

## ***Title: Ty-Plosion (1)***

Nik's grin broadens as he looks at the girls. *NOW* it feels like the Fire Nation is properly welcoming them. The stuff Ty Lee and others bought on Wangjile Island did not even compare to the wardrobe in the royal palace. Well, except for the Crusted Mangoes.

Yep, Nik is in *love*.

Crusted Mango now holds a significant spot in his heart which he shares with his harem.

He means his heart, not the mangoes.

Positively exhausted as opposed to extraordinarily spirited Nik and Sokka, Zuko gives the girls a passing glance before sighing deeply again as he tries to come to terms with the greatest *shame* of the royal family.

The moment his gaze landed on Ursa, his blush deepened while Nik and Sokka looked at each other. *That* had been quite the surprise, and this isn't the kind of thing Nik would even imagine sharing with others, but they stumbled upon it while raiding the hidden storage unit of the royal family.

"You all look great!" Nik smiles at them.

Like Zuko, Azula dressed in a royal outfit. An intricate golden pin with a flame motif held her glossy black hair in an elaborate bun on the back of her head with all her bangs tucked in that exposed her shapely and narrow jaws completely. Her red robe lined with golden rims wrapped her body tightly alongside a thick black belt around her torso right underneath her breasts which seemed to make her bust pop out more than usual.

Suki, Jin, Katara, and Yue wear similar outfits: Dark maroon robes lined with silver edges alongside black undershirts or vests of their liking and silver belts around their torso.

Suki and Katara only wore a portion of their hair into top knots and let the rest flow freely. However, no flame motif marked their hair or other accessories.

In comparison, looking far more prominent with the sheer size of her bust, Jin wore her usually untamable hair in an elegant upper bun. A slick gloss of some hair product can be seen on her hair as it held all her stubborn strands in place.

And Yue wore her long white hair into a simple braid with hair parting from the center and pulled back, leaving a few strands to grace the corner of her ears. Somehow Yue got the most attention among them due to her neighborly look.

But Kya and Ursa understood the mission and prevailed. Not letting the number of outfits at their disposal confuse them, the two women dressed in sober red clothes. It's obvious what they are trying to achieve.

Kya wears a sleek red kimono that overlays on each other right from her collarbones, leaving little to see. She sinks her hands into the exaggerated sleeves of the top and a thick silver belt around her torso. But instead of her belt making her bust pop out, the dense material of the kimono grants her chest a slop-like look that instills an air of elegance around her.

A golden band with an equally golden moon motif holds her top knot on the back of her head while Kya lets the rest of her thoroughly brushed hair flow back.

Adopting a formal tone, Kya regards others with a practiced smile, *"I am pleased to see all of you in such high spirits. I hope the royal palace has been to your liking."*

Then, the mother of two looks to her side and finds another mother of two nodding back with a thin smirk.

Meanwhile, Ursa wears a similar red kimono, but it is nowhere as decorated or premium in quality. The light quality of her clothes accentuates her figure quite well. Sokka elbows Nik with a shit-eating grin on his face.

The girls quietly watch Zuko *and* Nik glare at the chieftain. This only pleases the latter further.

Pushing back her curiosity, Ursa brushes her hair which she has worn similar to Katara's and Kya's usual style.

"Shall we go, Milady?" She questions Kya, who sniffs a bit and sticks her nose high, *"We shall."*

"Oh," Nik's eyes brighten, "So, you are the Queen of the nation. Hmm, hear that, Sokka? Now she is part of the royal family."

"Okya, what is going on?" Azula questions snarkily and looks at their mothers and their men.

"Say, Nik, we found loads of interesting things back there, right?" Ignoring Azula, much to her chagrin, Zuko smiles at the increasingly displeased Sokka, "What do you think we will find there? Even if we don't find anything, we can certainly think of many things given what we already found, no?"

"Alright," the Chieftain grumbles and lets a huff, "Let's drop it."

"Drop what?" Katara questions.

“Yeah, did you find something interesting? Perhaps a spicy royal secret?” Jin questions with a starry gaze.

“Oh, it’s spicy,” Sokka nods and bursts into a fit of a chuckle.

“It’s nothing!” Zuko vibrates in frustration and looks at Nik, who agrees quickly.

“Yep, nothing. We just found Iroh’s stash of tea leaves.”

“Oh, where?” Yue questions with interest while Suki stares at the blushing Zuko with confusion.

*Something is definitely going on.*

“We found a royal storage room,” Zuko replies with a dismissive wave of his hand, “It was just a dusty old room.”

But his words seize Ursa’s heart for a moment and she glances at the trio carefully.

‘It cannot be...’

“You went where?” Ursa questions and stares at the trio critically.

“The...” Zuko’s voice is cut short with a reminder elbow from Sokka. Meanwhile, Nik is already holding his head in his hands.

“Nowhere,” Zuko averts his gaze.

“Who has it?” Ursa questions after taking a deep breath to calm her furiously beating heart.

“What?” Zuko questions.

**“WHO. HAS. IT?”**

Losing all his humor at once under the mother’s glare, Sokka is the quickest to step aside from the duo. But he refuses to throw them under the bus by answering her.

Zuko blushes harder and looks down. Adopting an apologetic tone, he mutters, “We didn’t know it was there.”

“Where was what?” Azula questions with interest.

“Nothing,” Ursa shoots her daughter a look and stares at Nik. “Where?”

"I may have confiscated it," Nik replies, "But in our defense, it was just lying there. We even saw—"

"I don't want to know what else you saw!" Ursa huffs as red dusting becomes apparent on her cheeks. She glances at her son again before rolling her eyes, "It's alright. Let's drop it!"

"I want to know!" Azula sets her hands on her waist and looks back at the girls as her full lips stretch into a smirk, "Girls, don't you want to know the same?"

Kya covers her smile with her overly large sleeve and adds formally, "*It has certainly piqued my interest. Go on, let us all know what you have discovered.*"

"Mom, please stop talking like that," Sokka thins his lips and cast a desperate glance in Kya's direction.

Nik raises his hands in a calming gesture.

"Let's not get too rowdy. It's nothing interesting."

"Oh, so it is *not* interesting?" Ursa eyes Nik with a tight frown, "Are you admitting that it holds *nothing* interesting."

Even with Nik's wealth of knowledge, sometimes, there is no winning with his fairer halves. Chewing his lips in frustration, Zuko adds, "Mother, that's not necessary right now."

"In a moment," Ursa huffs and locks her gaze on Nik. It is truly not the smartest to seek validation, but what the trio found may as well be something she could never achieve again, so hearing Nik dismiss it... *kind of* stings.

"Is it, or is it *not* interesting?"

"It *is*," Nik smiles tightly, "But do you really want to force the issue? If it wasn't, would I have taken it?"

Ursa huffs when she hears Kya speak from the side. A playful twinkle glimmers in the 'queen's' eyes.

"*Don't keep us waiting, dear. I command you to spill the beans.*"

"Really?" Ursa deadpans at Kya.

"You *have* to stop talking like that, Mom!"

"Well, I'm not going anywhere unless I find out what it is," Azula scoffs.

"If it's that important, why not drop the issue," Suki shrugs and smiles, "It's not like making them uncomfortable will help us with what awaits."

"It does seem more private with how Zuko is acting," Jin sighs and mutters under her breath, "And here I wanted to learn of some gossip..."

"You girls are pathetic," Azula sneers, and Kya glances at her critically, "*Young girl, you will learn to respect others. I did not spend my youthful years just to have such a result.*"

"Wha—"

"Now," she looks at Nik, "*Show me what item of interest you have procured. Hold nothing back. And Kya,*" glancing at Ursa, Kya speaks humorously, "*Let's not act unkindly toward Nik after he helped you reunite with your children.*"

"Oh, no... no, no, no..." Sokka looks down desolately. He begged Kya to stop, and now...

*He cannot unsee it.*

"Welcome to the club," Zuko throws Sokka a stare without any pity. The chieftain had quite the laugh at his Nik and Sokka's expense.

Suddenly, Sokka snaps his head in Nik's direction and snarls, "Don't you dare imagine it!"

Slowly, Nik looks at Sokka. A kind smile reflects on his face. Understanding flickers in his eyes.

