

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x23 - "Rising Son."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Rising Son

by SD Perry

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 STOCK FROM 8x03 "AVATAR, pt 3"

JAKE SISKO sits inside his small shuttle, waiting inside the wormhole. He has been here a while with nothing to show for it, and he has just decided to give up.

JAKE

I guess I let my own wild hopes
talk me into this silly fantasy
that I could bring back my dad.
But why should he come back? He's
off enjoying his wondrous destiny.

He sits up straighter in the chair, presses some buttons.

JAKE

Going home.

The ship suddenly SWERVES, and a bright LIGHT bursts all around the ship. He clings to the consoles, desperately gazing out the window, hope returning to his face.

As the shaking gets worse, Jake is no longer quite so excited, as things fly about the cabin.

JAKE

Stop it! Stop it!

The shaking gets more and more violent until Jake is finally KNOCKED unconscious against a bulkhead.

CROSS FADE TO:

2 INT. TOSK SHIP

The shaking continues, looking at first like it is the same ship. As it settles slightly, we see that it is actually now a Tosk shuttle (as seen in 1x06 "Captive Pursuit").

TOSK is at the helm, urgently trying to get the ship under control while fighting alarms and unresponsive controls.

3 **EXT. IDRAN PLANET - DAY**

A rather barren, rock-strewn vista with jagged hills and mountains, covered in places by an unpleasant slimy green-blue algae. Very little vegetation, and a dull grey sky.

The Tosk ship PLUMMETS towards the ground, smoke trailing from one of its engines. Its landing struts deploy and the ship SKIDS to a long, drawn-out halt on them, smoke still billowing from one engine.

After a moment, the hatch opens and the Tosk clambers out. Jumping to the ground, he makes his way to the broken engine and inspects it. He opens a panel on the nacelle. Reaching in, he pulls levers and presses buttons.

A clear vapour replaces the smoke, streaming from both nacelles like excess coolant being leaked. Nodding with satisfaction, the Tosk steps back and takes a moment to look around his surroundings.

He sees the rocks, the wide plains of dust, the total lack of life. He admires it. He breathes in deeply, considers the quality of the air, and finds it acceptable if not ideal. He looks up into the grey sky, as if checking that no-one else is following him down to the surface.

Behind him, the hissing gases from his ship dwindle and die. The Tosk looks pleased and heads back towards the open hatch. But something twinkles with reflected sunlight, catching his eye. It is practically under his ship.

He approaches it, crouching down amongst the slimy algae, and inspects the object. It is a red-orange CRYSTAL, about the size of a fist, shimmering on the dull ground. It is almost like one of the Orbs, but a different shape.

Intrigued, Tosk reaches out to touch it. The moment his fingers make contact, there is a loud CRACK and Tosk is THROWN backwards a dozen feet, landing on his back on the rocky ground in a crumpled heap.

ENERGY ripples through his body, making him shudder and spasm, his shroud flickering on and off, his breath hissing through his tightened lips, his eyes fixed and staring.

Around him, he sees the environment change in sudden FLASHES. For moments at a time, the austere rocks are replaced by level ground, green lawns, stone paths, swaying trees, a clear blue sky, and two great walls that meet at a point - the corner of some massive structure. This sight flashes in and out for some seconds, like the view Sisko and Dax saw inside the wormhole in 1x01 "Emissary."

As the Tosk's convulsions lessen and gradually end, the other image comes less frequently, until eventually there's just the same barren rocks and grey sky. The Tosk sits up, looking around himself, more confused than alarmed.

He gets to his feet, walks cautiously over to where the crystal was. In its place is just a dull smudge of dust on the ground. The crystal is gone, expended in the activity.

Feeling a sudden urge to be gone, the Tosk straightens and walks back to the hatch of his ship, clambering inside and closing the door behind him. After a moment, the ship's engines fire and it lifts off, rising into the grey sky.

