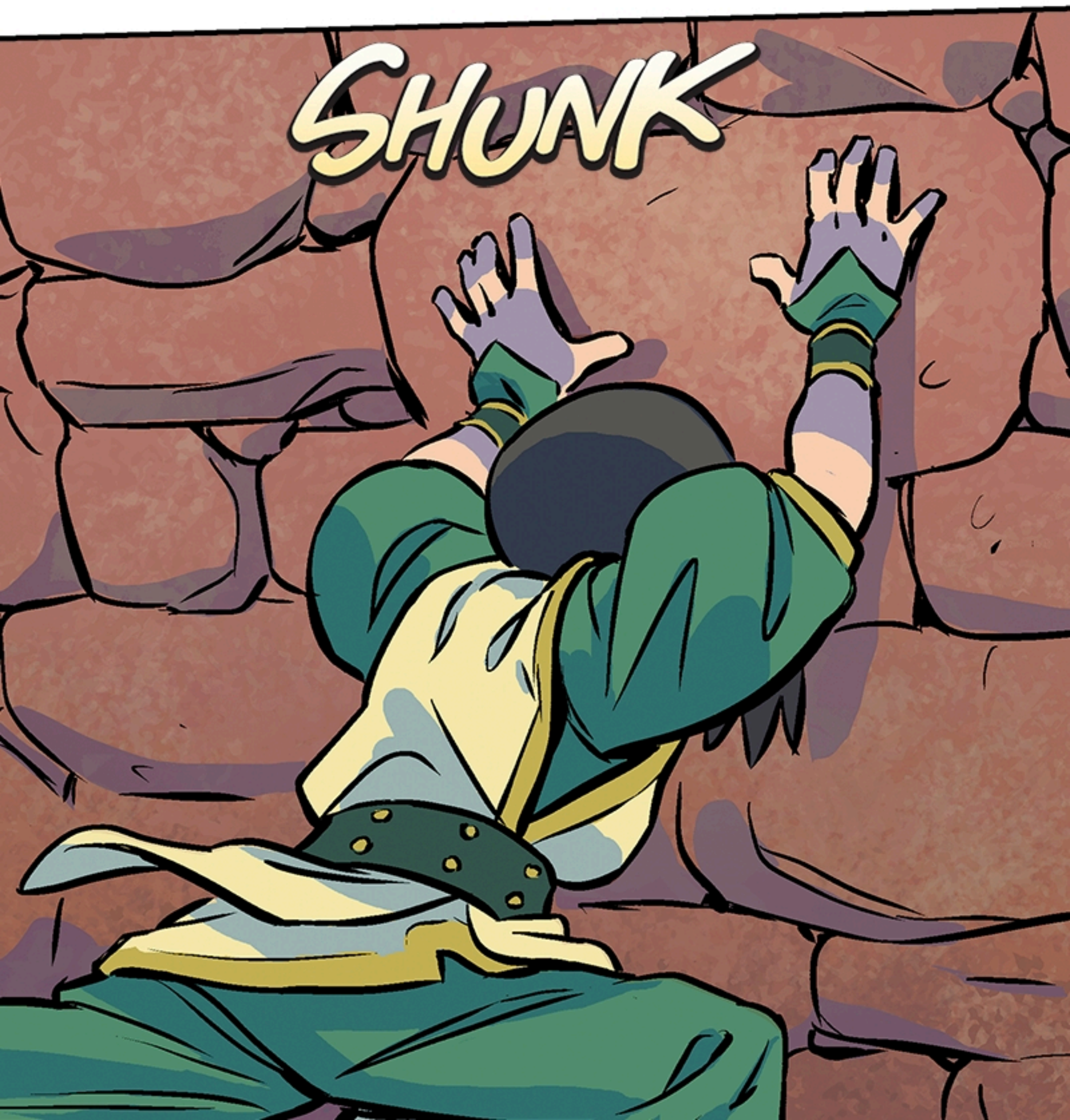




SHUNK





LITTLE
HELP, TWINKLE
TOES!

KRRRAKK

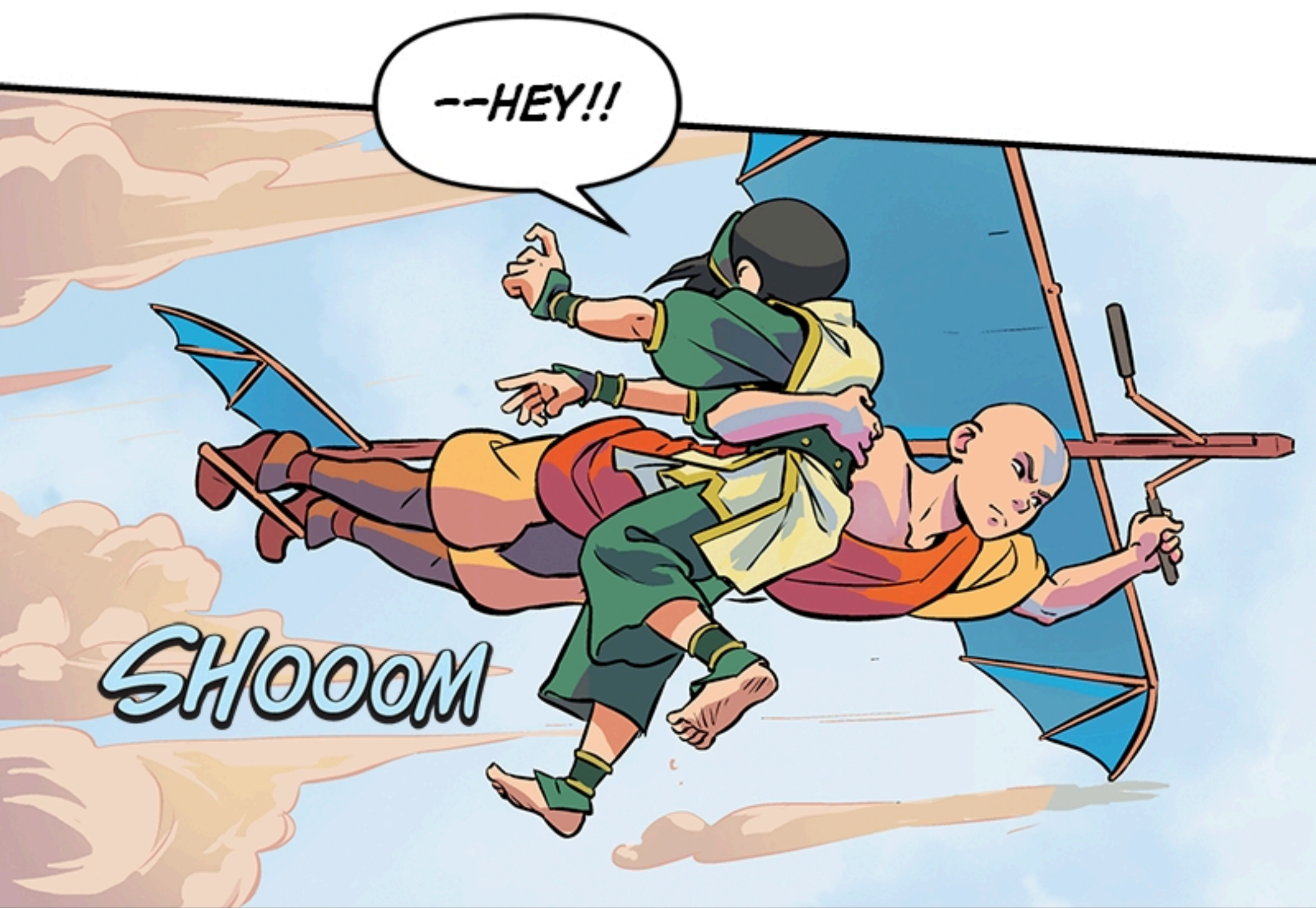






THIS THING
IS GOING TO
PIECES...