"It's too late," he whispers back and then closes his eyes with a tinge of satisfaction, "It's already done."

Sokka's lips part open while Ursa groans and shoots a confused Kya a glare.

"This is getting very confusing," Yue smiles. She tagged along with the promise of enjoyment that she shall have, "Isn't it better to just speak of it instead of showing anything? Not many things can surprise us about each other."

"No!" Ursa snaps.

"Just say it!" Azula groans.

*"It would be the best course of action, daughter,"* Kya smiles at Azula.

"Shit... I can't unsee it now," Zuko's whisper reaches Sokka, and at the depths of despair due to the sudden reversal, Sokka snaps, "We found steamy portraits of the royalty in the hidden

chamber of their secrets, alright? Can we please drop it? And Mom, can you please stop talking like that?"

The expressions of the girls freeze and Kya is the quickest to recover before she glares at Nik and Zuko while holding Ursa's hand comfortingly. But she will **NOT** break her character.

*"I am disappointed in you, dearest lover and dearest son!"* She knows exactly what she is doing as Sokka shudders, and Katara blanches a bit, *"How dare you two imagine Kya in the poses I struck for the portrait! Nik, I shall visit your quarters later and retrieve it but not before punishing you."*

*"No!"*

Sokka and Katara snap at Nik as he frowns, "Hey, don't look at me! Ursa, I willingly accept all responsibility!" He nods at Kya.

"Coming here was a mistake!" Sokka groans.

"I'm glad. It should haunt you, too," Zuko smiles and cherishes the new bond he has found with Sokka.

"Mom, please stop it," Katara begs, making Ursa sigh.

"Katara, dear, I'm not doing anything," Ursa smiles while tucking a strand of hair behind her ear, "And yes, I dislike how much trouble 'Ursa' is causing us." She glares at Kya who keeps a breezy smile,

This only makes Katara groan, too, and Azula shrugs, "What's wrong with you? Let your mother have fun. Or do you want her to act like she is still trapped in that death sentence?"

Katara and Sokka freeze in sudden guilt while Kya frowns, *"Young lady!"*

"Yes, yes, mother. I know. I shall visit his quarter with you and get punished alongside him," Azula smirks, eager to watch the world burn.

"You two are enjoying this quite a lot, huh?" Suki smiles at Yue and Jin who followed the development with eager expressions as Jin presents a toothy grin, "It would be a disservice to them if we did *not* enjoy it!"

"My thoughts exactly," Yue giggles.

"Let's just go to the Ty Manor," Ursa sighs deeply. Even she did not have the heart to make Kya stop now that the woman is enjoying herself a bit and it *is* a bit of Ursa's fault, too.

The former actor in the former queen gave Kya many acting tips while the latter styled her hair similarly to Katara's hairdo.

—

The moment Ty Woo informs Ty Lee of the routine they will be performing alongside her, the acrobat's emotions plunge.

Confusion, sadness, and a flicker of genuine anger birth in Ty Lee but she keeps herself in check for the time being—

'How could they just use *that* routine?'

— As hard as it may be.

An elaborately embroidered golden-lined white crop top covers her bust as its straight collar reaches her neck. A white skin suit underneath tucked into baggy, translucent white harem pants that reveal her covered legs underneath cover her flat stomach. A pair of gold anklets clasp onto the ends of the pant around her ankles.

Her sisters dress in the same outfit.

Recalling Nik's statement about how he can discern their differences, especially between Ty Liu and Lum because they swim and dance, they went as far as covering themselves completely.

There is a chance that Nik is just *that* good and his compliments on their body were a lie, but if they can screw with him and see if he was lying or telling the truth then... it would be optimal.

Optimal *how*?

That's for them to know.

After resting, bathing, and changing, Ty Lee moves around in the manor. She visits the gardens, at least in the small region not covered by the large tent where her sisters perform every weekend. She greets a few workers she remembers till now and finds out what transpired after her employment in the Circus.

Her sisters were more than equipped and knowledgeable in managing the family business after their father's passing because of their studies at the Royal Academy. But like Ty Lee, her sisters had no such interests. They tried to employ a few of their '*trusted*' advisors but quickly caught on that those men and women did not have the family's best interest in their hearts.

For a group of girls only graduating from their teen years, they proved themselves far more perceptive than their naysayers.

Instead of letting their passion go to waste, the sisters tried to bring their hobbies to work: Ty Lin would play the flute for her admirers and workers in the warehouse; Ty Lat woke everyone in the manor in the morning with her harp; Ty Lao would leave beautiful pieces of origami to various workers with words of motivation drawn on them; Ty Liu couldn't exactly make the best use of her hobby, so she began teaching a few recent sailors how to swim accurately; Ty Lum would put on traditional clothes and dance to the slow music of Ty Lin's flute and Ty Lat's harp every weekend for the manor's maids and servants; And Ty Woo... quarreled with Sailors using insults that would put the entire profession to the shame.

Ty Lee learned that her sisters tried to find significant halves for themselves a few times. So that their beloved does not mistake them for the other sibling, they began wearing clothes of a single color, but their boyfriends made mistakes. Or at least, they *tried*.

Those men were left with sealed chi points and thrown out.

The more she learned about the things her sister went through, the guiltier she felt.

Ty Lee is well aware of how lucky her family is despite everything after performing in the Earth Kingdom for two years.

Even her blind optimism could not look away from the scar of war left on the Earth Kingdom. It forced her to open her eyes. That is one of the reasons why Ty Lee isn't vibrating in one spot with frustration but trying to understand what her family has been upto.

Yet, the more she learns, the more bitter she grows. Not for herself... but for them.

One of the maids revealed how Ty Lin started losing interest in the business. It would have been fine, but the real blow to her sisters was when Ty Lum stopped dancing. All of them began to grow sluggish. They would wake up late. Ty Woo began drinking heavily and would often raise a ruckus in the manor.

They were hurting and Ty Lee could feel it despite being unavailable to witness it by herself.

The final bit of her sister's tale concluded with Ty Lin suddenly bringing the idea of creating their circus. The plan was set in motion almost the same day, and while this caused a major hit to their father's business, the Ty Family has been doing better than ever emotionally and financially.

Ty Lee eventually enters the wide domed tent to find a similar face present in the seating area with a dazed look on her face.

"Ty Lin?" Lee voices out and her eldest acknowledges her with a quiet '*hmm*.'



“What are you doing here?”

“Nothing... well, thinking about the performance... I’m nervous. We all are.”

Exhaling heavily, Ty Lin looks at her youngest with a smile, “I know you feel I should have no right to ask this but do you have any tips on how to deal with performance anxiety? I can’t take Ty Woo’s word for it and just down a bottle of alcohol.”

“She would say something like that without a doubt,” Ty Lee huffs and approaches Ty Lin. Her hesitant expression only recedes when Ty Lin pats the seat adjacent to hers with a grin.

“When I feel anxious... I would usually pet the sky bison that we reared. You don’t happen to have a few for yourself, would you?”

“None. We tried to get a few but the officials... do you remember how some boys used to tell us that it’s a dream come true for any man to have all seven of us. The official charged with the maintenance wanted that dream *come true*.”

Ty Lee thins her lips. “I could ask Azula to—”

“We blocked his chi so many times he is paralyzed now,” Ty Lin shrugs and snickers, “But you can say we did fulfill his dream. After all, all six of us knocked him into his special space.”

Ty Lee giggles at that.

“But I don’t think it compares to your story,” Ty Lin grins, “Energybending skill that makes you hot, appearing in another location, and even seeing an actual dragon! You really are the luckiest of us all!”

Sensing a brief moment of envy flash in her eldest sister’s eyes, Ty Lee wanted to say something. It’s not like their life hasn’t been great when looking at the larger picture. The thought of her sisters envying her makes Ty Lee more than uncomfortable as their father’s passing was only a minor reason why she left.

Before she could speak, the noise of a few performers entering the circus distracts them.

“Ah, there you are. Boss Lin, your guests are here.”

