Someone you love

Posted originally on the fanfiction.lol at https://fanfiction.lol/works/704.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Slash (M/M)
Fandom:	Avatar: Seven Havens
Relationship:	Datu/Jae (Avatar: Seven Havens)
Characters:	Jae (Avatar: Seven Havens), Datu (Avatar: Seven Havens), Nisha (Avatar: Seven Havens), Pavi (Avatar: Seven Havens)
Additional Tags:	Spoilers, Established Relationship(s), Top Datu (Avatar: Seven Havens), Boys In Love, Kissing, Anal Sex, Shower Sex, Anxiety, Angst with a Happy Ending
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-10-29 Words: 12,513 Chapters: 6/6

Someone you love

by FallLover

Summary

> Jae is exhausted after a long day of fixing the city and helping Pavi and Nisha. Thankfully, Datu is there to help.
>
> Set after Book 1, Chapter 3: The Order

Notes

> Well, this is weird. But I've been meaning to have a backup for my fanfics anyway. I'll start slowly uploading them here and in a couple other places as I can. It's a problem when you have over 400 and would like to focus on making more rather than backing up old ones (and when most sites make it hard to post a lot of what I write). But such is life.
>
> This was originally set after Book 1, Chapter 3: The Order, but is also spoilery for Book 1, Chapters 5 and 9. I imagine it will also be spoilery for the end of Book 1 when that comes out.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jae collapsed on his bed, grateful to be there at last. The sun was already going down when he managed to leave for home. Given he had regular duties to help clean up the town with his brigade and Karthik could only do so much to allow him time to work with Pavi and Nisha in secret, Jae was basically working multiple shifts every day. And given how stretched they *already* were for benders in the haven, that was hard already, going on day 4 of this schedule.

There was a knock on the door and he made a load groan, thinking he'd get up. He didn't manage.

The door opened and a warm, familiar voice said, "Hey Jae! I was eating with the squad and finally got off and thought we could—oh." The door shut and Jae heard Datu's quiet footsteps before a big weight settled on the bed next to him. A warm hand rested on his back, rubbing it. "How you doing down there?"

Jae groaned and moved closer to Datu, glad that Datu took the hint and rubbed his back a bit more. "Exhausted. There's so much work to do…" He still felt uncomfortable figuring out who to tell and what, and Datu had been labeled as *do not tell anything to* multiple times at this point.

He didn't like keeping secrets like this. It went against everything he knew. And he especially didn't like keeping them from Datu.

But he also reminded himself that the secrets were to protect Pavi and Nisha. Yes, Jae and Karthik's freedom and jobs were at risk, as well, but two little girls depended on his silence. Really, the *world* did, given this was the Avatar. Or Avatars. He just had to get through it. And hate himself privately.

We're all working on repairs, Jae thought as he shut his eyes. Datu was really good at massages, and he was doing almost half of one right now. *It's not like he'd realize I have other worries with all that on my mind.*

"Well, think of it as a chance to work on your precision!" Datu said cheerfully. "You always think you could use improvement there."

Jae grumbled a, "Thanks," before he pushed himself up with a grimace and asked, "Do you want to do your back?" It wasn't fair he was *the only one* getting some attention. Sure, he wasn't as good at it as Datu, but…

"Mmm… better idea?" Datu leaned forward to kiss him on the lips.

Jae shut his eyes, trying to get his body to settle, especially when Datu reached up to hold Jae's shoulders. Kissing Datu usually made everything go quiet around him, but Jae had schedules racing through his head, thinking about the strange red light possessing people and animals, why it came from the storm, what it all meant, and how best to help the new Pavi settle into living properly in the city… At least he wasn't the only airbender helping her, but Karthik was relying more on Jae for his youth and better ability to connect to her than Karthik, who knew he was a bit intimidating.

When they pulled apart, Datu gave him a thoughtful look. "Babe, you're so tense. We're getting the city back in order. It's okay. I mean, sure, we still don't know what's up with Commander Bountan, or what happened with the red light, but—"

"I know," Jae said, glad he could *at least* talk about Bountan's odd spell with Datu, given it had been too public to hush up. He leaned forward so that his head rested on Datu's chest. "It's just a lot. I'm glad we're making good progress on the gate at least." And it wasn't like Pavi was a slow learner. Now that she was actually invested in completing her training, she was doing rather well, especially for someone so young, who'd been living on her own for so long. Really, Jae's life *should* have been easier than he thought it was.

I'm not a little kid with that as much responsibility as Pavi has on her shoulders right now, he thought, sadly. *She and Nisha have to deal with so much. I just have to help keep them safe.*

"And yet," Datu said, "you look depressed." He sounded fond and a bit worried.

"How was your day?" Jae asked, wanting to not talk about *his*. That would be easier. "It can't always be about me."

Datu smirked, clearly seeing through what Jae was doing. "Busy. More animal wrangling, dealing with storehouses… A lot of goods were damaged. Thankfully the hospital was mostly okay, but there were a lot of scared people, and we're finding more casualties."

"You've been everywhere, huh?" Jae asked as he looked up at Datu's handsome face. Datu had a big heart, and he worked hard. Jae almost wished *he* was training Pavi and Nisha, since he'd probably be better at it.

But he didn't wish the anxiety on anyone.

"Even us non-benders get around," Datu said with a smile. "Though an air skimmer would be helpful for speed…"

"When I'm free, we can go on another ride together," Jae said with a smirk, remembering the last time they'd done that.

Datu winced and looked away nervously. "Actually, now that I think about it…"

Jae laughed and said, "You don't have to come if you don't want to." When Datu still looked nervous, Jae said, "Come on, I'm kidding. It's okay to not like it." It was hard to be comfortable in the air when you weren't used to it, especially when you weren't a bender. Though Datu was still a powerful martial artist, so it was rare to see him afraid of *anything*.

“You and my mother, I swear,” Datu said with a laugh. “Remember how her eyes lit up when I brought you home the first time and she was so excited you were, ‘*That boy who’s always on the air skimmer’*?”

Jae grinned and replied, “Well it made talking easier. And listening to her antics from when she was younger was fun! She got up to a lot. Still does.” She’d trained with Karthik, and they were still friends.

“I’m just glad my father was there,” Datu said. “He and I watched you both chatter on. It was nice. And kind of like bonding.” He sighed and said, “I still remember him patting me on the shoulder and going, ‘I always wondered if you’d fall for an airbender like I did.’” He sounded a bit nostalgic.

Things had been so much easier back then. Scary, because Jae had wanted to make a good impression, but easier, too, especially because Datu’s parents were kind, just like Datu. “Any regrets?” Jae asked.

Datu’s eyebrows rose in surprise.

“I mean…” Jae sighed, realizing the weariness was getting to him. “I’ve been so tired lately with cleaning up the city. We’re both working more than we used to, I feel we never really get to spend time together…” *And I’m hiding so much*. Jae pressed his hands against Datu’s chest. “I feel bad I’m only catching you in moments like this.” At the end of the day, when they were both tired.

“It’s been less than a week,” Datu replied as he wrapped his arms around Jae’s chest and pulling him closer. “Things can be hard, but they’ve been hard before. And we’ll get through them. Soon enough, there’ll be another festival. And maybe we can get our shifts off at the same time and go try to have fun together.” He grinned. “If that’s possible for you?”

Jae grimaced. “I *can* have fun at festivals.” They could be loud and distracting, and he always felt the need to be on guard, so it was difficult.

“You just always schedule working during them,” Datu noted.

“Everyone else wants to go have fun,” Jae said. “I feel bad when they want it so much more than I do.” Plus, the squad was important in case of accidents. But after seeing Datu’s thoughtful look, Jae winced and asked, “Is that bothering you? That you want to go and I…? Datu, I’m sorry…” He knew he was screwing up *somewhere*.

“No,” Datu said, as his expression grew softer. “I like spending time with you whether or not it’s at a festival. Walking through town, getting a bite to eat… It’s all fun to me.” His expression grew sadder. “But regrets, Jae, really? Is there something you’re not telling me?”

Yes. “No! It’s—! I mean…” Jae shut his eyes. “It’s not about our relationship. It’s really just work stress.” He reached a hand around Datu’s left hip and tugged him so they could fall down on the bed together, side by side. He just wanted to hold Datu close and forget everything. Forget anything in his life had changed since he’d noticed Pavi at the festival.