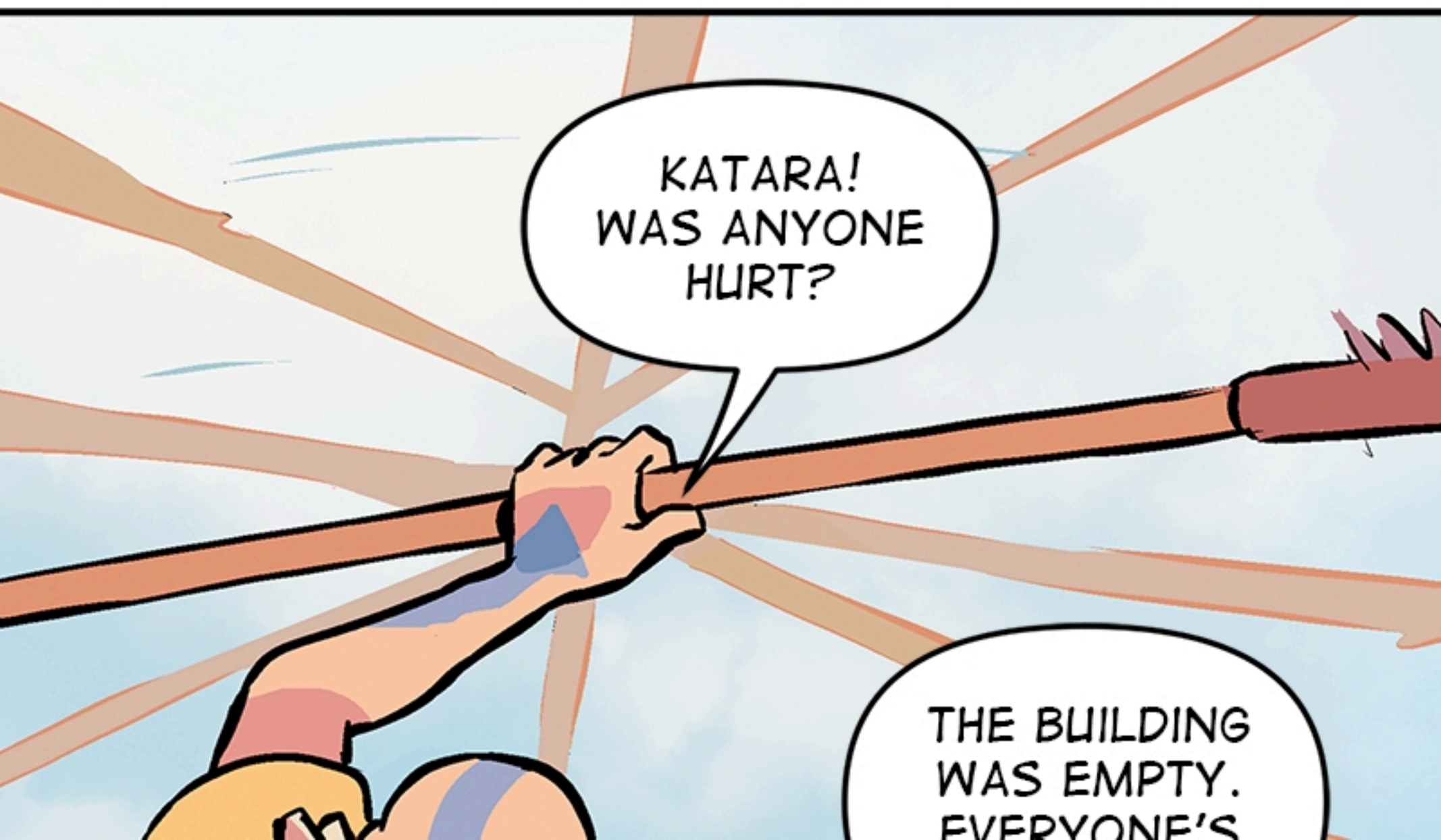








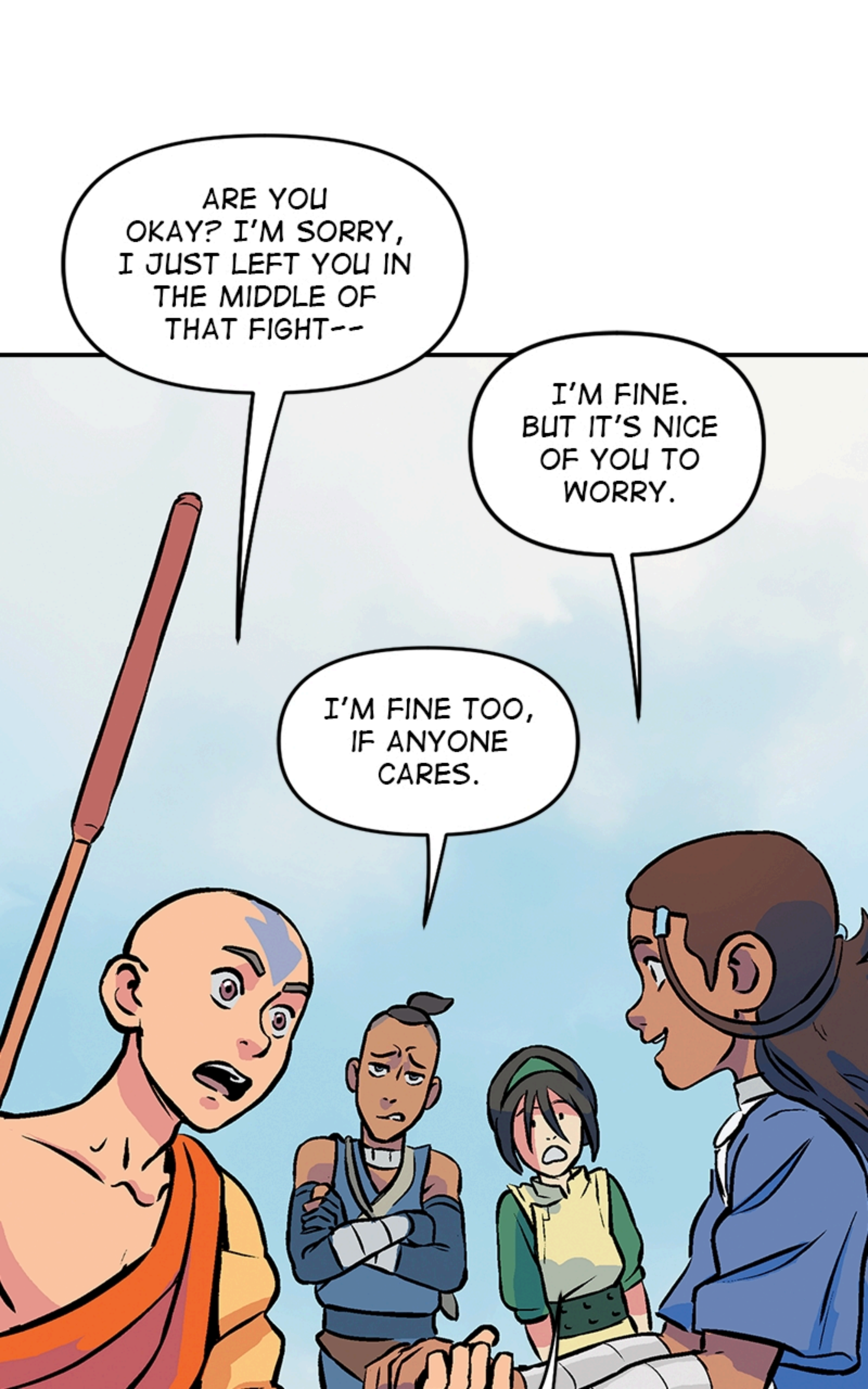
THERE WASN'T
ANYTHING LEFT
TO HOLD UP. IT HAD
NEARLY COLLAPSED.
WHOEVER BUILT IT
DID A TERRIBLE
JOB.



KATARA!
WAS ANYONE
HURT?

THE BUILDING
WAS EMPTY.
EVERYONE'S





ARE YOU
OKAY? I'M SORRY,
I JUST LEFT YOU IN
THE MIDDLE OF
THAT FIGHT--

I'M FINE.
BUT IT'S NICE
OF YOU TO
WORRY.

I'M FINE TOO,
IF ANYONE
CARES.

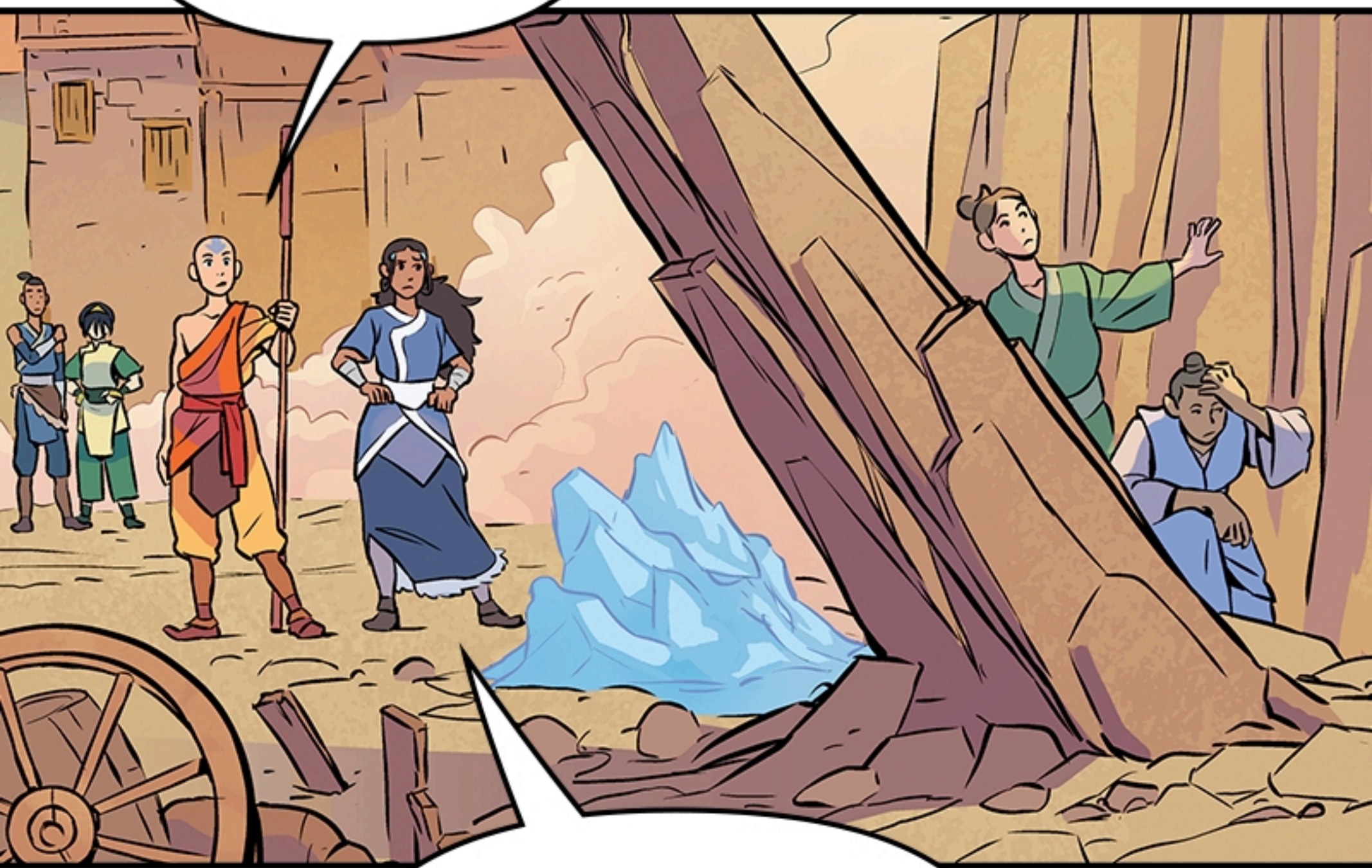
I CARE.