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**Alternate Title:** What is Love? **Crusted Mangoes**; Would You Share Crusted Mangoes? **No**; Swap Day; The New Queen; Changing Partners? Nah, They Changing *Children!*; Sokka’s Nightmare; How The Tables Turn; Fire Nation Citizens Are Artistic Freaks; ‘Ursa’ is Going to

Punish Nik and Azula; The Challenge that Awaits; Ty Family Being Savage; Envy From Both Parties; Troubled Past; The Hidden Depression

**Title: Ty-Plosion (2)**

“Is this some rite of passage?” Nik thins his lips with a humored smile. He purposely deepens his voice and adopts a wise old man’s expression, “*You must pass this test to earn the right to enter the dungeon of the sisters—* Or something like that?”

The Ty Sisters welcome and block the passage of their guests with calm and deceptively collected looks. Long and thin white gowns cover their outfits and exude a noble aura. Their hairstyle, to the last strand, is chillingly the same.

None could differentiate between the seven sisters after their demand from the group to differentiate them.

But really, it was more of a challenge thrown at the *Hero’s* path who pointed them out accurately earlier. Perhaps other girls may find this challenge an entertaining way to see Nik face a setback, but Zuko is the only one whose eyebrows sink slightly. A complicated look flashes across the prince’s face as he recalls Nik’s earlier account in the bath.

His smile has a price that none can imagine, but Zuko could certainly empathize with what little he knew of Nik’s past.

But one’s past is just that— In the Past.

“Something like that,” The sibling in the center replies with an aloof look. “Consider this a good show for us. But it’s not mandatory in any manner. If you cannot identify us—”

“That’s a lot of *nonsense* without a single insult, Ty Woo,” Nik chuckles, “Consider me impressed.”

Her lips part open.

“How the fuck did you know?”

“The spirits of fertility and identical siblings bless me, I guess. But that wouldn’t interest you, right, Ty Liu?” He looks at the Ty Sibling to Woo’s left.

Leaving her lips gaping in surprise, Nik identifies the sibling to Woo’s right.

“Are we doing more physically active sisters first? First the swimmer, and now you, the dancer, Ty Lum.”

“I should respect age and point you out next, Ty Lin,” Nik grins at the girl adjacent to Ty Lum on Woo’s right.

“I’m not old!” The eldest snaps with a scoff.

“Of course not,” Nik shrugs, but such a non-committal response does not make her feel better.

Nik then glances at the girl adjacent to Ty Liu on Woo’s left.

“And there’s no way I am forgetting Ty Lat. I would love to see someone play nice songs on a harp!”

Only two remain. Even the guards look at Nik with respect. The girls behind him, however, look thoroughly surprised.

They are aware of most of the things Nik is capable of achieving, so all *this* being some spiritual shenanigan is less than likely.

Then *how*?

As Nik’s grin widens, the greater Zuko’s mood sinks. The prince knows he owes Nik his life. Not that the youth would ever lord it on others, but it is the cold truth. He could only sigh to himself for the moment.

If Nik opened up to him after so many interactions— most of them being confrontational— then Zuko feels he must keep it to himself. He is well aware of how just a friend to unwind with is what others usually need and appreciate— Not someone who actively tries to interject with someone’s life to *help* every living moment of their life.

Nik quietly looks at the girl next to Ty Lin. A flicker of hope and expectation betrays her aloof look as he looks in her direction. But he soon looks away from her to look at the sister on the far end of Ty Woo’s left.

“And you... I spent a few weeks with you already. We trained, we drank, and I even had June practice her brutish pick-up lines on you.”

Her lips quake and guilt seeps into her gaze. Meanwhile, the girl next to TY Lin shudders. Her eyes turn glazed and watery— something that everyone from Nik’s group notices, but before they hint at him, he drones on.

“Not to mention, you may have run out on me last night, but it was special.”

He rubs his jaw with his finger in a ponderous manner, “I also remember our first performance with Aang— ah, no, *The Great Pippinpaddleopsicopolis!*”

“So, mistaking you for your sisters is simply unthinkable after my vivid performance. So that’s why I saved you for the last. Oh, by the way, you’re Ty Lao. I’d like to see what you can do with paper one of these days. Ty Lee told me you once made a miniature dragon from origami.”

“Huh?”

All the sisters still for a moment of brief silence. Standing beside Ty Lin, on the verge of tearing up, Ty Lee’s watery eyes widen, and Ty Woo mutters, “This prick!”

“You did say it’s a performance, no?” Nik glances at Ty Woo with a smug grin and sniffs haughtily for a moment, “Entertained?”

“You are terrible for our little sister,” Ty Lin eyes Nik as if facing the worst tribulation for the family and drags Ty Lee away by her hand lest the girl gives away the *game* so quickly. She throws her guards a look.

“Lead them to their seats in the tent.”

Other sisters quickly follow Ty Lin’s steps and leave after throwing Nik glances filled with various emotions.

“That was... mean,” Yue thins her lips and gazes at Nik disapprovingly.

“If anything, that was impressive. If it were me, I would have called them Ty 1,2,3,4,5,6, and 7 before saying I numbered each of them just like that,” Sokka shrugs. His shoulders feel quite burdened by the size of the brain he carries.

“I... damn, that would have been even better!” Nik rubs his forehead, “And if they asked me to name them, I would have done that, too!”

“Exactly!” Sokka scoffs and crosses his arms, “And you would have achieved all seven—” He pauses and looks around to shrink under the glares of others, including Ursa, who narrows her eyes.

“*Son*,” she smiles with a resounding lack of warmth in her gaze. “Continue with your idea. All seven siblings, is that it? Now, why would I or anyone think that is the last thing Nik should do considering the Ty Sister’s past?”

Sokka looks at Kya and then at Ursa before rubbing the back of his head.

“Are we still doing this?”

“Doing what? Azula, dear, is there something wrong with Kya or me?” Kya speaks to Azula, who shakes her head with a bright grin.

“Not that I know of, mother~!” Azula hugs Kya’s arm while tossing Katara and Sokka teasing glances. Knowing how *dangerous* the princess is, the siblings feel slightly anxious. Kya and Nik, as likely as it may be, is something they were taking time to accept.

But Azula and Kya?

That’s...

The two glare at the princess when Ursa voices out sternly.

“Now, don’t be rude to Ursa’s daughter!”

‘This is kind of fun!’ Ursa smiles at Kya, who does the same.

“Anyway, we’re here to enjoy, right? Let’s enjoy ourselves. Seeing seven of them doing tricks on a pole is something worth hurrying for.”

By now, the group understands he is just being playful, and his vague words only confirm this doubt.

If anything, Nik’s evolution may have made him more frivolous in the most inappropriate times.

— — —

“How did that son of a bitch get us all correctly?!” Ty Woo curses her heart out with a furious blush the moment the seven of them step backstage.

The other six sport equally unnerved expressions. They are used to men getting their identities wrong by mistake or on purpose, so someone tossing out their entire playbook for these circumstances left them blank. TY Lin could only drag Ty Lee away, who she felt would almost burst out— out of happiness or tears!

“I don’t know,” Ty Lao mutters with a complicated look. “He almost made me worry for a moment... laying in on Lee so thickly while,” she chews her lips with anticipation betraying her expression, “Ravishing me with such intense gaze!”

“Hey!” Ty Lee glares at her third eldest.

“What? He could get all of us right! *All of us!*” Ty Lao emphasizes. “And we practically made the game hellish! Look at us! Even *Babu* would have fumbled!”

The mention of their father leaves a moment of silence before Ty Liu squirms, “It was... hot.”

“Then go dip in cold water again, bitch!” Ty Woo barks and then glares at Lee, “How’d you manage to find him? You never told us he could do *that!*”

“How was I supposed to know?” Ty Lee squeaks, “I wasn’t here?”

“And who the hell ran away?” Ty Woo scoffs before closing her mouth shut.

Ty Lin and others look at Ty Lee in worry as the girl clenches her fist before taking a deep breath. With ice lacing her voice, Ty Lee glares at Ty Woo. No.

She glares at *all of them*.

“Let’s just perform that routine and be done with this farce,” She seethes. “After all those promises... you all could not even leave that routine alone.”

Ty Woo opens her mouth to say something, but Ty Lin cuts her off and nods, “We promised to talk after the routine... let’s reserve all of it for that moment.”

The other four look at each other while chewing their lips with similar helplessness in their gazes.

There are many, many things they want to talk about.

Many curses they want to unleash.