And leave a little girl to suffer in that awful storm? He thought. Sure, she was a survivor, but what if she'd been out there, alone, when it struck? He didn't want to imagine…

"Well your anxiety doesn't usually manifest that way," Datu said as he moved his legs between Jae's. But he smiled. "And here I wondered if you were thinking of Daemin again."

"It was *ages* ago," Jae said as he turned onto his back, glad at least Datu wasn't thinking Jae was hiding something *else*. "You can't still be jealous."

"Look," Datu said as he rested his left hand on Jae's chest. "I love Daemin. He's great. We also both know he's still *very handsy*."

"Which you don't normally mind," Jae pointed out. They'd talked about this before.

"I don't," Datu agreed. "Really, I don't. He's a great hugger. You know it, and I know it."

I do, Jae thought, but didn't say aloud. It was part of why the surprise hug rule was in place.

"And I'm glad you're still friends and work great together," Datu continued. "Just, you know… sometimes…" Datu looking away, clearly a little nervous. "It's obvious he's not fully over things."

"I know," Jae said. "But he's just going to have to get over it." He rolled over so he could rest on top of Datu's large, muscular body. Even with the armor on, it was cozy. Jae's long hair settled over the orange part of Datu's collar.

Datu's hands settled on Jae's back, keeping him more stable.

"And I'll talk to him if it gets worse," Jae finished. It would be a really awkward conversation, but they'd get through it. They hadn't ended on bad terms, exactly, and it wasn't like Jae didn't sometimes think about stuff between them, but Jae was happy with Datu. And it seemed like Daemin regretted things more. But neither of them wanted to stop being friends, and they really did work well on the squad together.

"But no regrets from you?" Datu asked.

"Well, I was pretty sure you'd dump me for making you a rebound," Jae replied with a smirk.

Datu snorted and looked up at the ceiling. "As if! I thought you'd dump me for being clingy!"

"You're not *clingy*," Jae insisted. "You're attentive. I like that." He leaned forward and kissed Datu this time. He looked how much Datu looked out for him, when Jae often forgot to do so. Jae was known to get his head buried in things without thinking through them as much as necessary. And Datu tried to make that easier.

Datu murmured against him, and his hands moved down Jae's back, teasing at his lower spine.

Jae broke the kiss and then lowered his head against Datu's chest. "Could you stay the night? I sleep better when you're around."

"Oh," Datu said with a teasing note to his voice, "is that the only reason?"

Jae's face warmed. "*No*, of course not." He twisted a little to press down on Datu's body, making the taller man grunt. "But if you want to do *more*, I need to eat something first."

Datu's eyes widened in surprise. "You haven't eaten yet?! But it's so late!"

"I was *busy*," Jae said as he sat up, feeling hungry. "And too tired to stop anywhere on the way home." Truth be told, his head was so full of other things, he'd forgotten about food until now. But with Datu there for the night, he'd need sustenance.

Datu laughed quietly, and there was a fond look on his face that Jae wanted to drown in. "There are still some places open. Let's go get you something hot. Besides me."

"You are *awful*," Jae said before leaning in to lightly kiss Datu's cheek.

"And you love it," Datu said as he gently grabbed Jae's chin for another kiss on the lips.

When they parted, Jae leaned his forehead against Datu's and said, "Yeah. I do." He already felt refreshed, at least a little. Maybe it wouldn't last. And tomorrow was another day. But he'd figure out how to get through all this, as long as Datu was with him.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 <3 Kudos and comments are love! If you'd like to read more of my work, you can subscribe to the fanfic and/or my author page! My archive of our own page, when it is back up, has my completed archive of work, and will be the first to be updated with new works (usually), so that is the best place to subscribe to me.

Rebloggable on tumblr * Retweetable on twitter * Blue Sky Social

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Morning sunlight peeked in through the cracks of the apartment window and warmed Jae's bare shoulder and neck. He grumbled and pressed closer to Datu, who was mostly wrapped around him under the blankets.

"Five more minutes," Datu muttered under his breath without opening his eyes.

Jae slowly opened his eyes to gaze at Datu, where his nose nearly pressed into Datu's chest. They both still smelled vaguely like the spices from their dinner, which was simultaneously a bit distracting and also made Jae want to curl up more and soak in the comfort.

His internal clock told him he probably had about two hours before he needed to be on his shift.

I wanted to meditate before work, he remembered, vaguely. He hadn't been doing it much lately, and he needed to get back in the habit. The tornado he and Pavi had faced off was terrifying, and Datu was right that Jae wanted more practice with his bending. And Jae knew it would probably help with his anxiety. He'd already talked with Karthik about teaching the girls to do it, even if Nisha was a bit averse.

Meditating required not being in bed, though. But when Jae started to move, Datu just squeezed him tighter and pressed his face into Jae's hair.

Jae laughed, with a heart full of Datu's affection, and said, "Datu, we should get up and shower." They both had work today.

Datu lowered his face to press kisses to Jae's neck. "Don't wanna." When he moved, Jae blinked to realize *why* he might be in a morning mood.

I suppose we did go to bed early, he thought as he reached down to palm Datu's hard cock, making the taller man groan.

Datu pressed his lips almost to a bite against Jae's skin.

"Once and then a shower, mm?" Jae asked as he moved his left palm delicately up and down Datu.

Datu hissed against Jae's skin. "Havens, Jae… Yeah, okay."

Jae reached up with his right hand to push Datu's chin up for a kiss, not letting up on his left.

"Mmm…" Datu murmured against him. His long dark hair brushed against Jae's hand.

Jae felt his own heartrate pick up. This wasn't meditating, but it was nice in its own right as a wake-up routine. He pushed Datu onto his back, and then pushed himself up so he could straddle his boyfriend. His long hair fell down his back as he gazed down.

Datu's half-lidded grayish blue eyes gazed up at him, and his smile was soft, even in the shadow of the rising sun in the darkened room. His warm hands moved to Jae's thighs, and his cock pressed up against the crack of Jae's ass.

Jae grinned down and pressed against it, knowing it was working Datu up even more.

"You're playful this morning," Datu said with a grin. "It's a sexy look on you."

Jae's face heated. For now, he was still a bit sleepy, and a lot of his anxiety from the previous day was gone. In this room, with Datu, it was just them. And he didn't want to leave that for all the worries that awaited them, no matter how pressing they were. Karthik, Shilpa, and Hamka would handle Pavi and Nisha. And his squadmates were all diligent without him constantly pressing them. They wouldn't appreciate him showing up early.

Jae moved up and reached behind himself to better move Datu's cock. He was still really loose from the previous evening, so he got it inside without much trouble, and slowly lowered himself back down to kneel over Datu, breathless at the exertion.

Maybe I need to do more morning stretches, he thought, resting his hands on Datu's borad, muscular chest.

"Fuck…" Datu said with a groan. "You want me to keep going or…?"

"Let me," Jae said as he lifted himself up once, nearly emptying himself of Datu's cock, before lowering himself back down. It was harder earlier in the morning, but the stretching was good, and waking him up more. His own cock was taking interest in the proceedings, and already leaking over Datu's chest. He slowly pushed himself up again.

Datu watched him, taking everything in and making Jae's face burn even hotter. Datu's hands moved to Jae's ankles, gently squeezing and massaging the skin there as time passed.

Jae faltered as Datu's cock hit deep inside him, making a soft wave of pleasure move through him.

"I love watching you," Datu said at last, "But we both need to wake up a bit. If you don't mind?"

Jae laughed and said, "I might need the help."

"Well, then," Datu said as he moved his hands up to grip Jae's hips. "Hold on." Datu used his thick guard muscles to easily lift Jae up, and then slowly lower him back down, meeting Datu's thrusting hips.

"Mmm," Jae said as he leaned forward over Datu. His breathing was fast now.

“Touch yourself, babe,” Datu said, as he increased his speed just a little. “You have a schedule to meet, right?”

Jae’s face burned in embarrassment, remembering how Karthik apparently thought he was too focused on following rules. “We have time…”

“I didn’t mean it as a criticism,” Datu said. “It’s cute how you’re so hard-working. Means I have to work extra hard to keep up.” He demonstrated this by speeding up even more, and thrusting deeper, making Jae gasp on each thrust.