WHAT?

...NOTHING.



WHERE DID
THE BENDERS
WHO STARTED
THE FIGHT GO?



THEY RAN
OFF INTO THE CITY.
I COULDN'T STOP THEM
ESCAPING **AND** HELP
PEOPLE GET OUT OF
THAT COLLAPSING
BUILDING.





HOW MANY
PEOPLE LIVED
IN THAT BUILDING?
THEY'VE ALL LOST
THEIR HOMES.



AVATAR,
THIS IS WHY I ASKED
MY DAUGHTER TO BRING
YOU HERE. THIS CITY IS
PLAGUED BY BENDER VIOLENCE.
WE **DESPERATELY** NEED
THE AVATAR'S AUTHORITY
TO HELP US DEAL WITH
THIS PROBLEM.



I THOUGHT
YOU NEEDED MY
WISDOM AND
GUIDANCE.

WE NEED
EVERYTHING
THE AVATAR CAN
OFFER US. IF YOU'D
COME WITH ME TO THE
BUSINESS COUNCIL
MEETING THIS
AFTERNOON...



I'LL COME,
BUT I NEED
TO HELP THESE
PEOPLE FIRST.

TOPH, YOU UP
FOR EARTHBENDING
THESE PEOPLE A
NEW HOME?



AS LONG
AS I GET TO
CHUCK ROCKS,
I'M HAPPY.

EVERYONE,
I'M SORRY FOR
WHAT'S HAPPENED
TO YOUR HOME.
MY FRIEND AND I
CAN HELP YOU
REBUILD IT--





WE DON'T
WANT YOUR
HELP.

YOU
DON'T?

SERIOUSLY?
I CAN MAKE THAT
PILE OF ROCKS LOOK
BRAND NEW, I'M
THAT GOOD.





BENDERS
DESTROYED OUR
HOME. WE DON'T
WANT THE HELP
OF BENDERS
TO REPAIR IT.





I'M
NOT--I'M NOT
LIKE THE BENDERS
WHO DESTROYED THIS
BUILDING. I'M
THE *AVATAR*.

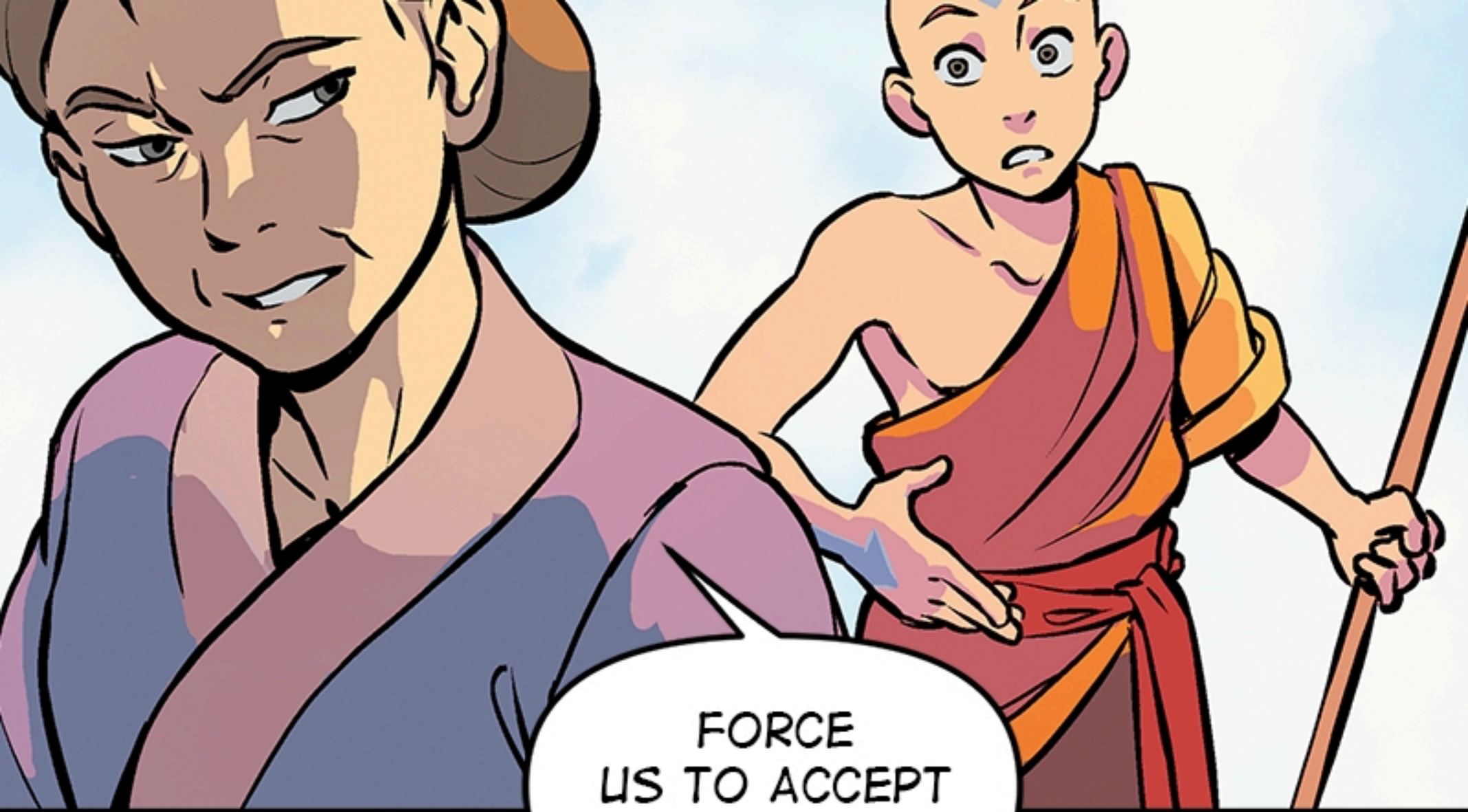
MY JOB IS TO
HELP PEOPLE.
THAT'S ALL I
WANT TO DO.



THANK YOU FOR
YOUR OFFER, AVATAR,
BUT WE'RE GOING TO
FIX OUR HOME
OURSELVES.

WAIT--

WHAT ARE
YOU GOING
TO DO?



FORCE
US TO ACCEPT
YOUR HELP?

THEN
LEAVE US
ALONE.

NO,
OF COURSE
NOT.