They want to apologize to one another for many things, and all the parties are self-aware of these faults. They know that they all are aware of it.

“Let’s practice it,” Ty Lin claps her hands softly. “Others will start with the usual show and try the things we plan to perform the next show.”

Ty Lee quietly enters her position as the show begins for Nik and others. His words continue to resurface in her mind. They act like an anchor to her emotions before they spiral out of control. She recalls his vast and dependable aura.

*‘So, mistaking you for your sisters is unthinkable...’* He said.

It’s only been a few hours at best since the knot in her stomach about the thought of being one of the many *faceless* women in Nik’s life, but she feels it unraveling.

As Ty Liu said—

It was *hot*.

To stand out, it felt good. To have a different identity under *his* gaze felt thrilling. Ty Lee can still beat her heart beating with excitement.

And as she practices with her sisters, Ty Lee recognizes a disheartening truth.

They are similar.

And it was no less impactful for them than it had been for her.

Her sister's colleagues quickly step on the stage and perform for their guests. It could have been under happier circumstances...

But Ty Lee dismisses the thought quickly.

It could not have been under happier circumstances. Not since the day their *Babu* died, and Ty Lee witnessed *that*.

Soon, it is their turn to bring it in with the finale. Ty Sisters step on the stage with their practiced stage smiles despite their internal turmoil. The seven sisters stare at Nik at once as if vying for his attention for themselves, but they quickly notice something. Unlike their original seating plan, Nik is not sitting with the rest of the group.

The girls are sitting ahead of the three men.

Sporting lopsided and dopey grins, the three men sit two columns behind the cheerful girls who demonstrate cheery and roused looks of excitement after the performance.

If this isn't strange enough, Ty Lee and others notice Sokka's and Zuko's aura being all fuzzy as Nik's aura continues to remain steadfast if one ignores the purplish tint of impishness.

"Whoooooooooooo!" Sokka suddenly cheers loudly, "Go Ty 1,2,3,4,5,6, and 7!"

'*He is asking for all his chi points to get blocked!*' All seven of them deadpan at Sokka's words making Zuko guffaw suddenly.

"You guys got this!" Nik claps loudly, too, "And don't worry! I know who Ty 1,2,3,4,5,6, and 7 are!"

And now the sisters wanted to know what numbers are assigned to them!

"He does! Son of a bitch really does!" Sokka bursts out laughing.



'Holy shit... they are drunk. They could have invited me, too!' Azula curses them as Zuko only grins like a shy maiden when *drunk* like one!

With the two of them raising a proper ruckus that would accompany their arrival on the stage and a grinning Zuko appreciating life's simplest blessing from behind the drunken tint of his gaze, the seven sisters get started.

The seven of them bounce forth at once. As two of them climb the poles with tightropes connecting them, the other five begin climbing over each other to form a human pillar of the *Ty* in a few breaths.

Meanwhile, Ty Liu and Ty Lum each at the peak of the pole and grin widely. Their bodies move reflexively as they jump on the tightrope!

"Woah!" Zuko gasps, making the rest of the girls twitch a bit.

Displaying remarkable balance as they strike a pose on the tightrope, Ty Liu and Lum nod at one another before sprinting on the rope and reaching the center of the rope where Ty Lee is waiting on top of her sister.

The two cause a bit of alarm as they drop down the rope with a flip in their jump, but they catch the rope with an arm each. The rope bends and curves promptly as the two sisters reach down with their other hand. Looking at Ty Lee, both of them reveal sincere grins.

This is how they want to let her know the truth!

""*Grab on!*""

Ty Lee extends her hands and grabs her elder sister's hand before the rope pulls them only for the duo to grit their teeth and throw Ty Lee in the air.

Without an ounce of fear, Ty Lee spirals in the air gracefully, and as she begins to descend, for a moment, her brown ponytail seems to be forming a halo over her head.

If they were just hyping the group out of being drunk, the trio now watches quietly with sheer appreciation and wonder.

*It's beautiful:* They all think at once as the Ty Sisters begin to present themselves in one of the best performances.

'I could do all these two years into my training,' Ty Lee performs with a huge smile, but her thoughts cannot be far from happiness.

'How long did it take you all?' She wonders.

'I could do it all alone.'

Ty Lee's heart aches in genuine sadness as she wonders—

'You six *always* had each other's back. It must have taken less than 2 years to achieve all this. I bet..'

The corner of her lips quiver, but she will not let her smile fade. No matter how stale her aura grows, she refuses to stop smiling.

'I'm sure... you six continued to support each other even after Babu's death. Even when you faced all those problems while I was away. Not that my existence ever mattered to you all.'

As she sinks from the sky, she stretches her hands out as her sisters catch her again.

'If only my life could be like this performance. If only I could count on you all to have my back like this when it mattered the most.'

As if seeing through her smile, each of Ty Lee's sisters would hold her hand tighter. They all would be reluctant to let go. Not this time. Not *again*.

But even if they can only hope to convey their emotions as they can always sense each other, they fail to connect with Ty Lee. Despite Ty Lee's huge smile, her eyes are blank, and her body is only going through emotions.

Ty Lin, Lat, Lao, Liu, Lum, and Woo all think the same thing while barely holding their hearts from breaking collectively.

*'She is amazing. We have to give it our all, but she can do it without a thought.'*

'I'm sorry! Truly!' Ty Lin catches Lee again, but even if they look at each other, Ty Lee merely looks past her eldest sister with a note of indifference.

And it hurts so much.

'I really wish we could have explained it all... *that* day especially,' Ty Lin begs internally and her smile quivers. Her eyes water unconsciously.

'Does it matter?' Ty Lee *brightens*. 'I heard that hint loud and clear. Besides, it has always been like that. I was just fooling myself that I was only pissed at others getting our names wrong. None of that would have mattered if only you all... were there.'

— — —

It has always been like this ever since she can remember.

*Seven sisters.*

*Three pairs of two and...*

*One odd one out.*

“Lin! Let’s play! I’ll be the catch! All of you can hide!” She would ask... no. She would beg, “Please~ I want to play with you guys, too!”

“Sorry, Lee! Lat and I are going to climb trees!”

“Can I come?”

“Uh! How about next time? We have a score between us who can climb trees quicker.”

—

“Lao, Liu! Let’s train that ‘fist’ things Babu teaches us!” She would find someone else. She has six sisters for spirit’s sake. She can persuade one of them to play with her, right?

“Nope~ We have to spar with each other!”

“Yeah! Only two can spar. You’re the odd one out!”

—

“Lum, Woo! Come on, acrobatics and dancing are not that different! Let’s just try something together while doing our things while, Woo, you can learn insults while watching us!”

“No can do, bitch! Lum is my practice dummy! Find your own bitch!”

“Sorry, Lee, I’m preparing a special dance performance like your acrobatics for Babu to see~ Woo is my critique. No one else can see it right now.”

—

Eventually, she stopped asking altogether. The feeling of disconnect continued in her family, but things weren’t that bad. They would still talk all the time. Even if Azula disappeared, she still had Mai.

But things came crashing down when their Babu gave in to his heart condition and died one night. He went away peacefully in his sleep. The funeral had been tiring but serene, even if marred by their tears.

However, for Ty Lee, sadness only piled on when they returned home.

Mai had left with her family for the Earth Kingdom.

And as Ty Lee looked around to find comfort with her sisters... she saw the same sight.

*Seven sisters.*

*Three pairs of two and...*

***One odd one out.***

She left that night. She had no plans, but she could not stay in that house. She wanted to clear her head. She wanted to be away from them. A part of her wanted to be found within days. That's why she hadn't left the capital but took her time to join the circus.

But nothing happened.

So, the other uglier part of her won.

'Maybe they forgot about me. Not that I mattered to their precious pairs.'

So, when the opportunity to leave the capital arrived, she latched onto it.

— — —

'They could not even leave my first routine alone,' Ty Lee winces internally as Ty Lum holds her and spins her around in a dance move that she said she found in their family's secret storage.

She finds herself against Lao and Liu, who take mock stances before performing fake chi-blocking strikes that Ty Lee dodges promptly and performs a similar counterattack.

'This is my first performance for Babu. But.. it also has their first performance.'