Jae reached down to hold his own hard cock, feeling himself shake on the thrusts. The bed creaked beneath them, and he was glad the apartment walls were thick. Couples could move out of the Brigade Compound, which was convenient for a variety of reasons.

Then Datu pressed deep inside him, and Jae yelled, coming all over his hands and Datu’s chest as a sparking wave of pleasure rocketed through his body.

“Fuck,” Datu said as he grasped Jae and sat up, allowing to move his hips even faster.

Jae wrapped his clean arm around Datu, holding on for life, even as his breathing shuddered around his release. He could see the light growing in the window, and he could distantly hear Ellora waking up for the day.

Datu made a loud groan as he came, and then stilled, panting against the left side of Jae’s head. His arms wrapped around Jae’s back, holding him close as they breathed heavily against each other and shook.

Jae’s feet were splayed behind Datu’s hips, and he was sweating. The blankets and air were hot and sticky. In the relative quiet, Jae could hear more of the town, with food sellers calling out their wares for people looking for breakfast.

Jae’s stomach grumbled.

“Yeah, I’m hungry, too,” Datu said as he rubbed Jae’s back. “If we’re fast getting washed, maybe we can grab breakfast together?”

Jae nodded, but leaned his head against Datu rather than moving. He was comfortable, with Datu still wrapped around him and no new – or old – problems to deal with. Or at least he could pretend as much for a little longer. They hadn’t had a ton of moments like this recently and he wanted to savor it.

Datu leaned his head against Jae’s and was quiet for a while, seeming to respect the moment. But eventually, he said, “*Or* we could both call in sick and just stay here all day? Who’d know better?”

Jae snorted and said, “You know we can’t do that.” And he knew Datu wouldn’t. Datu was almost stricter with his scheduling than Jae was. He just handled it better. It was one thing that made him respect Datu so much, along with his charisma and charm.

“I guess not *today*,” Datu said with a grin. He turned to kiss Jae’s ear. “But sometime, maybe. If you need to.”

“I needed this,” Jae said, making Datu look at him. “Just… being here with you.” All the secrets were still uncomfortable. And one day, he’d have to explain things. “Datu… I love you. You know that, right?” Every day, he felt lucky to have Datu at his side. To have chosen and be chosen one of the best men Jae knew to spend his life with.

Datu’s expression grew solemn. “Of course I do. I love you, too.” He leaned forward and kissed Jae on the lips.” But when he pulled away, he said, “You’re getting serious in a worrying way again.”

“Maybe everything that’s happened lately has shown me how fragile what we have is,” Jae said. “And I want you to know how I feel, no matter what we face.” Things were going to keep changing with the Avatars around. And Jae and Datu both worked dangerous jobs. Even if they didn’t, there was always risk. The storm and the rampaging camodillo showed that.

Datu studied him for a bit before saying, “Well, I *do* know.” He gently pulled Jae off of him, settling him carefully on the bed, before reaching down for the towel they’d used last night to clean up.

Jae didn’t even want to look at the mess beneath him. But he *did* summon a small breeze to dry their sweaty skin a little.

Datu smiled at him before saying, “You can go first if you can get up from here.” He pointedly glanced at Jae’s legs.

Jae snorted before saying, “All that lifting hasn’t made you tired?”

Datu grinned and leaned forward until their foreheads touched. “I could go all day, babe.”

“So pick me up and carry me, then,” Jae challenged, even as his face heated again, and he had to ignore the temptation. “And we can take a shower together.” At least that way they could chase the fantasy of relaxation and fun a bit longer.

Datu’s grin widened and he reached out and pulled Jae into his arms before standing up.

Jae wriggled and then grabbed Datu’s chest. “Datu!” He wasn’t *truly* afraid of falling, but it was still startling.

“Your wish is my command,” Datu said as he walked to the shower.

Jae bit back more laughter and squeezed Datu tighter.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 <3 Kudos and comments are love! If you'd like to read more of my work, you can subscribe to the fanfic and/or my author page! My archive of our own page, when it is back up, has my completed archive of work, and will be the first to be updated with new works (usually), so that is the best place to subscribe to me.

Rebloggable on tumblr * Retweetable on twitter * Blue Sky Social

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

This was written before the release of Book 1, Chapter 4.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was late in the afternoon when Jae was able to take time off for lunch, and Datu came to visit and drag him out for a snack, because he was in the mood for kachoris again.

“Plus,” Datu added as he tugged a weary but fond Jae along through a bustling city still in the middle of repairs and filled with weird glowing red rocks. “They’ve got milk bread cream rolls today!” He winked at Jae, clearly not letting the worrisome atmosphere bother him. And he wasn’t unusual: plenty of people were trying to stay cheery, though Karthik said there were more people asking what to do about the strange rocks every day.

Jae followed and put a smile on his face as he said, “Okay, okay, I get it…” Karthik had told him to take the day off from extra training, since he needed it. Jae wasn’t a fan, and he imagined Pavi might need the support, so he was thinking of going anyway, later, to see how she was doing. *Maybe I can get her a snack from the store.*

Then he became confused when he saw familiar gray and black cat-monkeys resting outside Agam’s sweet shop, in the shadow of the front awning.

“Oh,” Datu said in surprise as he looked at the cat-monkeys. “They’re cute!”

“Ah hah, yeah…” Jae said as he tried not to make eye contact with the animals, especially Geet, who was *staring* at him. Jae ushered Datu into the shop. “Really cute!” No one had told him the twins were *outside*, and he hoped it was just some miscommunication…

The inside of the shop had a tall ceiling and the walls were covered in shelves filled with warm baked goods, while the air was filled with the smell of fresh bread and spices.

People sat at tables inside and in the open porch area along a far wall, sipping tea and eating sweets. Including two twin Avatars, both of whom waved excitedly at Jae as he continued to *stare* at them.

It felt like there was a stone in his stomach dropping lower and lower.

“Oh, your family friends again?” Datu asked as he saw where Jae was looking.

“Ah, yeah…” Jae said as he walked over to the two girls, wanting to ask *just what they were doing out and about?!* But instead he forced a smile and asked, “He-ey… fancy seeing you

both here!" His right hand went for his ear and he could feel Datu *entirely* close to him. And the Avatars. Who were sitting *right there*. "Pavi, Nisha, this is Datu. Datu, Pavi and Nisha. You met already…" It was unavoidable to introduce them: it would be rude not to, and Datu would only ask more questions.

Where's a wagon when you need one, Jae thought, desperately.

"I wanted to try the kachoris again!" Pavi said with a grin at Jae. Despite her wariness of people, particularly members of the Brigade, the way she lit up when Jae was around was always warming.

It even managed to get Jae to stop pulling his ear and hair so hard. *It'll be okay. We've gotten by so far.*

Or at least he could hope.

"Oh, you like Agam's kachoris?" Datu asked with a smile. "They're great! But have you tried the bhakarwadi?"

Pavi shook her head, but her eyes gleamed.

Datu looked to Jae and said, "Sit down, I'll get us something to eat," before heading off.

Jae noticed the girls already pushed out a chair for him, and he obediently sat. He glanced around and then whispered as quietly as he could, "Should you really be here? If the commander sees you…" He couldn't see Karthik, Shilpa, or Hamka *anywhere*, which meant they were *definitely* skipping out again, like when Nisha had joined him to chase after Pavi…

"It'll be *fine*," Nisha said with a wave of her hand. "Most people are at work anyway." As usual, she sounded older than her nine years, and Jae respected her confidence, even if he felt she was ignoring the gravity of the situation a bit too much.

"It only takes a few people to remember the twins riding monkey-cats," Jae said with a nervous glance around. Really, no one was paying attention to them, but people couldn't have ignored the creatures at the storefront.

"That's why they're not in here," Pavi said with a grin. "We just look like kids!"

You are *kids,* Jae wanted to say. And they were. But they were more than that, too.

"People are scared of the red rocks, anyway," Nisha said. "and staying home. If anything, they might get worried that Ruhi and Geet will act up like other animals have."