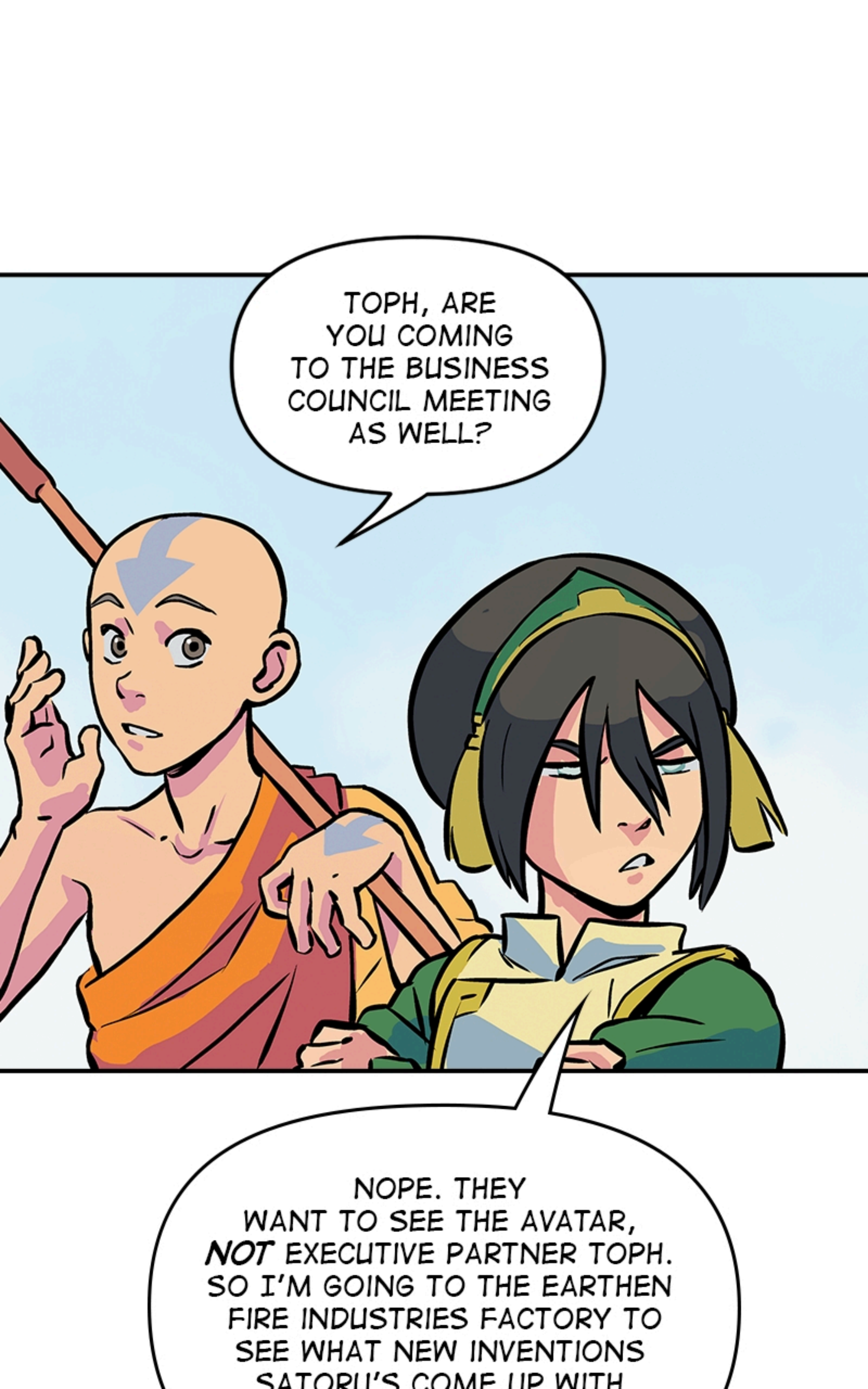
WHAT'S
THEIR PROBLEM?
WE COULD'VE EARTHBENT
THEM A NEW BUILDING
IN NO TIME FLAT.

AVATAR, YOU
ARE ALREADY HELPING
THOSE PEOPLE BY AGREEING
TO APPEAR AT CRANEFISH
TOWN'S BUSINESS
COUNCIL.



I KNOW
WE'LL BE ABLE
TO COME UP WITH
A WAY TO DEAL WITH
BENDER VIOLENCE
IN THE CITY.

IN FACT,
I MIGHT HAVE
A SOLUTION
ALREADY.



TOPH, ARE
YOU COMING
TO THE BUSINESS
COUNCIL MEETING
AS WELL?

NOPE. THEY
WANT TO SEE THE AVATAR,
NOT EXECUTIVE PARTNER TOPH.
SO I'M GOING TO THE EARTHEN
FIRE INDUSTRIES FACTORY TO
SEE WHAT NEW INVENTIONS
SATORII'S COME UP WITH

SAYONRA'S COME UP WITH
SINCE WE WERE
HERE LAST.

I WANT
TO COME.

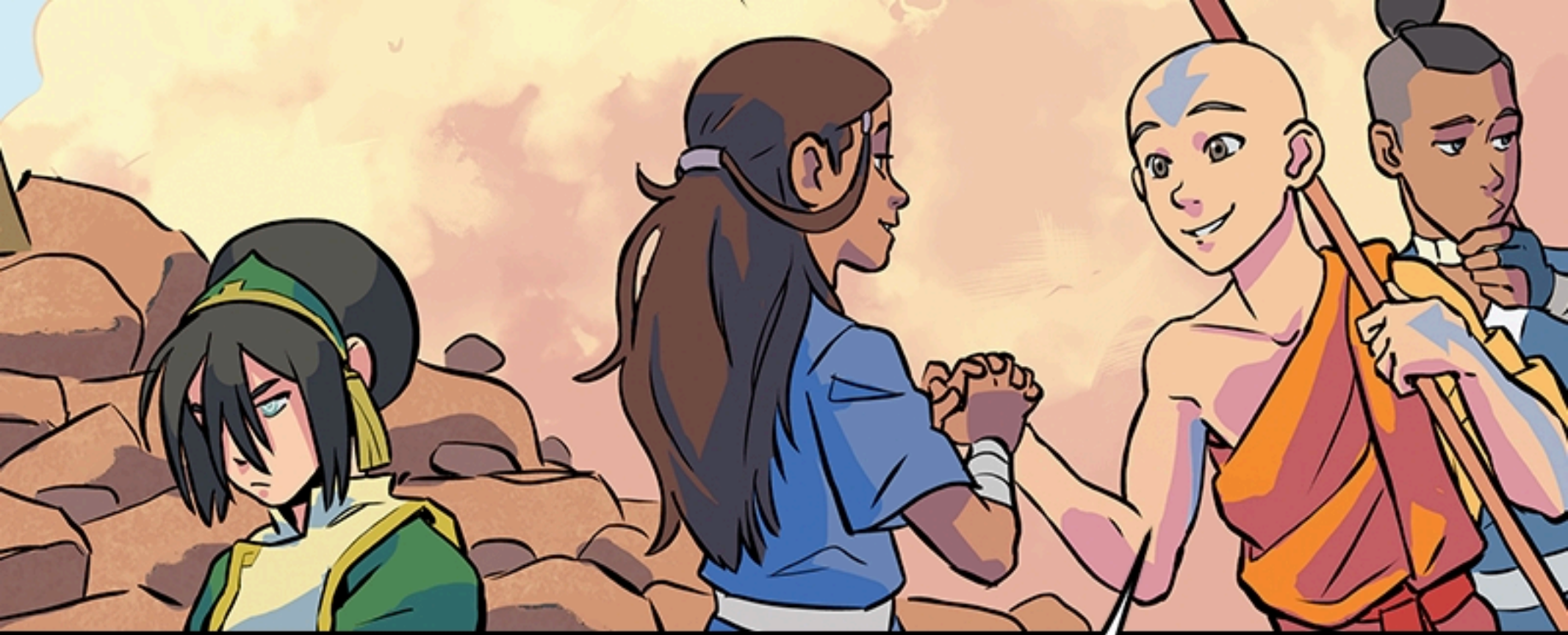
REALLY?



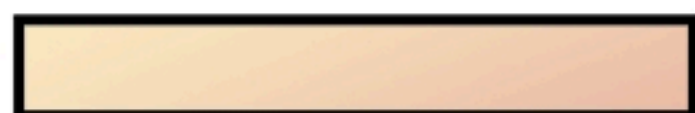


YEAH, IT MIGHT
BE INTERESTING TO
SEE HOW THE BUSINESS
COUNCIL WORKS. AND
MAYBE I'LL SUGGEST
A BETTER NAME.

I'LL TAKE
APPA AND GO
WITH TOPH TO THE
FACTORY. I'LL SEE
YOU BOTH AFTER
YOUR MEETING.



OKAY.
I'LL SEE YOU
TONIGHT.



OSTRICH
HORSES!



THEY'RE GOOD
FOR GETTING AROUND.
CRANEFISH TOWN HAS
GROWN SO LARGE IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE TO WALK
EVERYWHERE.





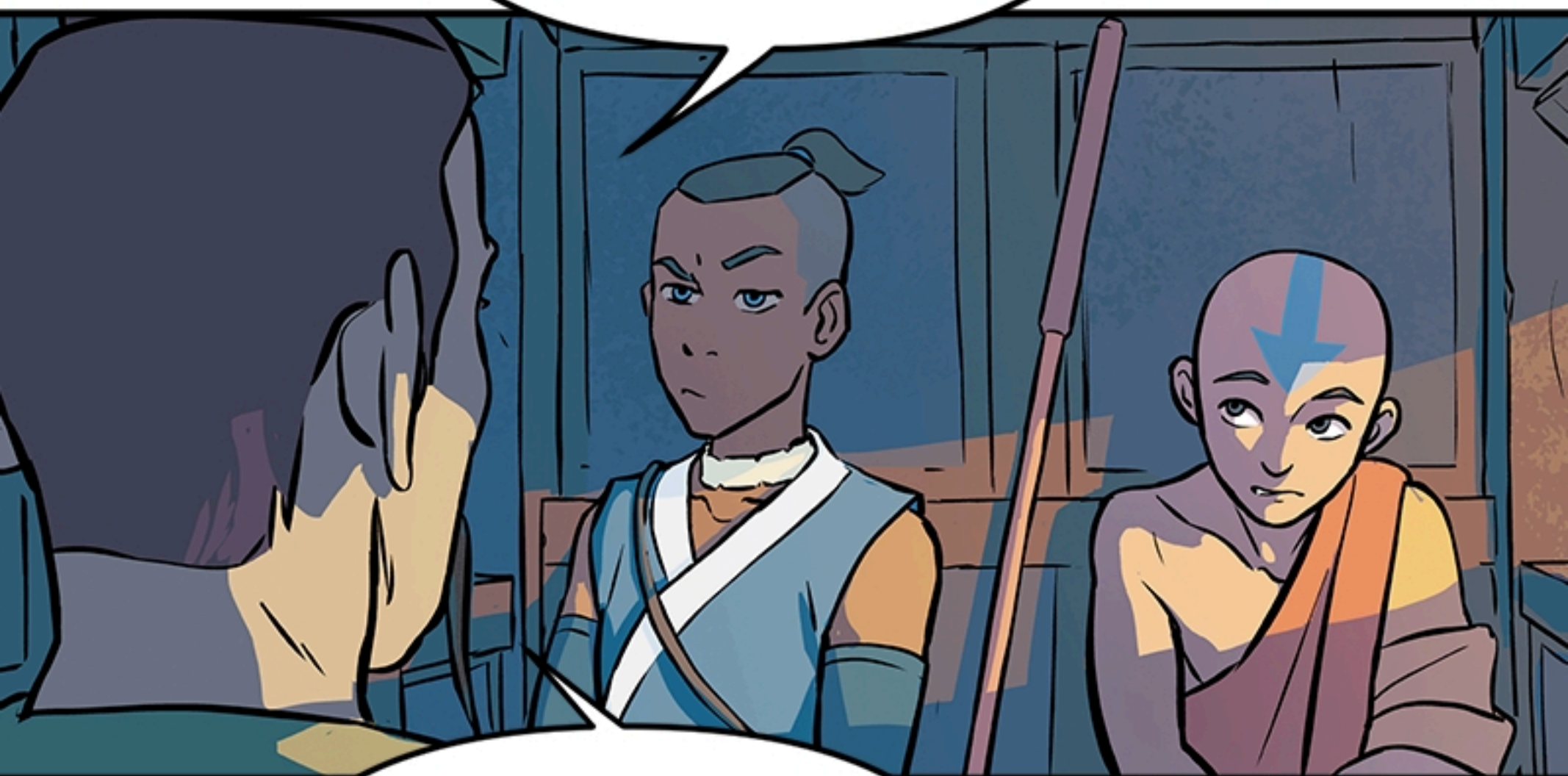
THIS CITY...IT'S
SO **OVERWHELMING**.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S
GROWN THIS MUCH IN
SUCH A SHORT
TIME.

