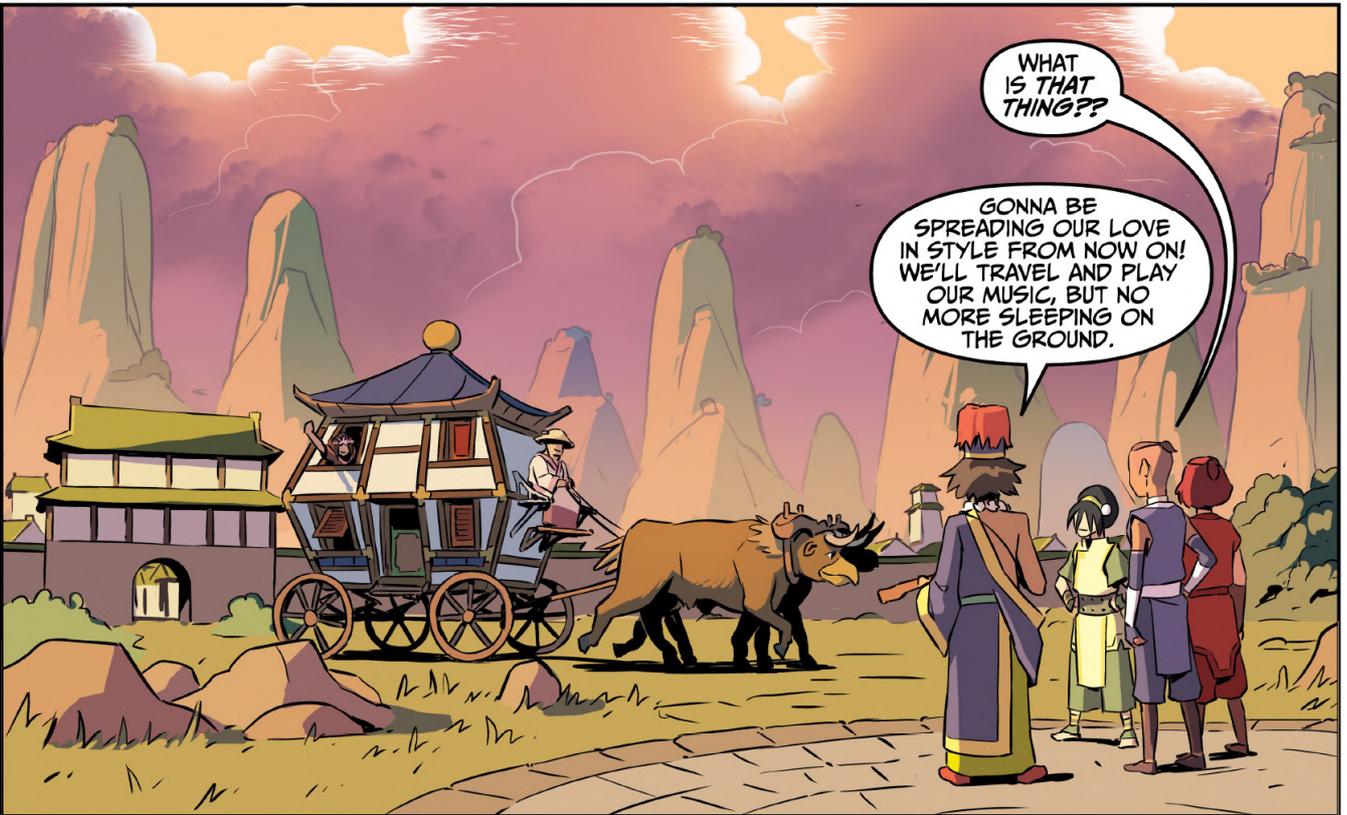
HAH! I JUST HOPE THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'LL BE STUCK BABYSITTING A BUNCH OF KIDS WHEN I'M OLD AND GRAY.

RUMBLE



WHAT IS THAT THING??

GONNA BE SPREADING OUR LOVE IN STYLE FROM NOW ON! WE'LL TRAVEL AND PLAY OUR MUSIC, BUT NO MORE SLEEPING ON THE GROUND.