Jae's expression grew somber. They hadn't yet figured out what was wrong with the animals, or what the red stones left by the Anomaly were doing. Shilpa had suggested there was a connection between them and the red eyes, given Bountan's eyes after he fought the Anomaly, and reports of animals acting odd around them. But there was nothing anyone could prove. The Anomaly thankfully hadn't returned. But it also meant no new answers.

“But keeping them penned up in the Brigade Compound is cruel!” Pavi said, looking sad. “Though… you don’t think what happened to the camodillo will happen to them, do you, Jae?”

“I don’t know,” Jae said, gazing seriously at her. “I like to think it won’t, but there’s no way to know. Maybe…” He’d been planning to say that keeping Geet and Ruhi off the streets might even protect them, like people who’d opted to keep *their* animals away from the rocks, but what did he know? The Anomaly and storm affected the whole haven. It was possible walls made no difference.

And it felt too much like lying to say otherwise.

“Maybe what?” Nisha asked with a frown. Jae could see she’d reached out to hold Pavi’s hand. And for all Nisha was putting on a brash face, he could tell she was worried.

It’s wrong that kids their age should be like this, Jae thought. *Benders don’t get recruited this young… And they have to fight something we don’t understand at all.* It was hard to accept his role in the Order of the White Lotus as a teacher when he didn’t know *how* to prepare his students for the world out there. Airbending wouldn’t solve this.

The smell of warm coconut filled the air and Jae turned to see Datu arriving with a fresh plate of bhakarwadi and a smaller one with a milk bread cream roll on it. He set them down on the table before Jae and grinned when Pavi gestured to the opposite free chair. “Thank you so much! Dig in!”

Pavi needed no further invitation.

Nisha looked at Datu thoughtfully before grabbing a piece of bhakarwadi, carefully nibbling it. Her eyes widened in surprise, and then she finished off that piece before going for another.

“Is something wrong, Jae?” Datu asked, watching as Jae was gazing at the girls.

Jae knew they were still on awkward ground. The reassurances of the past days wouldn’t always be enough when the reality of the situation – the situation being the two Avatars before them – was right in his face. But it wasn’t like he could explain everything here and now. People would *definitely* pay attention if he said, “So these two girls are *the Avatars*.”

Instead, Jae reached out for the roll and tore off the end: it was neatly cut to form a small sandwich already. The thick bread was soft and fluffy white cream smelled wonderfully sweet. He smiled and said, “No. Thank you for this.”

“You get to treat me next time,” Datu said with a grin as he took the roll and tore off the other end. He also had his eyes on the girls, who were working their way through the bhakarwadi. “Wow. They put it away as fast as my unit does.”

“What’s your unit like?” Nisha asked. “I’ve never talked with…” She frowned. “What do you do?”

“Well,” Datu began as he gazed into her green eyes, “we guard the council. We keep an eye out for trouble.”

“What kind of trouble?” Pavi asked as she licked her fingers.

“Whatever might show up,” Datu replied. “Animals, people who mean harm… You never know!”

“Have you ever had to fight?” Nisha asked, her eyes a little brighter than before.

“Yes,” Datu said as his expression grew more serious. “Unfortunately, Ellora isn’t always peaceful. But it’s never been anything major.”

Pavi looked worried, and lowered her hand rather than reach for more food.

“It was a long time ago,” Jae reassured her. “You don’t have to worry about it.”

Nisha raised an eyebrow at him, clearly skeptical.

Jae pressed his lips together and saw how Pavi only looked *slightly* less worried. *And why wouldn’t she be?* He thought. *The whole haven would be hunting for her if they knew who she was…* I *was hunting for even when I didn’t! And there’s the Anomaly… There’s plenty to worry about, especially from people like Datu. And me.*

He didn’t want to think about how his squad would feel about all this.

He’d barely eaten any of his roll while Datu was talking, but he didn’t feel hungry.

“Jae can be a bit of a worrier,” Datu said to the girls, surprising Jae, “but he’s right. The storm was really bad, but we’re recovering, and the haven should be back to normal in no time. We’re built to take care of each other.”

Pavi and Nisha didn’t look convinced.

Don’t blame him, Jae wanted to say. *He doesn’t know.* And it hurt him how dangerous that was. Datu had a right to know: everyone in the haven did, even if it was dangerous. *But know what? That the Avatar is back and they’re two little girls? That things are in motion that we don’t understand? How would that help?*

“Plus,” Datu added, when Jae didn’t know what to say, “Jae’s worries are usually for everyone’s benefit. It’s benders like him who keep the city safe, because they think of all the problems we might face.”

Jae’s face warmed, and his heart felt a little heavy. People always told him he stressed too much, focused overmuch on rules and being wary about the Avatar. He knew the Avatar thing was more complicated now, but… this was different.

“Even big, strong guards like me sleep happier knowing people like Jae are out there to look after the haven,” Datu said. He met both of Pavi and Nisha’s eyes before glancing at Jae, and smiling warmly.

Even with the lies, Jae thought, watching Datu reassuring the two Avatars. *Because Karthik and Daemin were right… Not knowing the truth makes people feel safer…*

But Jae reminded himself that he was also helping the Avatars become stronger to face the threats they needed to face. One day, Pavi and Nisha would have to go out and do that. And every day of training got them closer to that. He didn't like to think of it, because they were so little now, but that *was* the end goal. And they were already strong, despite their age.

I can't let Datu, Pavi, or Nisha down, Jae thought. *Because all of it matters.* As he watched the three of them together, and saw Pavi and Nisha speaking up to make Datu laugh, he thought, *One day… maybe there won't be any lies.* Just looking at them now, sitting together and eating, seemed like a vision of that future. The world in balance, Avatars, benders, and non-benders alike.

"I suppose it *is* useful," Nisha said, still sounding a bit skeptical. "Has he always been this way?"

Datu laughed and said, "Yeah. But it's cute."

Jae's face heated in embarrassment. "Datu…"

"Have you seen him airbend a lot?" Nisha asked.

Datu nodded. "It's incredible. Have you seen it?"

"Yeah!" Pavi said. "Jae's amazing!"

"Pavi…" Jae said, touched.

"When he focuses, he's amazing," Nisha noted. She didn't meet Jae's eyes as she said it.

Jae wasn't sure how much of a compliment that was, really, but he imagined Nisha meant well. He'd been noticing she had trouble being honest about her feelings, like it made her feel vulnerable. And he could relate to that. Just like everything happening now felt scary to him, too, and he could understand Pavi's nervousness.

Datu nodded sagely, like this was a very serious conversation. He was also smiling softly, clearly happy.

One day I'll tell him, Jae thought as he chewed more of his roll and watched three of the most important people in his life chat happily. *But at least we have calm moments like this for now.*

It gave him hope for the future.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 <3 Kudos and comments are love! If you'd like to read more of my work, you can subscribe to the fanfic and/or my author page! My archive of our own page, when it is back up, has my completed archive of work, and will be the first to be updated with new works (usually), so that is the best place to subscribe to me.

Rebloggable on tumblr * Retweetable on twitter * Blue Sky Social

Chapter 4: The One Left Behind

Chapter Notes

This takes place after Book 1, Chapter 5: The One Left Behind.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jae finished his Popsicle and helped Karthik clean up the cafeteria, trying not to think about all the food waste in the wake of all their other problems, especially with increased shortages due to the Faceless raids. It was far later when he was able to head back to Datu's place, breathe in deeply before the closed door, knock, and hear Datu call, "Yes?"

"It's me," Jae replied.

"Oh, Jae. Come in!"

Jae pushed open the doors to find Datu sitting on the orange bench he used for weights, not touching them. He looked up at Jae's appearance and smiled, but it was clearly forced. Electric light from the wall lanterns kept him visible, but there were shadows everywhere.

Jae shut the doors behind him and let himself settle more. He had spent the walk here – not riding on his air skimmer, since he needed time to think – thinking over what to say. He'd thought over and over of what he'd read in the journal, but also Karthik's assault on Molin, silencing him rather than trusting that Molin could be talked down. Jae understood Karthik's concern, especially given Chancellor Kayoko had been held under Molin's spear, but Jae had *also* seen Molin backing down. There had been hope that things could be de-escalated without further violence.