MANY PEOPLE
HAVE COME HERE
LOOKING FOR
WORK.



UNFORTUNATELY,
THE FACTORIES CAN'T
EMPLOY EVERYONE,
NOT EVEN SKILLED
BENDERS.

WE'VE HAD
PROBLEMS WITH
BENDERS HARASSING
AND STEALING FROM
NON-BENDERS.



THEY CAN'T
USE THEIR SKILLS
IN HONEST WORK, SO
TO MAKE ENDS MEET,
THEY TURN TO...LESS
HONEST MEANS.

THAT'S
TERRIBLE.



BUT I HAVE A
PLAN TO PUT A STOP
TO THIS CONFLICT,
YOU'LL SEE SOON.

GOOD
AFTERNOON,
FELLOW COUNCIL
MEMBERS.

WE THOUGHT
YOU MIGHT NOT
BE COMING. BETTER
LATE THAN NEVER.

LAO, GOOD
OF YOU TO
JOIN US.

COUNCILMAN LAO
HAS ATTENDED EVERY
BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETING.
THERE WAS NO REASON TO
THINK HE WOULDN'T
BE HERE TODAY.

YOU WERE JUST



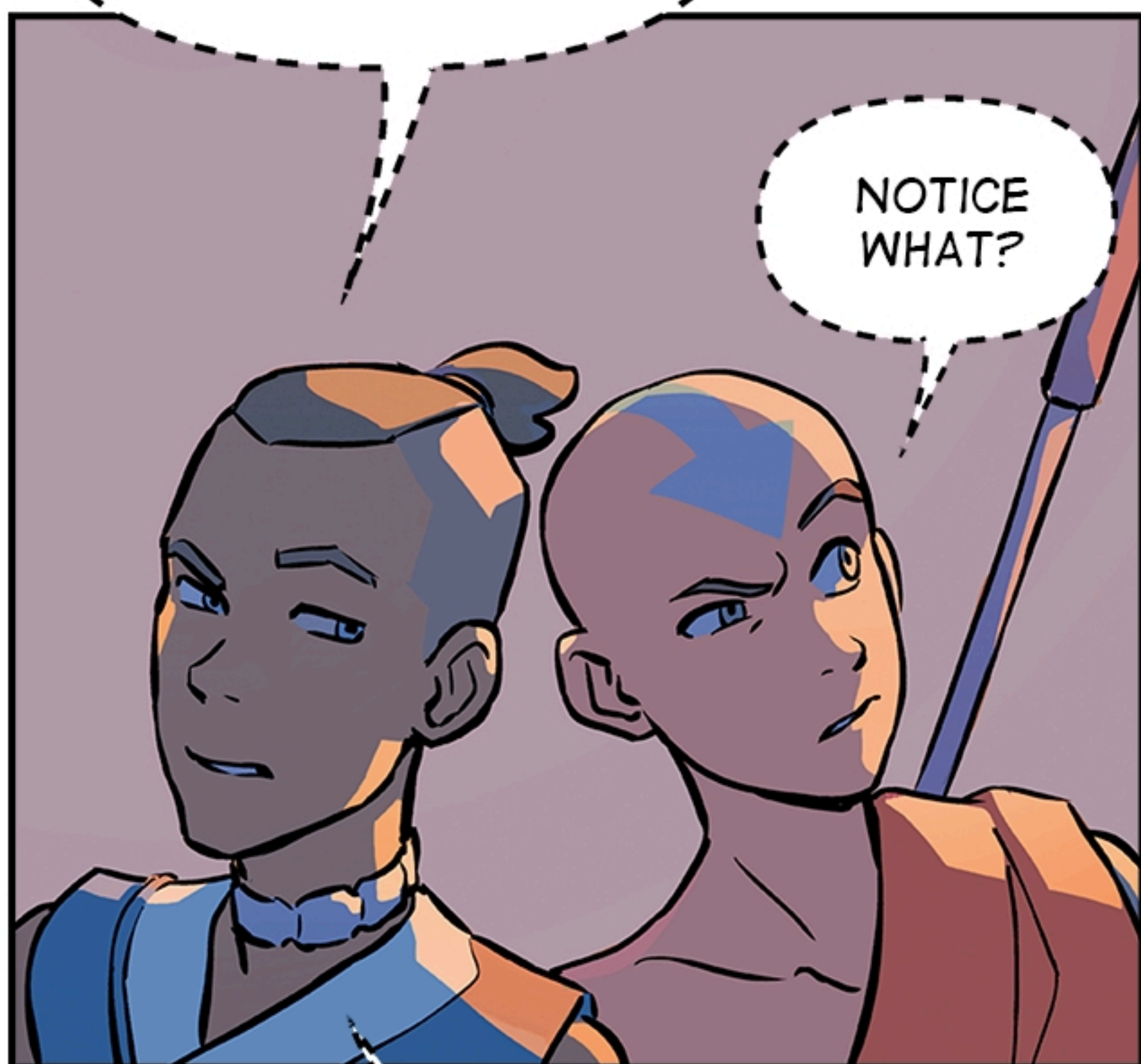
YOU WERE JUST
LOOKING FOR A
REASON TO START
WITHOUT HIM.

I WAS DELAYED,
BUT I HAVE SOME
GOOD NEWS.