Well, aside from Ty Woo, who was grounded for insulting a servant to his nine generations as her performance, the rest are all incorporated.

Every time her sisters hold her with genuine affection, a part of Ty Lee broke down further.

Why could they not do something so simple before?

Why did she have to be the odd one out?

Who even decided on the pairs?

Why did no one ask her about it?

Why couldn't just one pair invite her in?

Why? Why? *Why?* **Why? WHY?**

The thoughts and emotions which she has kept suppressed for years burst out.

The spectators have long gone silent.

It's not just the sight of the angels in white performing their hearts out that have caused them to spectate the breathtaking scene in silence but...

They notice something. Something pure.

Something even a menace like Azula does not have the heart to defile.

It's similar to a crystal dew in the dawn's first glow. It conveys emotions in several manners. The sight of it resonates a similar emotion among those who are close to each other and seeing Ty Lee like that, Kya is the first one to get affected. Others follow soon. Not Azula. She empathizes but she is not that sappy.

Even Sokka cannot control it. Even Zuko is infected by it.

Nik just watches in amazement.

'Why did it ever fucking matter if I sleep with her or not? When did I even come up with that dead-brain rule? I *want* her to know it. All.' His thoughts clear up in an instant. Things are only complicated when he makes them one.

The seven of them come to a stop.

And as they spread their hands out to take the final bow with Ty Lee in the center...

As the rush of excitement fades.

As they notice tears in the eyes of the spectators.

They realize—

Their smiles are long gone. Somehow, their sight has long been cloudy, but it failed to stop their performance today as... Sisters.

And like their spectators, tears stream down their cheeks without any intention of stopping.

The Ty Family welcomes their guests to the angelic mess they have always been.

\*\*\*

**Alternate Title:** Frivolously Dangerous; Sokka's Big Brian Moment; The Parent Exchange is Finalized— Consent is Provided; Azula's New Mommy; The Halo; Performing Their Hearts Out; Conveyed Feelings; The Odd One Out; Absence of Babu; Resounding Tears; The Drunken Bros; Numbered Ty; Knowing Correct Identity is... Hot; The Sisters' Target; Septuplet Rizz

\*\*\*

A/N: Chapter 6-8 are edited (Would have gotten till 10 but I started editing on laptop too from the 8th chap but I am feeling the slightest bit more comfortable on laptop.)

- 1) Alternative Titles
- 2) Better Grammar (Hopefully)
- 3) Optimizing and adding a few points to make the story less boring? I remember a few of those complaints.

**Title: One Last Regret (1)**

*\*Knock\**

*\*Knock\**

*\*Knock\**

“Go away!” Ty Lee feebly shouts while wrapped in her blanket in her room. She did not want to look at anyone right now.

“I made sure Azula doesn’t come and be all... *her*. Kya will take care of her. So, can I come in?”

Ty Lee glimpses at Nik’s voice but doesn’t answer and curls further into herself.

*\*Knock\**

*\*Knock\**

“Ty Lee?”

“What?!” the usually energetic contortionist snaps and grunts. “I don’t want you to pity me! After being pathetic last night, despite speaking big and acting so bad today, too—I’m sure you just want to laugh at me!”

“I think that’s called projecting,” Nik chuckles from the other side and mutters, “I wanted to see if you’d be interested in getting cheered up a little. Originally, I planned to go somewhere with Sokka, but others are interested in exploring more.”

“Just leave me be...” Ty Lee mutters and adds under her breath, “I don’t deserve to be near anyone.”

Nik refrains from commenting on the last bit and sighs. “Fine, I won’t force you. But you’ll be alright on your own, right? I mean, even your sisters are going—”

*\*Thud\**

*\*Bang\**

Loud thumps and hurried knocks echo from Ty Lee’s side before her door slams open.

“Oh, look at that,” Nik grins, “You’re up!”

“What do you mean—you're going out with my sisters?!” Ty Lee still hadn't changed out of her white outfit and looked positively disheveled.

“That's not what I said,” Nik rolls his eyes and then huffs with a frown of his own, “Look, do you want to come or not? When Zuko felt down, a trip with me—” *‘And a life-death situation.’* “—helped him relax. He even got a dragon's egg. We're going to a similar location. Aang might be there, too.”

Ty Lee thins her lips and looks away. She clenches her fists nervously.

“I... I don't know. I'm sorry. It's just a lot harder than I expected. I don't want to ruin everyone else's mood...”

“But if you don't tag along, you risk ruining my mood. What about that?” Nik smirks as she scoffs under her breath.

“As if you care.”

“Fine, stay here.” Nik sighs and turns around. He didn't come here to force her but to extend an invitation. If she does not want to join, then it's on her. Before leaving, however, Nik stops and remarks quietly, “Your performance was beautiful. I don't know if you want to hear this, but I disagree with your idea of setting yourself above your sisters. And your performance seems to agree.”

“Of course, you take their side now you've met them!” Ty Lee flares up.

“Really?” Nik looks at her critically.

“**REALLY!**”

“Fine,” Nik scoffs, “I wanted to invite you and tell you what others know, but you don't. But guess what? I'm going to an island that houses ancient civilization. I wasn't planning to aggravate you because you are clearly more important to me, but I am going to make moves on your sisters.”

Her eyes widen as he continues.

“You'd like that, wouldn't you?” Nik calmly goads as he crosses his arms. “You're set on letting your frustration get the better of you. I should just help you then. Right?”

She flinches and chews her lips in frustration.

“I didn't mean that! Alright! You do not know how hard it is for me to accept all this!”



“You think I can tell you, sisters, apart because I’m some kind of lucky freak?” Nik scoffs, “I *understand* how difficult situations can get. I just don’t know the specifics—like you don’t know mine. *You* have no idea what I had to suppress and smile as I played along with you seven.”

An almost tangible sense of irritation sets itself on Nik as one particular memory resurfaces in his mind. It is one of the rare instances where the leading star isn’t Esta but one of his past regulars.

“What did you mean by that?” Ty Lee finds her anger simmering as she observes Nik’s stony expression.

“Whatever. I just wanted to congratulate you on the performance and ask you out, so I could make up for my foolish thinking. Stay here to stew in your mess, or tag along—your choice. We’ll be leaving for the port in 30 minutes.”

Ty Lee’s lips part as if she wants to say something, but Nik does not look back again.

As he turns away into the corner, Ty Lee stands in front of her room alone.

‘*Why did I say all that to him?*’ She bites her bottom lip. Her eyes tear up again.

‘*What the hell happened to me back there?*’ Nik frowns, too, and scans the mansion for any stray spirit. He found none.

Nik had been joking about the triplets of misery with Zuko earlier today, but now he suddenly blew his top off?

It is strange.

Very strange.

‘Great, we’re also off to another island. Fucking great!’

— — —

Azula couldn’t have asked for a better day!

Since early morning, she has only gotten pleasant surprises—Ty Lee’s sisters starting their circus; a lavish palace; a mouth-watering wardrobe; an exchange of mothers that grills Katara and Sokka; news of her mother’s *wild* portrait; and now Nik’s somewhat detached reception to the Ty Sisters, including Ty Lee.

Best day ever.

They are even going on a quick trip!

Truly, leave it to a mother to know what her child wants!

“Thank you, *Mother~!*” Azula hugs Kya. Their group is scattered over the deck of the ship. Her voice is just loud enough to earn a glare from Katara and Sokka again.

It was Kya’s idea to tag along with Nik.

Nik wanted to collect the last bit of information he could and then make peace with others before leaving. Completing the mission by Ozai’s demise loosely signified that he had no other concrete aim to accomplish in this world.

But Zuko still refused to join them. He returned to the personal space to see to his Dragon Egg.

‘If I get a Dragon, too, then this day will be *royally purrfect!*’ Azula winks at Katara before letting go of Kya.

“Tch, she is so annoying! You had to sleep with her, didn’t you?” Sokka blames Nik as the latter leans on the railing and quietly looks at the sea.

“Hey, are you feeling alright?” Sokka questions again, “You’ve got a sour face since you invited Ty Lee. Couldn’t handle the rejection?”

Nik glances at him before shaking his head. “That’s not it. I’m just feeling weird.”