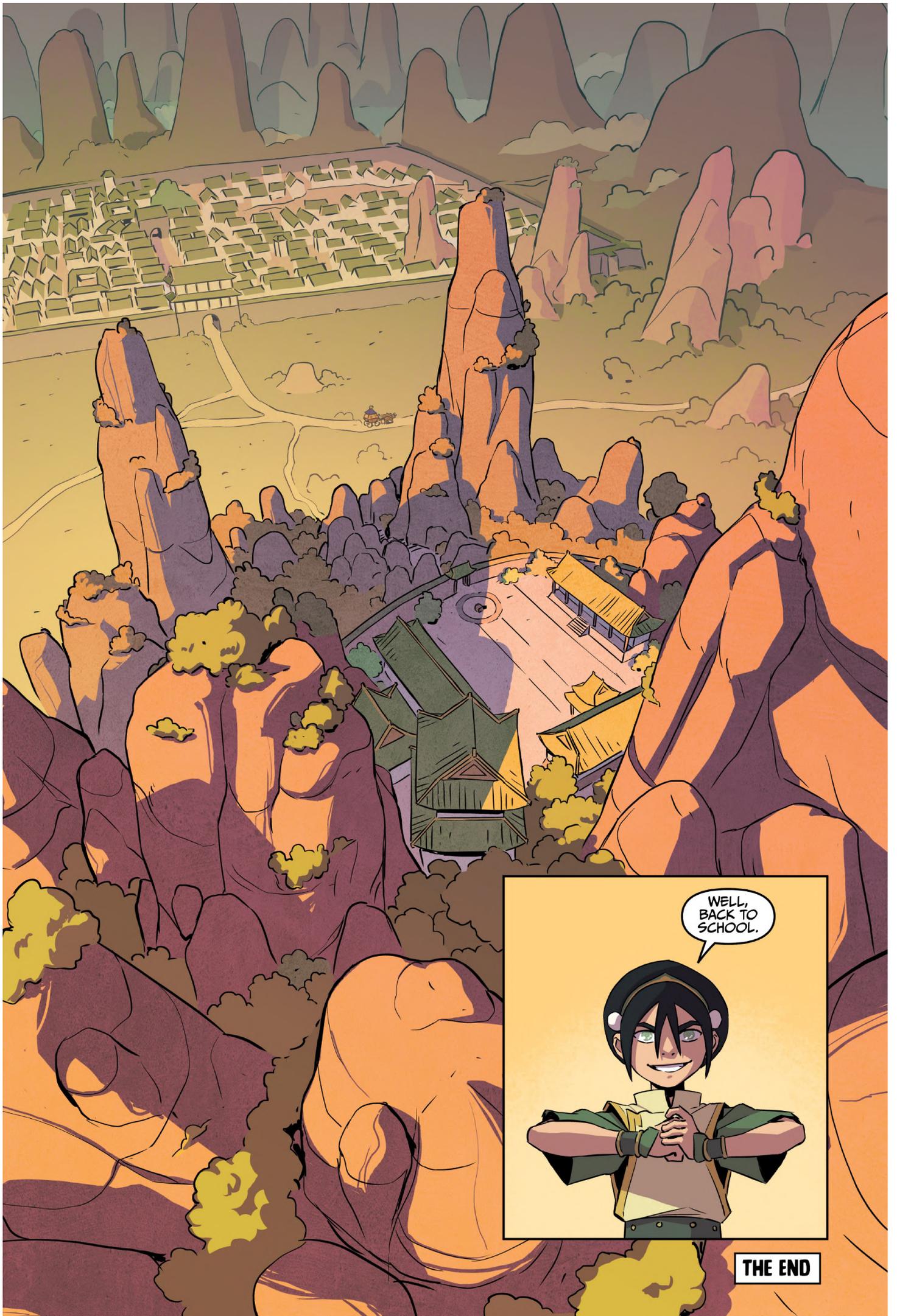


GOODBYE, ALL YOU GOOD PEOPLE! UNTIL OUR PATHS CROSS AGAIN.

I CAN ONLY HOPE THEY NEVER WILL.

SOKKA, BE NICE.