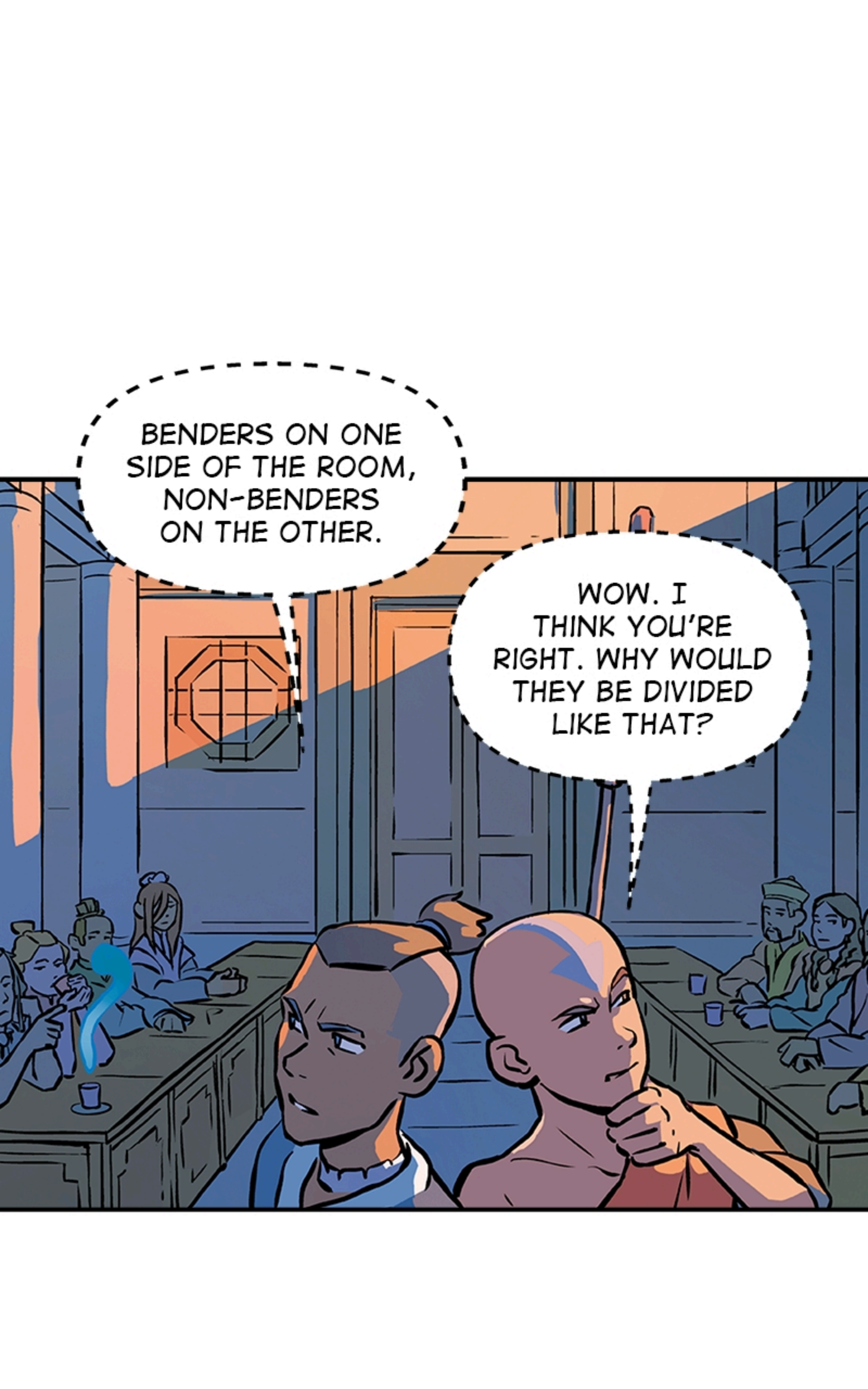


AANG, YOU
NOTICE SOMETHING
ABOUT THE PEOPLE ON
THIS BUSINESS
COUNCIL?

NOTICE
WHAT?



LOOK
AT THEM.

A comic panel depicting a scene in a room. In the foreground, two young boys are shown from the chest up. The boy on the left has dark skin and a shaved head with a small patch of hair on top. The boy on the right has light skin and a shaved head with a blue flame-like mark on his forehead. They are both looking towards the left. In the background, there are several other people sitting at long wooden tables. On the left, a group of people is gathered around a table, and a blue flame is visible. On the right, two more people are seated at a table. The room has orange walls and a large window with a grid pattern. Two speech bubbles are present: one on the left containing the text 'BENDERS ON ONE SIDE OF THE ROOM, NON-BENDERS ON THE OTHER.' and one on the right containing the text 'WOW. I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT. WHY WOULD THEY BE DIVIDED LIKE THAT?'.

BENDERS ON ONE
SIDE OF THE ROOM,
NON-BENDERS
ON THE OTHER.

WOW. I
THINK YOU'RE
RIGHT. WHY WOULD
THEY BE DIVIDED
LIKE THAT?



MY FELLOW
BUSINESS COUNCIL
MEMBERS--

SERIOUSLY,
THEY NEED TO DO
SOMETHING ABOUT
THAT NAME.

--OVER THE PAST YEAR
WE'VE SEEN *INCREDIBLE*

GROWTH IN CRANEFISH TOWN,
WHICH WE HAVE ALL BENEFITED
FROM. OUR BUSINESSES
ARE *THRIVING*.

HOWEVER, OUR
CITY'S GROWTH HAS
ALSO BROUGHT...
CHALLENGES.





OUR HOME IS
PLAGUED BY VIOLENCE,
ESPECIALLY **BENDER**
VIOLENCE.





OUR FACTORY
EMPLOYEES ARE
AFRAID TO WALK TO
WORK FOR FEAR OF
BEING ATTACKED.



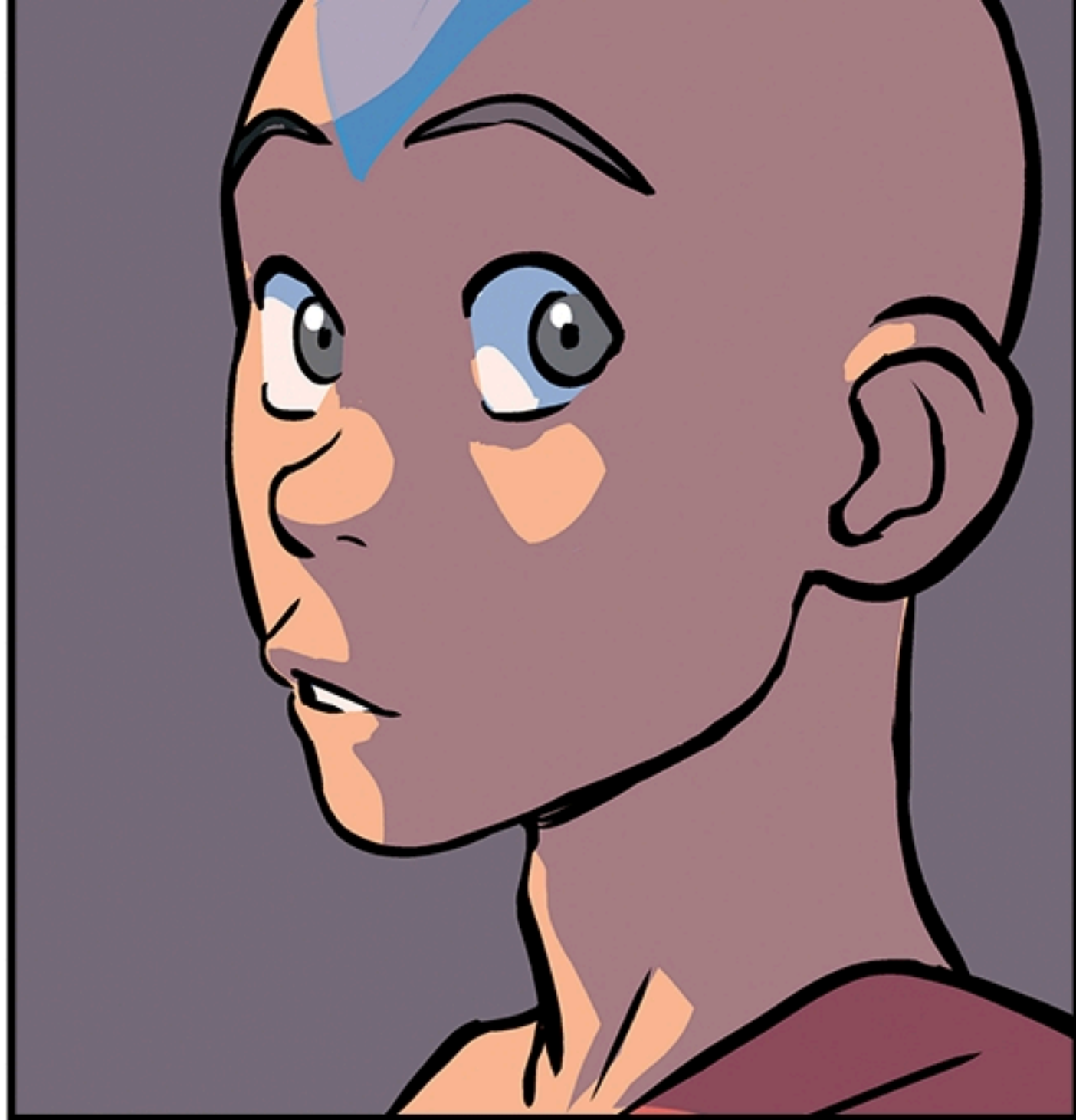
I WANT TO
PROPOSE SOMETHING.
WE ARE CRANEFISH TOWN'S
COMMUNITY LEADERS. IT'S UP
TO **US** TO FIND A WAY TO
DEAL WITH THE ISSUES
OUR CITY IS FACING.



I PROPOSE THAT
BENDING BE **BANNED**
ON PUBLIC STREETS. THIS
WILL HELP PREVENT THE
BENDER VIOLENCE THAT
IS CAUSING SO MANY
PROBLEMS.



BAN
BENDING...?



WHAT
NONSENSE
IS THIS?? BENDERS
HAVE THE RIGHT TO
USE THEIR ABILITIES
HOWEVER THEY
WANT!