As he'd gone to the cafeteria to think it over, he'd thought of Kayoko's fear, and his own anxiety if he'd been held like that, unable to fight back, while everyone in the city was afraid. And how at risk Molin's words put the lives of both Pavi and Nisha, who were likely to be recognized if he'd been allowed to finish what he'd been saying.

And he'd seen the way Karthik hid Pavi and Nisha's existence from the Council, at every turn. How the lies spilled so freely from the older man leading to the speech. And how Jae had lied to Datu more than once, now, terrifying and awful as it was. Yes, he understood very well what Karthik meant about *difficult decisions*.

And the result had been the man Jae loved joining a group of terrified guards, and slumping over in frustration in Jae's arms after the Chancellor was attacked.

Jae walked over to Datu and rested his left hand on Datu's cheek, brushing the warm brown skin there. "How are you doing?"

Datu shrugged his broad shoulders, absent of his heavy armor. “You know. About as well as can be, I suppose.”

Jae pressed his lips together.

“Finished up with work?” Datu asked with a smile, trying to sound a little lighter. “I can only imagine what the Chancellor has you all up to.” His gaze lowered. “I don’t even know if I’ll have my job in the coming weeks. Would Chancellor Kayoko or the other council members even trust us now?”

Jae winced. Karthik hadn’t told him anything, but the fact Datu and the other guards had been rounded up for questioning by Shilpa, but let go, was understandable and frustrating. He couldn’t fathom how Kayoko would be comfortable in council meetings going forward, even if some of the guards had clearly never joined the group Molin had been part of, and even took Molin away after Karthik and Daemin disabled him.

Jae didn’t think Datu should lose his job. But that wasn’t his decision to make. Datu had a *lot* on his plate right now.

And more innocents might be drawn into this if we say nothing, Jae thought. Kayoko didn’t even *know* about the Avatars. And Molin had assaulted her anyway, because he assumed she *would* know, as the city’s leader.

Jae stepped closer to Datu, so that Datu’s right arm pressed against Jae’s chest. “Datu… what I say here can’t be repeated to others. Please. This doesn’t have to do with the council or the Brigade.”

Datu looked up at him with a frown. “Okay. What is it?”

“…The Avatar *is* back, Datu.”

Jae was so close he felt Datu freeze.

“She’s not some monster come to destroy us,” Jae insisted, reaching out to hold Datu’s left shoulder tightly. “*They’re* not… Datu, they’re nine years old, these two girls. One of them saves *bugs* from getting stepped on.” He wasn’t sure if it was *that* or how she’d saved his life or any number of other factors that had made him change his mind. *Probably all of it. But I can’t replicate that for him.*

“They’re…? Girls? *Nine?”* Datu’s eyes were wide as he stared up at Jae. “Jae, what are you —?!”

“Shh!” Jae said, leaning in closer. “Please. I’m not supposed to be telling you this. I know I shouldn’t. It’s dangerous for them. For us.” He waited until Datu was still again. “Remember when I ran after someone into the Harshlands?”

“Yeah,” Datu replied, still wary. “The other guards were wondering if you lost it.”

“I was chasing what I thought was just an unregistered earthbender,” Jae said. “But she was actually the Avatar. *One* of the Avatars, anyway.” Things seemed so simple back then. Sure,

there were still incidents every now and then, though most predated Jae's squad dates. Jae had no idea things could go so wrong.

"One of…? What are you talking about?"

"There's always been one," Jae insisted. "Just one person. But for now, for whatever reason, the Avatar is a set of twin sisters."

Datu stared at him for a bit, clearly confused, but he wasn't pulling or pushing Jae just yet. Then his eyes widened. "You can't mean… Pavi and Nisha?!"

Jae nodded his head, jerkily. "Yes. Them." He'd decided on this, and yet it was still hard to do. And if he was wrong, both girls were in danger. As were Karthik, Shilpa, Hamka, and Daemin. "I'm in charge of looking after them. I volunteered."

"…How long?" Datu asked, after a long silence. "How long have you been doing this?"

"I met Pavi for the first time that day I raced after her into the Harshlands," Jae said, hoping Datu staying seated without Jae doing much meant he'd made the right choice. "And a short while later, I met Nisha for the first time."

"You never said anything," Datu replied, "You only said things were normal… And then you focused on the Faceless and the Anomaly…"

"Can't you see why?!" Jae asked. "Datu, I was as alarmed as you are. As scared at the idea of the Avatar being back…" He still hadn't learned all that much about what Avatar Korra did, but Pavi and Nisha had questions, and they'd made him wonder more than he ever had. "But I was expecting some giant monster tearing the haven down, not some little earthbender who desperately saved both our lives in a storm, even after I'd chased her into it!"

"She saved your life?" Datu asked, surprised.

Jae grimaced before he replied, "A storm was already brewing when we raced out into the Harshlands. We found shelter of a kind, but the storm found us there, too. I got buried in rubble, and Pavi ran out to rescue me, even as debris kept hitting her. But when there was this huge metal object coming for her… She airbent it away, which is how I learned she was the Avatar. And then got me out."

"You nearly died in a storm?!" Datu asked, reaching out to hug Jae close. "Jae…" He sounded scared, and Jae didn't like hearing that tone in his voice.

"I'm sorry," Jae said, pained at the mountain of lies between them. "I didn't… I couldn't tell you." The whole day had been one thing after another. "I needed to talk to Captain Karthik and explain, and he was being avoidant. He didn't accept what I said. But he was the only person I could think of."

"…Because it was a Brigade thing," Datu said, his voice low. "So you didn't tell anyone else."

“Yes,” Jae said. He pulled away so that he could stare down into Datu’s eyes. “Unregistered benders *are* the Brigade’s problem. And because if she *was* a danger, then I had someone on my side who could face the problem. I didn’t want to put you in harm’s way, Datu.”

Datu frowned at him. “You did that to *protect* me?”

“Partially, yeah,” Jae retorted. “I also don’t have much experience bringing unhoused kids to the haven who also are superpowered enemies of Ellora. What would *you* have done?”

Datu stared up at him for a while, before turning away. “I don’t know.”

“I didn’t do it because I don’t trust you,” Jae said, quieter. “Or because I don’t believe in you. Commander Karthik *is* my commander, and we have rules. I trust him.” Even if the trust was wavering in recent days, and Jae felt like he kept breaking more and more rules.

“I get it,” Datu said. “It’s just… the rest?”

“I couldn’t risk it,” Jae said. “So many people hate the Avatar. I did. You do. What did you expect?”

“That you knew I was scared and would be *honest* with me!” Datu said.

“This is more important than that!” Jae said, his voice louder. His face burned a bit as Datu *stared* at him. “Datu, I love you, but I couldn’t risk Pavi and Nisha’s safety. And I didn’t know you were so scared until recently. I thought you, like a lot of Ellorans, viewed the Avatar as some far-off fantasy. Especially with the Faceless and the Anomaly, it seemed like everyone had other things to worry about. The Brigade recruits new benders all the time. It’s not like you bug me about not telling you about them all.”

Datu’s lips parted, but he didn’t reply. And Jae knew he was struggling.

“But I also knew it was wrong to keep the truth buried,” Jae said. “*I* changed my mind. There are others working with us to protect the Avatars. Surely more people could be like us and see that, well… maybe Avatar Korra did something wrong, but these girls *aren’t* like that. They aren’t some haunting in the night waiting to come after us.”

“They like kachoris,” Datu said, quietly.

Jae smiled and said, “Yeah. They do. And spring rolls.” *They’re just normal girls. Outside the Avatar bit.*

“I think I’d have noticed if they brought down Agam’s shop,” Datu said, smiling slightly.

Jae nodded, almost afraid to move in case he was imagining all this.

“…Commander Karthik knows?” Datu asked.

“Yes,” Jae said, wondering if they’d get right back into dangerous territory. “He knows. He found Nisha, years ago. He didn’t know she was a twin. Or that *her* twin was also an Avatar.”

“And yet,” Datu continued, sounding angrier, “he stood beside Chancellor Kayoko while she said the rumors were unfounded, that the Chancellor would find the Avatar…”

“She doesn’t know,” Jae said. “And Karthik… I imagine has his own reasons for not telling her.”

“He could go to prison for that,” Datu said. “*You* could.”