“Great! Because this entire situation is uncomfortable and weird. Can’t wait for this day to end and cap it off with our visit to the tavern!”

Bhanti Island, their destination, is not that far from the mainland. The trip back and forth would only take about 2 hours, and Nik won’t spend too much time copying any information he finds to study later.

His gaze pierces into the crashing waves. His mind keeps rewinding his spat with Ty Lee.

That was low of him.

Just because one side acts out because of hurting does not mean he needs to reciprocate. He would know.

“Hey! Why the long face and gloomy aura?” A Ty face pats his back and sits on the edge of the rocking railings with a wide grin.

“How did you sisters even read aura, Woo?” Nik glances at her and questions with a smile.

“Maybe they read body language and just lie to us,” Sokka grunts in a bored manner.

“Screw you, bitch! I ain’t a liar!” Ty Woo snarls.

Not offended, Sokka shrugs, “Just making an assumption. By the way, your performance was amazing!”

“You wish you three weren’t drunk, huh?” Woo smirks and dangles her legs.

Nik glances back at the group of sisters who kept looking in their direction before sighing and smiling, “I don’t easily get drunk. I used to, but I’m getting better. So I caught all of it.”

“You could tell us apart even while we were flying around?” Ty Woo brushes her swaying locks back with a hand and grins.

“Painfully so.” Nik glimpses internally. These words practically flew out of his mouth.

The annoyance in his voice is not lost on Sokka or Woo.

“Are you sure you’re alright?” Sokka questions again with a frown.

“Dandy,” Nik replies and steps back, “Call me when we reach the island.”

Nik pulsates his chi out of his body again as he walks into the ship’s cabin. More spiritually inclined individuals, like Yue, sense the gesture.

Still, Nik located no spirit nearby.

“Aw, did something happen?” Azula struts over with a smirk. “Do you want your sister’s help? Maybe I can be a better replacement than Katara.”

Sokka works his jaw while Azula turns to look at Woo. Flames of satiric desires burn in her royal gold pupils as Azula points her nose high. “Maybe yours, too, Ty Woo. Wouldn’t having a sister with a different face be desirable?”

The Princess is as unhinged as ever.

Ursa merely glances at her daughter, then she looks at Jin with a grin, “Thank the spirits I’m Kya for the day, huh!”

“Oh, yeah, mother. That is a relief.” The corner of Katara’s lips twitches, and she deadpans.

“I know, daughter!” Ursa replies cheerily, “So, have you made plans?”

“Plans?” Katara inclines her head.

“Don’t you want to marry Nik? Have you planned where you want to get married? Even you, Jin.”

Ursa’s question catches the duo off guard, and they look at each other.

“I didn’t think about it,” Jin scratches her cheek and looks at Katara, “You?”

“Not really. We never made it clear explicitly. I’m sure I want to leave with him, but what comes next is still…” She looks sideways and sees Kya walking over to them.

Katara stops talking her mind as the current source of her troubled heart approaches them with a smile and speaks in an accent that she is getting fluent in, *“Ah, you must forgive Azula for her comments. She is very excited.”*

“We know how Azula is, Aunty Ursa,” Jin grins back at Kya and then teasingly looks in Katara’s direction. She is no less of a menace. Maybe it is something she learned from the village alongside Azula. “Katara here was talking about her thoughts on marrying Nik.”

Katara glares at the girl who likes to keep a pretense of the simple village sweetheart and groans, “It is nothing important!”

*“Oh, my. Do I sense a lover’s spat?”* Kya smiles and looks at Ursa. *“Daughters can be so complicated, right?”*

Ursa glances at Azula in the distance before sighing and holding Katara’s hand. “Don’t I know it?”

Katara rolls her eyes.

Meanwhile, Jin is having the time of her life.

“Anyway,” Katara shoots back at Kya in annoyance, “Before I think of my marriage, shouldn’t you think about yours? Wouldn’t it get awkward if you and Azula marry the same man?”

Kya and Ursa flinch.

This feels like a trick question.

“Er, Ursa, a word?” Ursa looks at Kya as Katara interjects and holds Ursa’s hand. “No, Mom. I want to hear ‘Ursa’s’ answer. I want to understand if Ursa thought it was a good idea.”

Ursa looks sideways.

“Katara, let’s not,” Jin smiles awkwardly. The karma came too quickly to bite her on the ass.

“No,” Katara retorts firmly, “Jokes are well and good, but I also want to hear from her. What is so enjoyable about torturing your daughter with jokes like these?”

“Excuse me,” Ursa breaks free from Katara and walks away with a complicated expression as Kya looks at the young waterbender quietly.

“Are you happy?” Kya questions softly.

“Are you?” Katara frowns.

“Hey, it’s alright. You were alright with Aunt Ursa and Kya having their fun until a while ago,” Jin interjects to mediate, but she can only start with someone her age and not the elderly.

Sokka notices their commotion and ignores Azula before walking over to them.

“Did something happen?”

“Nothing,” Jin smiles.

“Stop lying!” Katara scoffs and looks at Kya, “I disagree with what Azula said! I’m happy you are with us, but I find the notion of you being with anyone aside from dad...”

Her expression says it all.

“And I’m leaving.” Sokka makes a quick turn.

A brilliant move.

He got enlightened in his drunken emotions during the performance from the Ty Sisters that things are only weird if he lets them get weird.

For instance, take the Ty Sisters as an example.

They have brilliant coordination, but they allow things to get weird because of emotions when their body acts in the opposite manner. Besides, Nik or not, Sokka knows he will be the man to evaluate his mother’s lover before anyone else. It’s his duty now. And even if it’s Nik, so what? He’s not sleeping with Nik, so he has no problems. And he risked his life to save all of them. That’s a good man right there.

Jin gazes at Sokka’s back with hung jaws.

That was quick.

“Katara, I was trying to—”

“Well, it was weird, all right?” Katara interjects snappily.

“That does not mean you should verbally attack others.” Kya glares firmly.

“Who?” Katara frowns.

“Ursa,” Kya replies. “Where did all that come from before? Has Ursa ever treated you unkindly?”

Katara's lips part open. She looks around but could not find Ursa.

“I just need to... leave.” Katara rushes away with a doubtful expression, leaving Jin and Kya in desolate silence as the mother regretted trying to have fun.

“Don't worry... you should have seen her with Iroh,” Jin squeezes a smile and comforts Kya, “And she doesn't mean half the things she says. Sometimes she says she doesn't like it, but give her a few seconds, and whoa!”

Kya glares at Jin.

Smirking, Jin links her arms with Kya. “Come on, Aunt Ursa! You know what I mean, right?”

*“I suppose.”*

The duo then glances at the source of another heated argument between the Ty Sisters and Azula.

‘Just what is going on today?’ Jin blinks owlshly.

“Don't listen to her!” Suki sighs and tries to interrupt the argument.

Ever since she saw the sisters performing, she felt the urge to enlist them under Kyoshi's name. And if Azula keeps swaggering about, her plan will crash and burn!

“Stay out of it, bitch!” Ty Woo shoots Suki a glance. Yue frowns even harder while standing beside an equally confused Sokka.

Ty Lin retorts against Azula. “And we don't want you as our sister, Princess.”

“Why not? You don’t want each other either. Or do you dream of living alone for the rest of your lives?”

“I do.” A voice suddenly replies.

It’s Ty Lee.

“What did you say?” Lum looks shocked as Ty Lee fumes.

“Why not? In fact, I’ll pick Azula as my sister over any of you!”

‘Well, that was a joke.’ Azula leans back slightly.

“Lee,” Lin begins with a frown.

“Give it a rest! Now you want me as a sister? Huh? **NOW?** Where were all of you when Baba died or before that? But oh, no. Suddenly you want me back after taking my routine. After taking my hobby! You left me with nothing, did you?!”

“It’s not like that!” Ty Lat interjects.

“I don’t care, all right?!” Ty Lee shouts.

“I don’t care what’s the truth and what’s not the truth! All I care about is I was left alone! I had six sisters! Every one of you six is older than me, but none of you could bother to ask how I was doing!”

Her loud voice attracts the attention of others as the glum Ursa and Katara get closer to the group. Even Nik hears the commotion and steps out of his chamber.

“And now here you are! Trying to be with the person I like! Trying to take someone who truly knows me at a glance! Some sisters you lot are!”