LAO,
YOU'VE TAKEN
YOUR ANTI-BENDER
AGENDA *TOO FAR!*

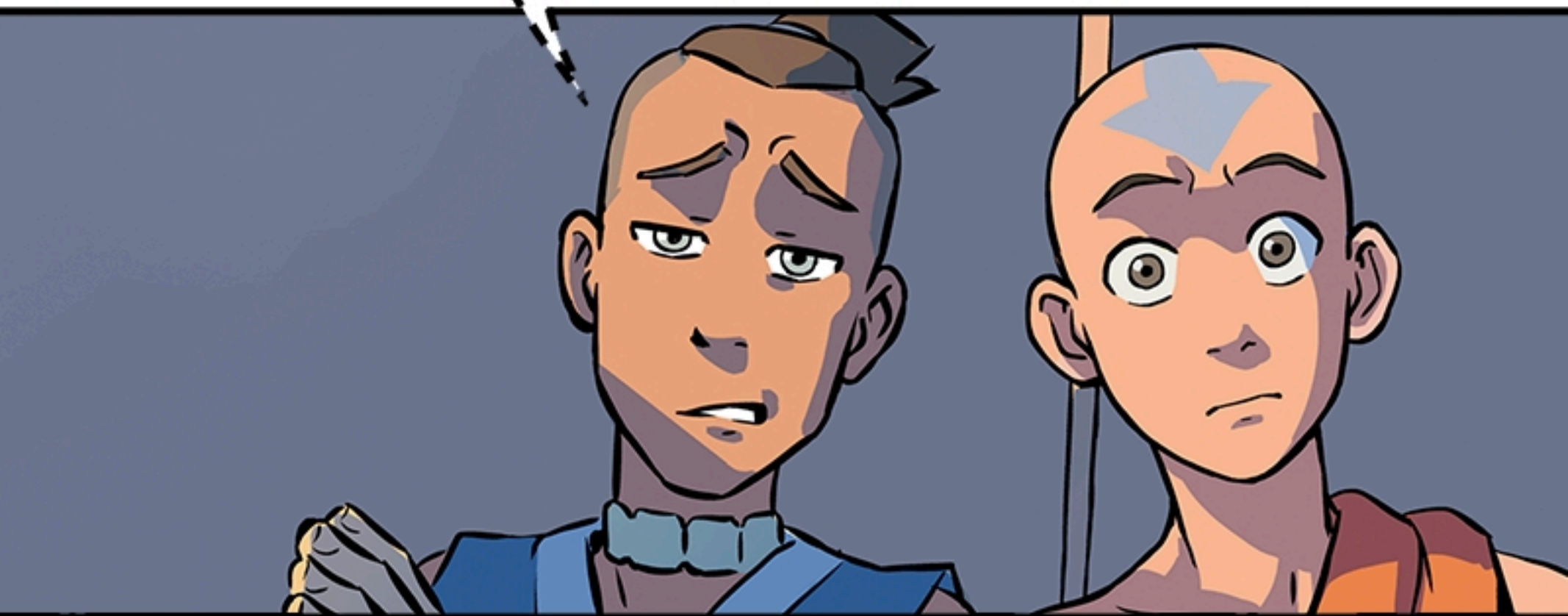


SO WHAT'S
YOUR SOLUTION
TO THIS PROBLEM?

AS A NON-BENDER,
I'M AFRAID TO WALK
THROUGH MY OWN
NEIGHBORHOOD
AT NIGHT!

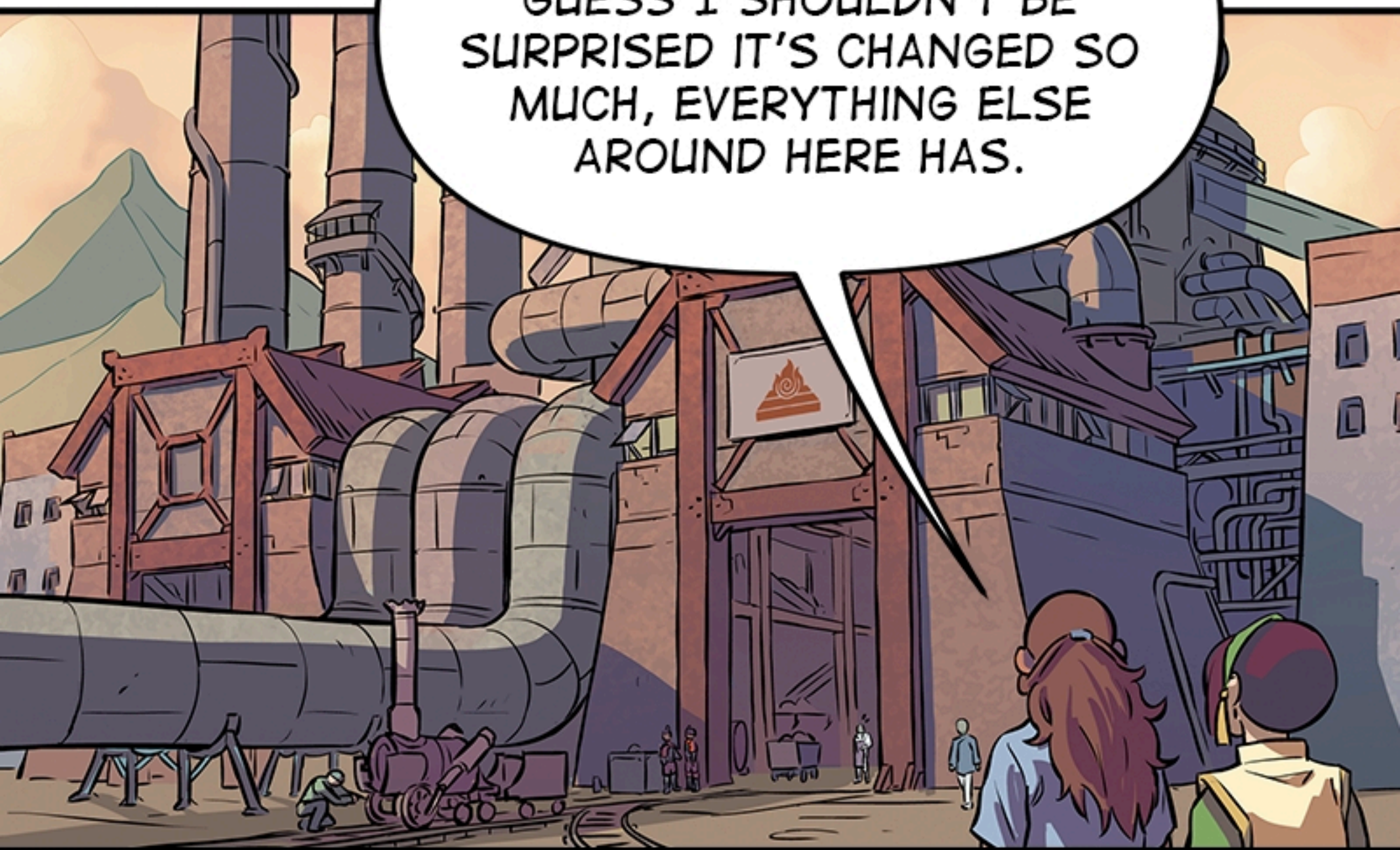


NOW WE KNOW
WHY THE BENDER
COUNCIL MEMBERS DON'T
SIT NEXT TO THE
NON-BENDERS.





THIS IS EARTHEN
FIRE INDUSTRIES?
GUESS I SHOULDN'T BE
SURPRISED IT'S CHANGED SO
MUCH, EVERYTHING ELSE
AROUND HERE HAS.



IT'S NEARLY
TRIPLED IN SIZE
SINCE WE WERE
LAST HERE.

TOPH! IT'S
SO GOOD TO
SEE YOU.



HI, SATORU.
WE'RE ONLY IN
TOWN FOR THE DAY.
I WANTED TO COME BY
AND SEE WHAT'S
NEW.

ANYTHING
FOR A FELLOW
EXECUTIVE PARTNER.
I THINK YOU'LL LIKE
THE UPGRADES.

WHO ARE

WHO ARE
THOSE PEOPLE?
WE SAW A FEW OF
THEM WITH TOPH'S DAD
EARLIER TODAY.



UNFORTUNATELY
WE'VE HAD PROBLEMS
WITH BREAK-INS AT THE
FACTORY, SO WE'VE HIRED
SOME NEW GUARDS.

WHAT
HAPPENED TO
THE OLD GUARDS?

REMEMBER HOW
THEY TRIED TO ATTACK
AANG THE LAST TIME
WE WERE HERE?

THAT
WAS PRETTY

FUNNY.

THE GUARDS
WHO USED TO WORK
FOR US... WELL, IT'S
COMPLICATED. I'LL
EXPLAIN LATER.



IS THAT THE
SAME PROCESSING
MACHINE WE SAW
THE LAST TIME WE
WERE HERE?

NO, THIS ONE
IS *MUCH* MORE
ADVANCED.

WE'VE DONE
A LOT OF UPGRADING
TO THE FACTORY LINE.
WE CAN NOW REFINE ORE
AT TWICE THE RATE
WE USED TO.