“Yeah,” Jae said. He didn’t want to think about it. “But there’s more at stake than my life. Those girls need me.”

Datu was quiet for a while. Finally, he asked, “Why tell me now?”

“Because I saw what Karthik’s way of doing things led to,” Jae said. “And I know I had Molin for a moment, before he stepped in. And I don’t think that’s the only path forward. And I fear that if we keep walking down that path, there will be more Chancellor Kayokos. And…” He leaned his head so he could rest it against Datu’s. “I don’t want to lose you to fear like we did Molin.”

“How does this change that?” Datu said. “You’ve told me that the head of the Brigade can’t be trusted, that the head of the council is in the dark, and my boyfriend is a liar, while there are *two* Avatars running around the city, unknown to most people…”

“You’ve met them!” Jae insisted. “You’ve seen them! They wouldn’t hurt you! They wouldn’t hurt anyone! They want to protect this place as much as we do. It’s their home!”

“So you expect me to lie to everyone, with you?” Datu asked, sounding angry again.

“I expect you to help me,” Jae said, making Datu’s eyes widen slightly in surprise. “Help me see a way through this in a way I haven’t, because I’d have a nonbender’s perspective, which I haven’t had. Everyone I know, thus far, who knows this secret, is from the Brigade. And this is more than a bending problem. The Avatar destroyed *your* world, too.”

Datu was quiet again, and Jae hoped his heart rate would slow down. He still believed in his decision, whatever Karthik said. They *needed* more people to know before something worse happened.

And he hoped Hamka and Shilpa wouldn’t kill him. If they felt airbenders did the right thing, well… he believed he was.

Maybe Daemin will help me, Jae thought, bitterly. *Though we’ve barely talked since I learned he knew.*

“You’ve been carrying this for a long time, huh?” Datu asked. “No wonder you’ve been so anxious.”

Jae laughed and said, “At least I knew. You’ve been in the dark. About this, on top of everything else. And maybe I can’t help with the Faceless or the Anomaly, but this… I could. And I didn’t want to lose you because of my cowardice.” He reached out to hug Datu’s head to his chest. “I need you, Datu. We need each other.” Then he swallowed. “But if it’s too

much, then I understand if you… If you wanted…" He slowly pulled away. Losing Datu would break him, especially now. But this was larger than everything. Seeing those words in the journal hadn't hurt in the way Jae's lies likely hurt Datu.

Datu tightened his grip around Jae's body, keeping him close. "To what? Leave you? Like this? When you're facing off against Commander Karthik and the Avatar of all people?"

Jae laughed nervously. "Oh you know. Just another day in the Brigade…"

"I'm not an asshole," Datu said. "I'm not abandoning you."

Jae smiled then, so grateful.

Datu sighed and then said, "You're amazing, Jae." There was fondness in his voice. "And I'm glad you finally trusted me."

"I'm sorry it took so long," Jae said.

"I haven't exactly been exuding trust, either," Datu noted, ruefully. "With everything that's happened."

"I do admit I wondered what I'd have to do to make you rethink calling me a liar and a traitor," Jae said. "Even by association."

"Jae…" Datu began. "I'm sorry, really."

"I mean I *was* a liar," Jae said. "I *did* lie… And by hiding the Avatar, I can see why that would make me a traitor to Ellora. We're already breaking so many rules… So you're not wrong."

"And if the Avatar wasn't two little girls?" Datu asked. "What would you do?"

"…I don't know," Jae said. "I like to think I'd do the best I could, for myself, and Ellora."

"I think so, too," Datu said. "You're not a traitor, Jae. Neither is the Brigade. Not when we're supposed to help each other survive. Including two little girls."

"And Commander Karthik?" Jae asked. "What do you think of him?" Jae hadn't told Datu *everything*, nor had he spoken of Shilpa, Hamka, and Daemin, but he knew he'd probably have to say more in the coming days. He planned to take it as it came, though.

"…That one, I may have to think on," Datu said. "But tonight… let me just think on what I'm going to say to my coworkers in the morning, assuming I have a job. And how to make my boyfriend feel less scared, even when he's in my arms."

Jae's face grew hot, and then he laughed, nervously. "That you're going to have to figure out on your own. Because I have no clue." Jae kissed Datu's forehead and whispered, "I really don't…" Things had been so rough ever since he'd run out into the Harshlands, and he'd felt a little stronger once Pavi and Nisha had both accepted him. And this felt like even more steadiness under his feet.

“We’ll figure it out, Jae,” Datu said. “When we’re together, we’re unstoppable, right?”

“Yeah,” Jae said as he shut his eyes, grateful. “We are.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 <3 Kudos and comments are love! If you'd like to read more of my work, you can subscribe to the fanfic and/or my author page! My archive of our own page, when it is back up, has my completed archive of work, and will be the first to be updated with new works (usually), so that is the best place to subscribe to me.

Rebloggable on tumblr * Retweetable on twitter * Blue Sky Social

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jae breathed heavily in the steamy air of the shower while his back pressed against the wet wall. He was sore and sleepy from all the long shifts he'd been doing lately, but the warmth of the shower really *was* helping a little. Hot water trickled through his dark bangs and down his face and neck.

Datu shifted his grip, re-settling Jae against his own hips. He leaned forward so his forehead bumped Jae's collarbone while his lips teased Jae's right nipple and sucked.

Jae groaned and then whined, "Datu, we're both tired…"

In answer, Datu pulled back his hips ever so slightly, drawing his cock out from Jae's tight, wet entrance, before shoving back inside.

Jae moaned as a wave of pleasure went through him, and he squeezed even tighter around his boyfriend.

"We both have shifts later," Datu said, "and I haven't seen you in ages. And if I let you go without tiring you out so you sleep, I just know you're going to sneak out the door and head into the Harshlands, even though we both know it's a bad idea." He sucked Jae's nipple into his mouth.

Jae squeezed his ankles around Datu's broad back and hugged his arms tighter around Datu's neck.

This had largely begun when Jae got off shift, showed up at Datu's door, and said, "I'm going to go searching for Uki and the other benders. We can't sit around waiting for the other Havens to show up to help." He'd been sitting on the unrest among the Bending Brigade all day, and didn't have any other ideas.

Datu had been pulling his armor off and frowned at him. "You know that's a bad idea. It's dangerous out in the Harshlands! There are storms and all kinds of unknown animals, and with the Bending Brigade low on warm bodies because of the raids and the Anomaly rocks, you barely have anyone in any condition to help you if you need it!"

"I just hate sitting around doing nothing!" Jae said as he paced near the door. He knew part of this was weariness. But while Kayoko promised she'd reached out to the other Havens and help was coming, people were still missing. Those affected by the Anomaly in the hospital were even more of a mess after the explosion, and Jae knew nothing about energybending or whatever Karthik was excited about in regard to the twins.

Jae's squad had been assigned mandatory time off, at least for a little, to rest. He didn't think it was because he'd spoken to Kayoko, but more because he'd emphasized that Lan in particular was exhausted, and demoralized after what happened to Tala. They didn't need more injuries.

"Who knows what's happening to Uki out there?" Jae demanded. He already felt horrible staying in Ellora while Uki was going through who knew what. "I've been out there before and I came back…" *With Pavi's help…*

"So what," Datu said as he stepped closer, "you're going to take the Avatars into the Harshlands with you? Two nine-year-olds to face raiders?"

Jae's face burned. "They've fought the Faceless with me before." Though Jae wasn't happy about it. For all he would have stepped in too, were he in their shoes, that didn't change the fact that it was risky and neither of them were trained in that kind of fighting. Though he knew it would change with time, especially if the Faceless kept whittling down Ellora's defenses.

"You can't be serious," Datu said, close now. "Jae, you're exhausted. You've got circles under your eyes." Datu reached out to gently rub them, making Jae look away in embarrassment.

Jae put a hand to his face. "I've been busy…"

"I can tell," Datu said. "But you're supposed to be resting before your next shift, not pacing holes in my floor."

"Do you need to sleep?" Jae asked, worried he was bothering Datu. Maybe Datu actually wanted some space with everything happened, even if they'd talked and were still talking things out. "I can leave you alone—"

"No," Datu said with a smile as he reached out to hold Jae's shoulders. "I want you to stay. But maybe we could take a shower together? If you're still worried you smell?"