Katara frowns and glances at Kya once again.

“Just give us a chance to explain—” Lin begins again.

“I won’t!” Ty Lee hisses.

“I won’t give the six of you any other chance! *Ever!* I’m done. Live your life happily doing the thing I love the most.”

Her breath shudders, and she heaves deeply.

“I regret being a part of you six.”

Her sisters grow silent. Each one is truly hurt. Their expression says everything and even if Ty Lee is angry, all her heat flies away as she looks at the heartbroken faces of her sister, and regret sets in her for a different reason.

“I shouldn’t have—”

Ty Lee suddenly collapses on her knees before she can complete her sentence.

A faint wind blows.

The wind carries a soft whisper.

The Bhandi Island can already be viewed from a distance.

Nik, Ursa, Kya, Katara, and the Ty Sisters collapse similarly.

Sokka, Yue, Azula, Suki, and Jin look at each other in shock.

“This isn’t my fault.”

Azula covers her base as quickly as possible. She was just out having fun. Not... this.

“It’s a spirit!” Yue rolls her eyes and looks at the island.

“And my weapons are inside Nik. Sounds even weirder saying it out loud.” Sokka clicks his tongue.

— — —

“I told you it’s either this or the Ember Island. It was merely a matter of their preference. Sigh. Not that you can hear me, Avatar Aang.”

A cloaked figure on the tallest peak of the island looks at the boy sitting cross-legged with his eyes closed.

Aang’s tattoos glow brightly while Hina and Niwan lay collapsed near him.

Not only Hina and Niwan but all the stormbenders on the island are unconscious.

“Ra and Raat were right. Bonding with emotional creatures has its ups and downs. Raava and Mokshi... are daring, alright.”



**Alternative Title:** The DLC Boss; Azula and Jin Are Menaces; Spirited Away; A Desolate Island; Words Sharper Than Blades; No Trip is Without A Spirit; The Travel Spirit's Curse; Regretful Actions; Cost of Knowledge; Hidden Hate; Bhanti Island's Mystery; Oh, Great. Sokka's Stuff is Inside Nik Again; Zuko is Unironically Classic Tea Certified Wise

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A/N: Chapters 9-12 edited.

- Fun alternative titles.
- Almost entirely rewritten with many useless statements and notions removed.
- I hope for better grammar.
- Overall smoother experience with a timely explanation on things why he doesn't just start devouring things.
- He learns language in chapters 9-10 rather than in 11
- His encounter with the ghost specter is more fleshed out.
- His 'date' with Mitsuko for shopping has gotten better.

**Title: One Last Regret (2)**

What sets one event from the other in an infinite pool of possibilities are the actions of living beings who don't know any better.

In one possibility, a passing comet grants Ozai unbelievable strength, which helps him dominate the Avatar.

In another, hope vanishes from people's hearts and the world for good since Aang is never discovered.

A stream of possibility exists where Aang wakes up years after Ozai goes with his plans. A possibility joyous of Aang's despair and suffering. He finds himself alone. A world where Ozai is a *God* and people do not know of him.

A world where spirits hunt him.

But all these possibilities pale compared to one possibility.

An event that Aang did not witness in his lifetime. His source of only and the greatest regret.

"Welcome!" The aged Fire Lord Sozin welcomes the crowd of Airbenders from the four corners of the world with a beaming smile. He walks up to the group of old monks and priestesses before bowing slightly in respect. The Gates of Azulon is still not constructed, but this place could only be the—

'*Fire Nation Capital.*' Aang gapes and looks around from side to side. He sees many familiar faces. Among them is Monk Gyatso standing ahead with other monks who reciprocate Sozin's Respectful demeanor.

'Where am I?'

Aang zones out. He cannot remember the last thing he was doing, but it feels like something too important to forget—'*Wait... I remember now. I was annoyed with the monks for not letting me play air scooter. Just because I'm the Avatar...*'

Aang looks around as he buries his indignations for later.

'So this is the preparations for Roku's Festival. I wonder if Roku used to have fun with his friends.' The boy looks around the port as Sozin leads everyone to the designated location where the Airbenders will begin the festival by meditation for an hour.

Next, everything happens too quickly.

They sit for a moment and close their eyes. The airbenders—young and old—control their breathing and fall into their meditative trance only to hear a loud command.

**“Attack!”**

Fire and arrows rain down on the nomads from all sides. Archers on the surrounding hills aim for the children indifferently while firebenders set the area on fire!

“Huh?!”

Aang’s eyes snap open as an arrow whizzes past him.

\*Khcch\*

He looks back and sees the arrow sticking into the eye socket of his training buddy, who collapses on the scorched ground with a puddle of blood forming around his head.

Aang looks around. He is too shocked to care for the monks rushing in his direction.

He sees his brother and sister getting slaughtered and is quickly brought to reality as a stray arrow flies into his thigh.

“Khuk!”

Aang stumbles down involuntarily. The smell of smoke and blood fills his senses, and his eyes widen in pain. A drop of cold sweat drips down his shaved head as he hears Gyatso’s shout, but it is too hard to discern anything in this carnage.

\*Fwip\*

An arrow whistles and stabs Aang’s chest. He looks down over his bloodied habit. It’s at this time that Gyatso reaches and holds him close.

“Aang! Stay with me! You’ll survive! *I promise—*”

Aang’s eyes widen in despair as an arrow pierces the back of Gyatso’s neck and sticks out of his mouth.

‘No!’

Aang’s mind screams.

He wants to scream out loud, but his body refuses.

Memories fill his mind.

Gyatso is dead.

Aang's gaze turns hollow as he perceives destruction around him.

His heart is filled with regret as all of it vanishes away.

The—

***“End.”***

Aang's eyes snap open at the familiar voice. He looks around in the darkness. However, as he blinks again, he is back in the port.

He looks around in confusion.

If he can't remember anything, it must not be significant, right?

*'Wait... I remember now. I was annoyed with the monks for not letting me play air scooter. Just because I'm the Avatar...'*

---

“What happened here?” Sokka whispers, and others are equally dumbfounded. It was already challenging to convince the captain to continue on the set course and reach Bhandi Island. Carrying them would have been impossible, so Sokka and Suki chose to explore while Azula, Jin, and Yue stood guard on the anchored ship.

Azula should be enough to deter the captain and other soldiers from doing anything stupid out of fear of the unknown.

The two seasoned warriors were not empty-handed. The warship itself had many weapons for the two to choose from.

“What happened is,” Suki grunts, “Zuko was right, and we all stepped on a spiritual landmine!” She gazes at the ground of a stone temple littered with stormbenders.

“That much is clear,” Sokka rolls his eyes and looks around, “If something happened to Nik then I can kiss Rena goodbye which is not happening!”

“Isn't Nik your friend? Show some care for him, too!”

“Believe me, if we wore the opposite boots, Nik would care about you girls more than me,” Sokka shoots back. “You girls will carry our next generation while we, guys, will carry the next bill in a tavern. Take a guess and see what’s important.”

Suki narrows her eyes. She somehow feels insulted and complimented at the same time.

‘It’s probably his tone,’ She clicks her tongue internally and chooses not to give this discussion any more heat before it becomes an argument.

“Besides, we should try not to speak too much.”

“What do you mean?”

Sokka and Suki enter the shrine and gaze at the broken pillars. The temple is well-maintained despite its dusty exterior.

“All of them were in bad moods and probably argued. Nik didn’t have any immediate argument, but he was sour for sure. We never know what a spirit uses. This time it may just be one’s foul mouth that gets them in trouble.”

“I think it’s a little more complicated than that,” Suki replies. “At the risk of sounding like the Ty Sisters, their *aura* felt off.”

“Hah! That sounds even dumber from someone other than those sisters!” Sokka chuckles.

“Were you always an ass or did Rena contribute?”

Sokka tosses an unamused look toward Suki and sighs, “Sorry. I’m just feeling a little unnerved and worried. But this isn’t the first time we encountered a problem of this nature. I just hope this isn’t our last.”

Sokka’s instincts force him to accept the reality of the situation. While others would feel deterred from following Nik after so many issues he seems to encounter... he understands that death is an eventual step in life. Death will seek them no matter where they live, so the fear of death should not stop them from making a decision. If anything, death should only deter them from being foolish, not courageous.