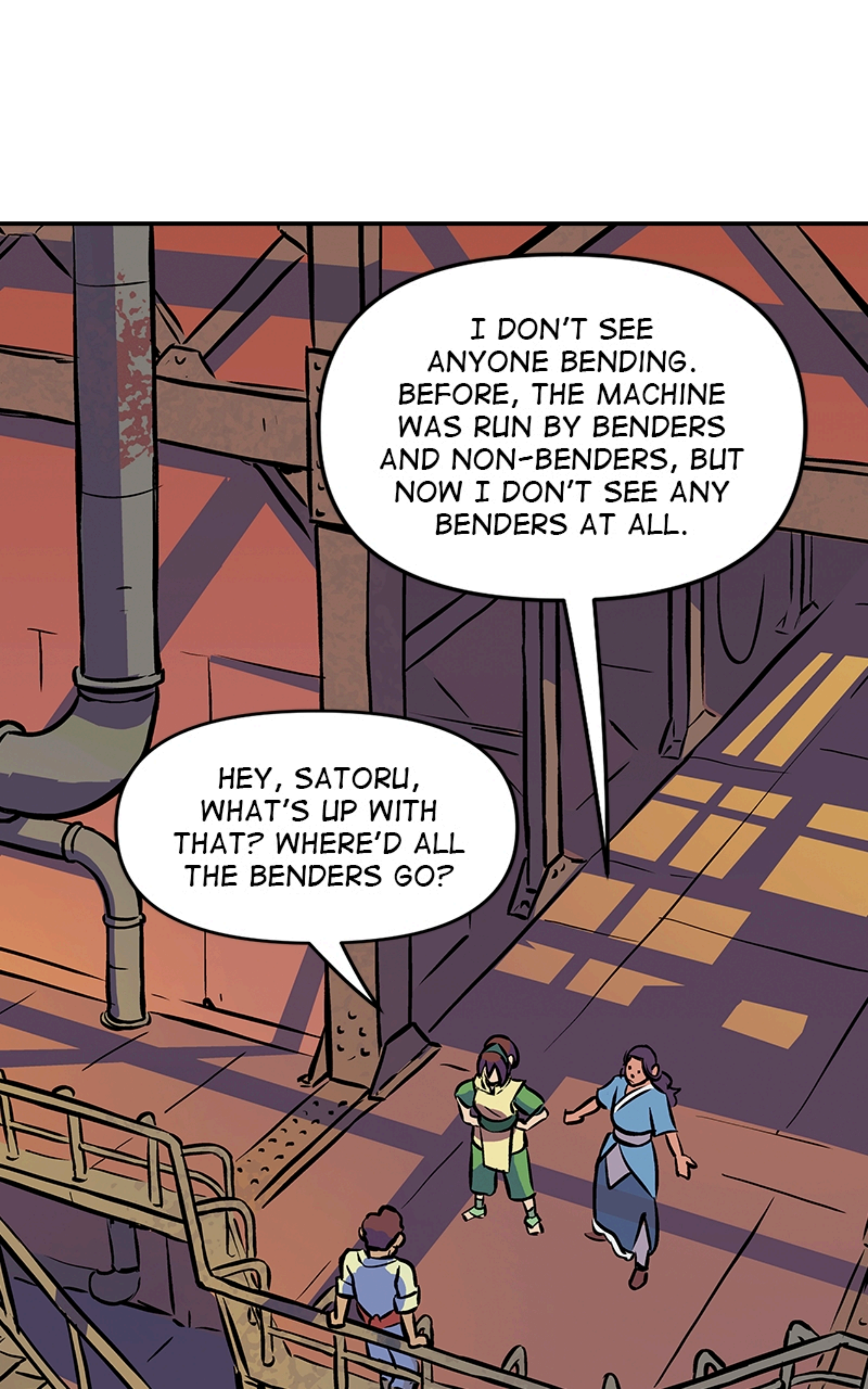




HUH.

WHAT
IS IT?





I DON'T SEE
ANYONE BENDING.
BEFORE, THE MACHINE
WAS RUN BY BENDERS
AND NON-BENDERS, BUT
NOW I DON'T SEE ANY
BENDERS AT ALL.

HEY, SATORU,
WHAT'S UP WITH
THAT? WHERE'D ALL
THE BENDERS GO?



A LOT OF THINGS
SEEM "**COMPLICATED**"
RIGHT NOW. ONE EXECUTIVE
PARTNER TO ANOTHER,
WHAT'S GOING ON?

WHEN I UPGRADED THE
ORE PROCESSING MACHINE,
IT WAS SO EFFECTIVE THAT

IT WAS SO EFFECTIVE THAT
WE DIDN'T NEED AS MANY
BENDERS TO WORK THE
FACTORY LINE.



EVERYTHING
COULD BE DONE BY THE
MACHINE AND NON-BENDERS.
SO WE LET A FEW OF OUR BENDER
EMPLOYEES GO, AS SKILLED
BENDERS TEND TO COMMAND
HIGHER WAGES.

UNFORTUNATELY,
THAT MADE OTHERS IN
THE BENDER COMMUNITY
ANGRY. THEY FELT LIKE THEY
WERE BEING REPLACED
BY MACHINES.



"OUR REMAINING BENDER
EMPLOYEES QUIT IN PROTEST.
I'M SYMPATHETIC TO THEIR FEELINGS,
BUT I WASN'T TRYING TO PUT ANYONE
OUT OF WORK. I JUST WANTED TO
IMPROVE MY MACHINES AND
INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY IN
THE FACTORY."



AND NOW THE
SITUATION'S GROWN
EVEN **MORE** COMPLICATED.
OTHER NON-BENDER-OWNED

OTHER NON-BENDER OWNED
FACTORIES HAVE INSTALLED
MACHINES SIMILAR TO THE ONES
I BUILT FOR EARTHEN FIRE
INDUSTRIES. AS A RESULT
EVEN **MORE** BENDERS
LOST THEIR JOBS.



THE TENSIONS
BETWEEN BENDERS
AND NON-BENDERS OVER
THE MACHINES HAS GOTTEN
SO BAD SOME BENDERS NOW
REFUSE TO WORK FOR
NON-BENDER-OWNED
FACTORIES.

AND *THAT'S* WHY
YOUR SECURITY GUARDS
ARE DIFFERENT. THEY'RE
ALL NON-BENDERS.

YES, OUR
EARTHBENDER
GUARDS ALL
QUIT.

THIS
IS *CRAZY*. THE
MACHINES ARE *GREAT*.
I'M A BENDER AND
I LOVE 'EM.



THANK
YOU, TOPH.

JUST AS LONG
AS YOU DON'T INVENT
ANY MACHINES THAT
DO METALBENDING.
THAT'S *MY* THING.





"MY FELLOW
COUNCIL MEMBERS,
I ***KNOW*** WHAT I'VE
PROPOSED IS
DRASTIC."

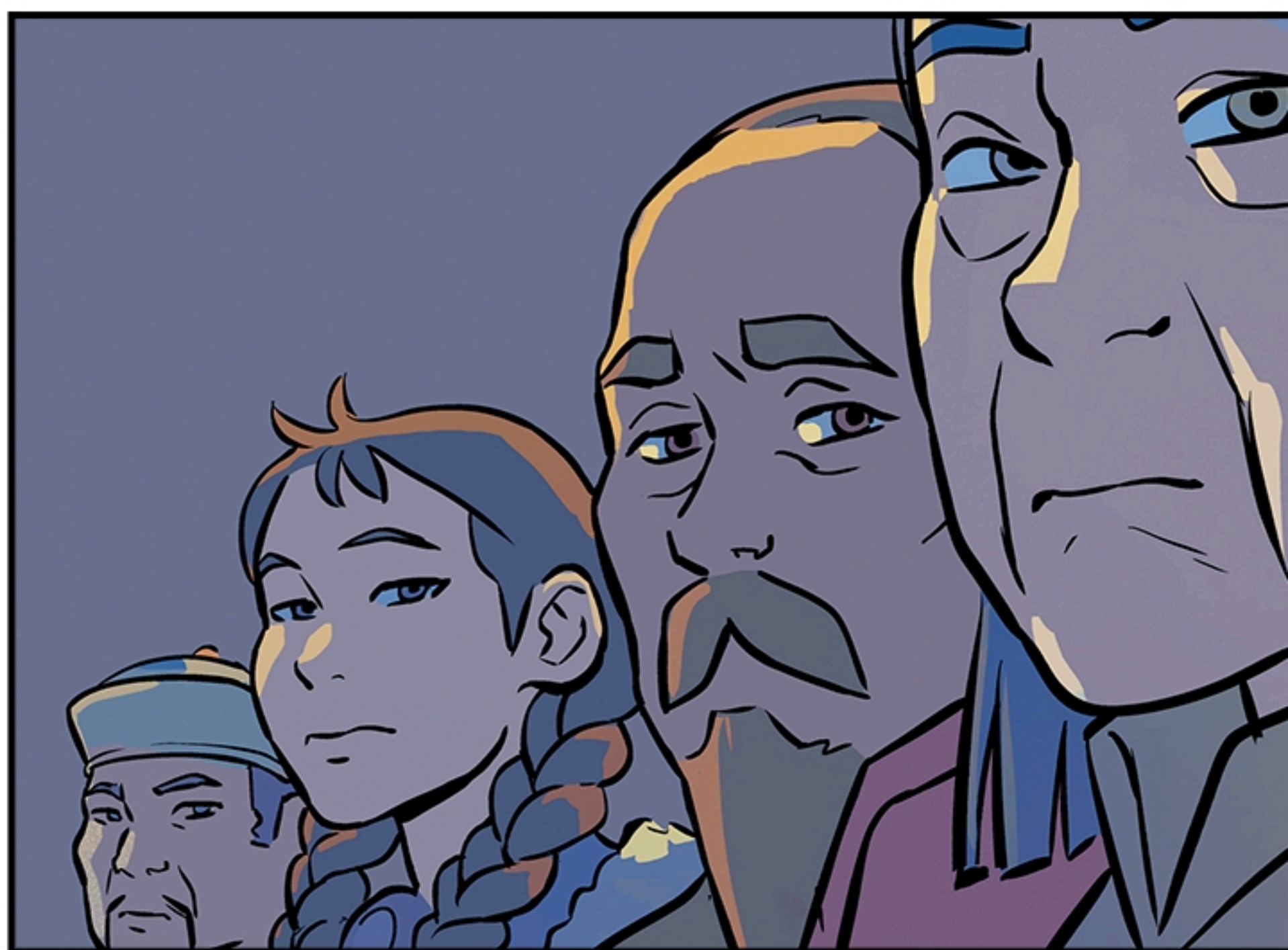


THAT'S WHY
I'VE ASKED THE
AVATAR TO JOIN US.
HE'LL BE ABLE TO
GUIDE US.









nickelodeonTM



AVATAR

THE LAST AIRBENDERTM

IMBALANCE

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