"Do I really smell?!" Jae asked in alarm. "You said I didn't!"

"That *was* a while ago," Datu said with a soft smile and a considered and perhaps slightly worried look. "Come on. Let's go de-stink." Datu tugged him towards the shower, and started undoing Jae's uniform.

What had started as Datu carefully removing all of their clothes - with Jae helping a little every now and then so that Datu would stop fussing - had turned into kisses and caresses and Datu pressing him against the wall in the shower while the hot spray poured down on them.

Jae moved his hands along Datu's muscular back and arms, feeling the delicious lines of his boyfriend. Since they hadn't seen each other for long in a while, Jae hadn't gotten to work out with him in a bit, and Jae missed it. And Jae hadn't been able to do as many check-ins as he wanted about the whole, "Yeah, the Avatar is real," thing, to see where Datu's head was.

But Datu seemed happy and was kissing just about every part of Jae that he could reach, whether it was the curve of Jae's neck or the back of his reddening ears, or the top of his biceps and his fingertips.

Jae had smiled fondly and reached down to cup Datu's cock, making Datu murmur against him. "Missing me?" Jae asked. This was all better than the worried frustration Jae had seen recently, or the fear, which hadn't returned as much after their conversation. And Jae wanted it to stay gone and go farther away if it was sticking around.

"You know I am," Datu said. "I miss getting lunch and seeing you airbend all around the haven." he leaned against Jae's neck as Jae stroked him. "Mmm… I miss hearing you hum while you check things off your to-do list."

"Datu…" Jae murmured. He hadn't felt like singing much lately. He was too busy with everything.

"Do you want something, Jae?" Datu asked as his hands lowered teasingly by Jae's hips. "Have you been missing me, too?"

"I always miss you," Jae said, feeling how hard Datu was now. "And I want…" His face burned. "I want you inside me."

"You just had to say," Datu said with a grin. He reached out to grasp Jae's left thigh, pulling it up so that water dripped down Jae's legs towards his crotch. Datu cupped falling water in his hands before pressing towards Jae's hole, letting the water soak the tight muscle there.

Jae bit his lip and tried not to fidget with his right leg. More hot water collected in Datu's palm, flowing around his fingers and even a little inside Jae's body… "Datu, stop teasing me…"

"But you're so handsome when I do," Datu said, seemingly uncaring. He pressed two fingers deeper inside Jae. "It's addictive."

Jae pulled Datu's neck closer, so that Jae could press his face into the curve of Datu's neck. "Datu, *please*."

Datu was relentless, just fucking his fingers in and out of Jae's hole, even humming quietly against Jae's cheek, as if he had all the time in the world.

"Datu if you don't fuck me soon, I swear," Jae said, with promise, pushing against Datu's fingers. "I'm going to bend this water in a way you won't like."

"You're an airbender, though," Datu teased.

"And you've seen me airbend water," Jae retorted.

"Neither of us is getting clean at this rate," Datu lamented as he withdrew his fingers. Then he obliged Jae's impatience by slowly pressing forward and holding his cock up.

Jae pressed forward against Datu, shutting his eyes against the shower spray as Datu pressed inside him. Jae raised his right leg to wrap around Datu's hips, encouraging him forward.

"At least I know you're still flexible," Datu said with a clear grin in his voice.

"I need you already," Jae said in frustration. "Would you move those hips of yours?"

Datu chuckled and said, "Someone's sure full of demands today."

"You were trembling in my hands earlier," Jae said. "You want this more than I do."

"You're not wrong," Datu noted. "You feel good around me. I missed this." Datu thrust deeper, making Jae sit up a little, and press his back against the wall.

Jae looked down, watching where Datu's cock disappeared inside him as Datu moved back and forth, thrusting his hips hard to shove deep inside of Jae's body.

Datu leaned forward to press his lips to Jae's left nipple, sucking on it in time with his thrusts. His left hand teased Jae's right nipple.

Jae wasn't usually one to get into this kind of teasing, but it had been a while since they'd been able to do more than just making out, and he shivered under Datu's tongue and tugging fingers. He buried his own fingers in Datu's dark hair, lightly tugging. He didn't want to stop Datu from what he was doing, he just needed something to hold onto. His heels dug into Datu's muscular back.

When Datu pulled away, he said, "Your injury from that firebender looks a lot better." He gently moved his hands over the spot on Jae's chest where his uniform hadn't caught the blast from the Faceless firebender. It had hurt a lot, but now was barely a bruise.

"It doesn't really hurt anymore," Jae said. It *had* hurt when he'd gotten it, and a while after. But he'd had other things to focus on.

"I don't like your working through pain," Datu said, sounding worried. "Kayoko should have called the other havens for help sooner."

"I got off light," Jae said. "It's okay. Uki's the one who's captured." *And I couldn't save her.* "And what's done is done."

Datu leaned forward to press his lips to Jae's, making Jae shut his eyes. His thrusts increased in pace, making Jae moan into Datu's mouth.

They felt like one being now, connected, sharing breaths, pressed together everywhere they could. Jae could only think of Datu against him: powerful, tall, hungry for everything Jae had to give him.

Datu broke the kiss to pepper Jack's jaw and neck with kisses, sucking on the wet skin of Jae's collarbone before moving down to Jae's right nipple, letting his fingers pluck at Jae's wet left nipple. He never stopped thrusting.

Jae pulled a hand back to squeeze himself, trying to match Datu's pace while muttering Datu's name. He was so close….

Datu spread his fingers, groping Jae's skin before traveling downward to cup Jae's ass and then hike Jae's left thigh up higher, giving him even more room to fuck inside Jae's body.

Jae yelped as his cock spilled over his fingers, and a wave of pleasure hit him in a rush, splattering come on the ground below them.

Datu murmured, "Jae," against Jae's chest, before coming inside, leaking out of Jae's stuffed ass.

Jae felt wet and full and distant as water spilled over his toes. He pet Datu's hair and then carded the wet strands, wishing this could last forever. Wishing he didn't have to go to his next shift, to see more tired benders, more risks of injury. He'd been lucky he hadn't been targeted by the Faceless. Datu was lucky the Faceless mostly avoided the nonbenders.

One nightmare Jae had was that he'd find Datu's face under one of those masks, opposing the haven. In the nightmare, he'd failed to protect his whole squad, the twins… He was alone and all his wrong decisions were coming to punish him for good.

But here, now, Datu murmured soothing nothings between them, and the water and air were warm. Jae soaked in the moment.

"We could dry off and continue in the bedroom," Datu said.

Jae nodded, grateful Datu was pushing for more. Jae wasn't tired yet.

"You should sleep well tonight," Datu said. "If I let you sleep." There was promise there.

Jae knew Datu was doing this to get him to sleep and not put himself in more danger, and Jae appreciated it. Although Jae felt there was more to do, and even with everything coming apart around them, Datu was such a rock. He always had more questions, but in moments like this, they were still *them*: the two boys who'd fallen in love and clung to each other, tightly, for warmth, in a world that made it difficult to cling to anything.

"We could stay in the shower for a bit, too," Datu said. "I like being inside you here."

Jae's face heated and he nodded. "Just a bit. Then you can twist me all around that bed, okay?"

"Deal," Datu said before moving in for another kiss.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 <3 Kudos and comments are love! If you'd like to read more of my work, you can subscribe to the fanfic and/or my author page! My archive of our own page, when it is back up, has my completed archive of work, and will be the first to be updated with new works (usually), so that is the best place to subscribe to me.

Rebloggable on tumblr * Retweetable on twitter * Blue Sky Social

Chapter 6: The Envoys, Part 2

Chapter Notes

This takes place after Book 1, Chapter 9: The Envoys, Part 2.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After Kayoko stormed off with other guards and benders to go deal with the rest of the mess of Ellora's lockdown, fleeing benders, talking to the departing envoys, and hunting down the Avatar, Datu saw Jae draw in another shaky breath behind Kayoko's back. So Datu grabbed Jae's hand in his own and pulled Jae away.

"Datu?" Jae hissed in surprise.