Suki nods grimly.

The two explore the temple cautiously but find nothing. There is another group of unconscious people aside from the storbenders that are dressed similarly to the fire sage on the temple’s lower floor, but everything else isn’t spiritually weird.

“Hey, there’s a way out from here,” Suki discovers traces of disturbance leading *through* a wall.

A densely packed vegetative path reveals itself once the stone wall drags open slowly as the two warriors push it simultaneously. The duo trek through the pseudo-grotto and work their way up the slope.

The vegetation grows sparse the more they walk until they are near the top of a hill which might be the tallest peak on the only mountain range of the island where the temple is built.

What they saw on the mountain peak did not please Suki and Sokka in the slightest—a ‘*meditating*’ Aang sitting near unconscious Hina and Niwanl.

And a cloaked individual perched on a small rock near the Avatar.

Suki and Sokka instantly ready their sword and spear.

“Who are you?” Sokka questions fiercely.

One thing the two did not expect was an interactive spirit as the cloaked individual chuckles.

*“Redemption slays me, so does self-satisfaction; I’m always a whisper away, but measured when one dies. O’ warriors, do pray tell, what am I?”*

Sokka and Suki look at each other for a moment.

Suki sighs softly and then grips her sword harder. She almost charges the spirit when Sokka gestures for her to stop with a thoughtful expression.

“Redemption is your slayer... so is self-satisfaction. Always a whisper away, but measured in time of death...”

The Chieftain exhales a long, exhausting sigh.

“Man am I familiar with you.”

His words cause the spirit to cackle gleefully.

There is a reason why Sokka and others are the way they are. There is something he has faced in his long tenure as a chieftain and made peace with just like others.

The only thing that the five survivors of the spirit’s mischief have experienced due to helplessness or the merit of their wrong decisions.

“You’re—”

---

He can finally hear Mokshi.

'For some reason, I previously couldn't. It's not like I'm completely immune to other spirits. While Koh could not steal my face, Reaper did devour me. So what caused me to fall into another spirit's *'mischief'* this time?'

Nik observes his surroundings.

He is in a beautiful room. Four lamps covered by pink lids illuminate the area in a sensual glow. Translucent crimson curtains cover the four sides of the bed, on which lie several *'instruments.'*

His eyes darken as he looks at himself.

He feels short and frail. A strip of blue cloth covers his torso in an x-shaped fashion, leaving his skinny abdomen and flat pecs bare while sashaying around his neck. A golden piercing on his navel reflects the pink light in the room.

His lips quiver, and he locates the nearest mirror to observe himself: a small scar near the corner of his right eyebrow, a bastardized heart tattoo above the flat of his cock.

A pair of baggy blue harem trousers cover his legs and reveal everything underneath them.

The violet irides of his eyes are the only thing that assures Nik that he wasn't dreaming before this moment. But the rest almost made him throw up again. It's not the clothes, tattoos, piercing, or the room. It's not even the nightmarish memories. Nothing about his past bothered him, but he still feels irritated.

Why?

External memories threaten to overcome his senses, but Nik holds his ground. His violet pupils exude a hazy glow as he feels Mokshi's reluctance clearer than ever.

*'You think this is my fault?'*

Instead of snapping back at Mokshi, Nik carefully considers his bonded spirit's intent.

Mokshi never screws around with him. Aside from its lack of will to communicate directly, it is willing to convey information in every other manner, including the more intimate energy bending.

'What spirit is this? Can we break this illusion?'

His question meets rich denial.

Before he can question the ‘*Why?*’, the door to his chamber opens. Nik’s head whip in the direction of the entrance. That’s where his nightmares began every day when he worked in the Pink District—the Entrance.

His customers sauntered up to him. All of them high-paying meant that they committed many atrocious deeds to reach their position of wealth and lacked compassion.

This time he saw three familiar faces.

Triplets.

Innately wavy and luscious locks of gold flow down on their backs. Three sets of beautiful ruby eyes light up in delight the instant they see him. Their plump and pink lips smirk widely in joy, and their generous bosom jiggles as they jog to him with wide eyes.

“Nik~! Are you ready?! See? We took Esta’s permission and purchased an elixir from her, too! So sorry for the last time! I got excited and didn’t think of healing your toes.”

She lowers her head and looks up with coy, upturned eyes. “Will you forgive me?”

“Stupid, that’s why I told you that branding the flesh is simpler,” the one on the right smiles fondly and shakes her head.

“Eh, whatever way is acceptable,” the one on the left drawls with a lazy smirk. “As long as our dear Nik get our names correct. Then we can have the nights of our lives.”

“So?” The one in the middle reaches out to stroke his chest. “Forgive me?”

Nik smiles gently. His face lacks the battle-weary features he has grown into, and his body lacks the same physical strength. But his mindset cannot be more different.

No, in fact, this is the same night he tries to escape with Cresta before he was betrayed a final time by whom he considered his mother for his actual ‘*mother*’—Esta.

“Ishtra,” Nik smiles and reaches out to stroke her cheek.

“You got my name right—” Before the psychotic woman could squeak joyfully, Nik cuts her off.

“I will not forgive you.”

His hand digs into her face before he smashes her head into Fretra to the right.

Without waiting, Nik grabs Aphrotra by her throat. His violet eyes glimmer in a cold light as the remaining two sisters reel from shock.



“Cease this illusion at once,” Nik demands, but nothing changes.

The girl in his hand struggles to free herself from his grip. Even if he wasn't startlingly strong, the three girls were nothing to him.

He feared them once. He then came to loathe them.

Now?

Nothing.

Right?

**Wrong.**

His hate burst out with no one to hold him back.

The primordial spirit of freedom becomes his witness as he brutally chokes the life out of one girl before killing the rest by stomping on their heads.

His own bare feet fractures in the process, but he does not stop even when their skulls cave in. The sound of the brutal performance long attracted attention, and the only one allowed to touch him in this establishment aside from the customers arrived at the room after a few minutes.

“Nik, what the hell—” The muscular picture of perfection comes to a slow stop as she looks at the *blood-stained* ‘son’ of hers and frowns. The next second, her palm flies out alongside her thundering voice that Nik has never heard before!

**“Who are you?”**

‘Is that a chi on her hands?’ Nik blinks in a similar surprise before Esta squashes his head, and darkness overcomes his gaze.

“What was that?” Nik questions the moment he understands things are different than his initial assessment.

This is no illusion.

And that's why Mokshi refuted the notion of breaking the illusion since it wasn't one in the first place!

A mischievous chuckle replies to him instead of Mokshi.

“I suppose my skills are limited when working on Mokshi and its host. To think a fickle mortal with some measure of spirituality will sense my presence...”

Nik looks around. He can still feel his body, but he finds nothing.

“I’m not something you can see here, Dear Traveler. I’m a sensation that you hide constantly. Although, things would have been better if I could control your memories while you traveled in this life.”

“Great, another spirit who says a whole lot of nothing, is that it?” Nik narrows his eyes and tries to connect with Mokshi. But something stops him—A whisper.

It’s like a soft gale grazing over him.

*Do you really want to do this? Are you sure you won’t—*

*“Redemption slays me, and so does self-satisfaction; I’m always a whisper away, but measured when one dies. O’ traveler, do pray tell, what am I?”*

Nik realizes the identity of the spirit instantly.

He realizes the source of his irritation. It’s not something Mokshi can ever stop him from feeling. It’s the reason why he felt like lashing out at Ty Lee. No, it’s the reason why everyone felt like lashing out at each other during the whole ride.

The more you suppress it, the worse it festers.

Once it blooms, it cripples.

“You’re...” Nik sighs softly.

—**Regret.**

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**Alternate Title:** Worst Situations; The Massacre of the Air Nomads; Ground Filled with Bodies; The Dark Spirit of Mischief; Return to Whoreville; The Triplets of Nightmare; No Forgiveness; Hidden Hate; Deeper Regret; The Paradox of Freedom Countered—One’s Own Chains

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A/N: I’m a little happy that I finally get to work a little on Esta. And yes... I was scrambling for names, so the triplets were named after the three goddesses of beauty and love from Danmachi.