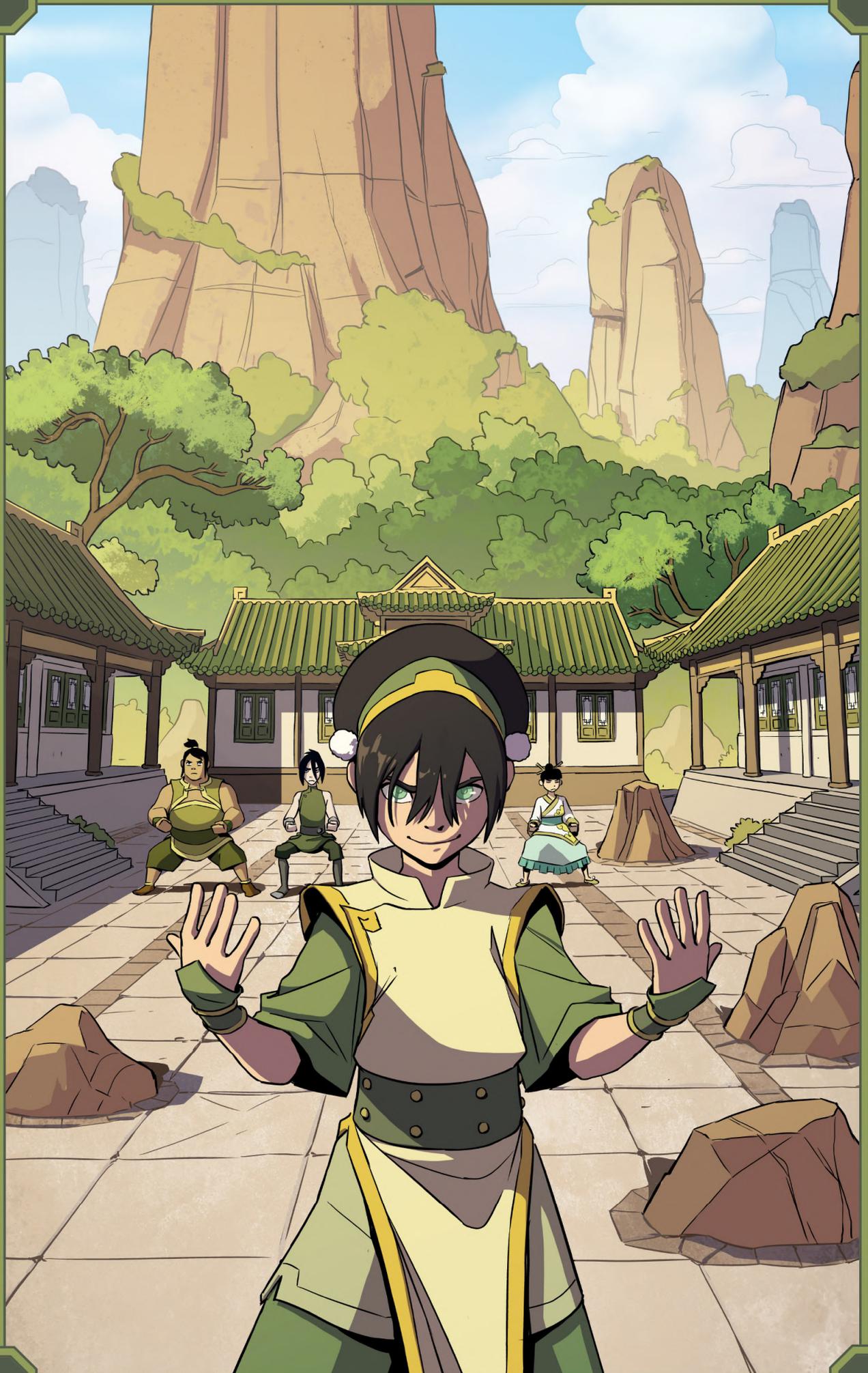




WELL,
BACK TO
SCHOOL.



THE END





For some, perfection just isn't enough.

Things are looking bright at the Beifong Metalbending Academy! But after all the adventures Toph's had with Aang, Sokka, Zuko, and Katara, the whole thing feels a bit dull. Luckily, Sokka and Suki come to visit and reintroduce some familiar faces from their wandering days. And while out and about to celebrate, Toph discovers something that just might put the sparkle back in her eye....

Written by Faith Erin Hicks (*The Adventures of Superhero Girl*, *The Nameless City*) and drawn by Peter Wartman (*Stonebreaker*), with colors by Adele Matera, letters by Jimmy Betancourt, and collaboration from *Avatar: The Last Airbender* animated series writer Tim Hedrick, this is the ultimate continuation of the hit animated series!



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