Everyone in the compound was scared and running around, helping the fallen envoys, cleaning up the damage from Anomaly, figuring out how to reschedule patrols with fewer benders… And word of what happened was spreading along with the alarm.

But Datu didn't want to worry about that for now. They ended up in a thankfully still orderly training room and Datu shut the door behind them, before setting his spear by the exit.

"Datu," Jae began again, "I need to find the Avatar! Nisha's out there alone, and she needs —!"

"You're still covering for them," Datu said as he turned to face Jae, who looked terrified. "Aren't you?"

"Yeah," Jae replied, his expression becoming determined. "I am." He breathed in deeply and his gaze grew steadier. But Datu could see the slight tremble in his hand.

Datu shut his eyes and breathed in deeply, trying to ground himself amidst all the chaos of the day. "The Avatar really is a little girl, huh?" Seeing her bend all those elements… It was awe-inspiring *and* terrifying…

"I told you—" Jae began.

"I know!" Datu interrupted. "It's just… another thing to *see* it. And they're *twins*?" Imagining two people, especially children, like that out on the loose…

He supposed he could understand why the Order of the White Lotus kept things quiet.

"Yeah," Jae said.

Datu breathed in deeply and ran a hand over his eyes. “You know, I *hoped*… I really hoped it was just… a mistake or something.”

“I told you they’re the Avatars,” Jae said with a frown.

“I know and I believed you,” Datu said as he put his hand down and walked closer to Jae to hold his hands again. “Obviously I believe you now. But I *hoped*, just…” Datu looked into Jae’s dark eyes and said, “You’re really guarding the Avatars.” It was all truly real now.

“I am,” Jae said. His expression grew worried. “Though now that Nisha’s fled, I have no idea where she went. And that was horrible… She was so upset…”

“A nine-year-old against the Faceless?” Datu asked. “Especially a bender like Agam, who seems really strong? That’s… yeah. *And* all of Ellora fearing her…” *Including me.*

“And losing Karthik, Shilpa, and Hamka…” Jae added. “I need to get out there and find her. And Pavi!” He frowned. “Why weren’t they together? They always are these days…”

“But the other benders are going to come looking for you once you’re out of here,” Datu said, looking pointedly at Jae’s new badge. “*Commander*.”

Jae glanced down and then away. “This is all wrong. Karthik didn’t want me to join them, but… I should have been with them! Maybe together we could have…” But even he didn’t sound convinced.

“As great a bender as you are, I don’t know that it would have been enough,” Datu said. “And then you’d be down in prison with them.” Datu didn’t want to imagine that.

“But I’m not a *Commander*,” Jae said. He reached up to the badge, as if to yank it off, but paused, possibly wondering who would have the job if Jae didn’t.

“It puts you in the best position to help the others,” Datu said, watching the indecision on Jae’s face. “You made the right call.”

“I thought I’d shake to bits,” Jae said after a while, smiling nervously at Datu. “Attacking Commander Karthik? Admitting all that to Chancellor Kayoko…?” He laughed, a bit manically, and said, “Wow, I’m so great at this whole secret society thing… I’ve spilled all their secrets in less than a year!”

“You had one of the more level heads in that room,” Datu replied. “Chancellor Kayoko… I’ve never seen her like this… She was enraged.”

“She and Karthik were close,” Jae said. “At least that was the impression I had.”

“Yeah,” Datu said. “I can only imagine…” He smiled sadly. “If you hadn’t told me about all this in advance…” He could almost picture himself in Kayoko’s shoes. “Though at least I’m not in charge of the haven.” *I just have to tear apart the Brigade Compound...*

“Things are going to get worse moving forward,” Jae said. “Without Karthik in charge, and Kayoko ready to rip anyone in her way to shreds, and now the Avatars are missing… All

while the summit is ongoing!" He frowned. "At least I think it is. I've never done one of these before."

"It sounds like things are falling apart," Datu said. "I don't think there's much of a summit to fix. Especially when you have even fewer benders to gather together to manage anything and now we're going to be arresting anyone who goes against Kayoko."

"How do we fix this?" Jae demanded, gazing up at Datu in alarm. "This is so much bigger than anything I thought might happen…"

"You were protecting the Avatar," Datu said, quietly. "What did you *think* would happen?"

"I don't know!" Jae replied, sounding angry. "That people might one day see that they're just little girls who don't want to hurt anyone and think, 'Well, maybe Korra was a one-off' or something? Nisha was trying to *help* fight the Faceless!" Then he muttered, "Even if she wasn't ready… She's always trying to prove herself…"

"Not everyone is *you*, Jae," Datu said. "People are scared and hungry, and their neighbors and family are disappearing. We don't have any allies and people want someone to blame."

"I *know*," Jae said. "I just… thought it'd sort itself out." His voice was small and sad, even lonely. "What mattered was training and protecting Pavi and Nisha."

"You'll need to give some sort of excuse," Datu said. "Something so that you can go alone, or… I'll go with you? Though I wouldn't be of help against an Avatar…" Datu could face regular nonbenders who might harass Kayoko the council, sure, and maybe *one* bender alone, under the right circumstances, but *the Avatar?* "You're supposed to show me what or who to look for anyway."

Jae frowned. "No, that could work! Nisha wouldn't hurt you, and it'd show cooperation between the Brigade and the guard. The way Kayoko threw you at the Avatar isn't going to win us any favors."

"I'm not sure she's the one who's going to be getting them this way, either," Datu noted, thinking Kayoko had made and was continuing to make far more enemies than allies as the minutes passed. "Also, how do you know Nisha wouldn't attack me? I was holding a spear at her face earlier, on Kayoko's order."

"She's a good kid," Jae said. "She trusts me. And she's met you before. I can make it work. …I think."

Datu was wary.

Jae gazed at him for a while, and then his expression fell. "No. I get it. It's *the Avatar* we're talking about. The person who destroyed the world. You may have met her but you don't *know* her. If you don't want to come with me, Datu, I understand."

Datu frowned, not liking the defeatist tone in Jae's voice. "Look, Jae, I may be scared, but that doesn't mean I'm not going with you. I'm just assessing the situation. You need people

with their heads on straight for this. Whatever comes." Alone, they'd all lose it. "We've seen what happens when we turn our backs on each other."

"I'm glad you're with me," Jae said as he leaned forward to rest his head against Datu's chest. "I couldn't do this without you." For a powerful airbender who'd just fooled the Chancellor of Ellora and been made Commander of the Bender Brigade, he seemed so small and helpless.

"As long as you're okay with me *maybe* being a bit alarmed," Datu said with a soft laugh. "At times. Maybe a lot more. …I'm still processing."

"*I'm* still processing," Jae said with a smile. "At least we have each other to panic with, right?" It didn't quite work as a joke.

Datu wrapped his arms around Jae and held him close. "Yeah. We do."

They were quiet for a few more moments, before Jae said, "We need to go find those girls. Make sure they're okay. Before anything worse happens. And I… guess I'll figure the rest out."

"I've got you," Datu said. "Even if Chancellor Kayoko… Well. I've got you." He felt like he was on the precipice of *something*, and it was terrifying. In the moment where Kayoko had started getting more furious, Datu had felt he was standing in the wrong place, but training kept him by her side. And he wasn't sure what that said about him. "There's no one else I'd rather get into all this with." He smiled down at Jae. Here, at least, things made sense, even as the world went to chaos.

Jae looked up to smile back at him, and then pushed up for a warm kiss. Afterwards, he whispered against Datu's lips, "I love you, Datu."

"I love you, too, Jae," Datu said. He let Jae go, to straighten his uniform. Datu turned back to grab his spear. And then he looked at Jae, who was gazing worriedly at the badge. But he didn't seem as overwhelmed as he was before, when Datu had pulled him in here, which was something.

Datu reached out his free hand again and smiled, trying to be comforting. "Jae?"

Jae looked up, and his expression softened when his gaze met Datu's. "Okay. I'm ready." He reached out to take Datu's hand.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 <3 Kudos and comments are love! If you'd like to read more of my work, you can subscribe to the fanfic and/or my author page! My archive of our own page, when it is back up, has my completed archive of work, and

will be the first to be updated with new works (usually), so that is the best place to subscribe to me.

Rebloggable on tumblr * Retweetable on twitter * Blue Sky Social

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!