4 EXT. IDRAN ATMOSPHERE

The small ship rises up through the atmosphere, gradually past it and further up into the glittering star-strewn SPACE. It moves off, returning to its journey.

We PAN AROUND slightly to a clear area of space. Far away, we can see what is just identifiable as the Gamma entrance of the WORMHOLE bursting into life. It spits out an object, visible for now only as a small light.

The light STREAKS straight across the sky at high speed. It is moving so fast that it is gone, into the depths of space, in an instant. The wormhole closes up behind it.

5 EXT. SPACE

Riding with the object, a glowing aura and comet-like tail obscuring identification. It is travelling at tremendous speed, stars and planets moving past at warp. The object shakes and rattles from the stress of the journey. It goes so fast that the aura eventually WHITES OUT the screen.

6 **STOCK - 8x03 "AVATAR 3"**

An indistinct humanoid shape hovers in a white void, reaching down to camera, and a deep, vibrant voice speaks.

VOICE

I've got you. You're going to be alright. I've got you.

The fog gradually recedes and the figure resolves into...

7 **INT. EVEN ODDS - QUARTERS**

An alien male, DEZ. He is tall and muscular, a previously unseen race with corrugated grey-bronze skin like crumpled paper, darker on the back and top of his head, giving the impression of hair without actual hair, and amber eyes.

Next to him is a female, FACITY. She is a Wadi (1x10 "Move Along Home"), with that race's distinctive facial tattoos and long hair. She is buxom and rounded, and wearing a skimpy outfit that would make a Dabo girl blush.

The pair stands in small, basic quarters on the *Even Odds*, an alien freighter vessel. They are both worried, genuinely concerned for the person Dez was speaking to. They look down at something we do not yet see.

FACITY

Who is he?

DEZ

I don't know... yet.

And we pan around to see that it is Jake Sisko, lying dishevelled and unconscious on the quarters' simple cot.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

8 INT. EVEN ODDS - QUARTERS

Beginning in darkness, with surroundings just out of focus.

PIF (o.s.)

Hey. Hey, human. Hey, wake up.

Jake slowly opens his eyes and sees a DOG hovering over him. Or at least it looks like a dog - large and Doberman-like but green, with spines down its back. It stares right into Jake's face, whispering conspiratorially. This is PIF.

PIF

Finally. Listen, if anybody asks,
I had nothing to do with this.

Jake is still just coming round, trying to focus, wondering why a dog is talking to him. He backs away a little on his bunk, pulling the bedclothes with him. Pif stands back and raises his front paws appeasingly.

PIF

Easy, calm down. I mean you no
harm. I'm your friend. Frieeend.

JAKE

Right, same here. Friend.

PIF

Good, sorry. I thought maybe...
never mind. Anyway, you'll say you
woke up on your own, right? I've
got half a peg riding on it.

Facity's voice emerges from a wall-speaker - Pif jumps.

FACITY (comm)

You know how I feel about
cheating, Pif. Now you owe me
another half-peg. How's our guest?
Should I send Glessin down?

PIF

No. Apex, top shape. Happy human.

FACITY (comm)

Good. Why don't you bring him to the bridge? Make him feel welcome, and I might forget to beat you.

It's a joke, not a real threat, and Jake knows friendly banter when he hears it. It helps him relax a little.

PIF

No problem.

(quieter, to Jake)

First officer. I swear that woman has a built-in monitor. I'm Pifko Gaber. Welcome to the *Even Odds*.

JAKE

Jake Sisko. Umm... Mister Gaber -

PIF

Oh please, call me Pif. Come on, your clothes are over here. We had them cleaned. I can't believe I took Facity up on this one. She's Wadi, you know. They bet on everything, you have no idea...

Pif starts chatting away obliviously. He is not nervous, he just talks, that's what he does. Jake begins to get out of bed and get dressed, rather bemused and lost.

JAKE

Pif, are we in the Gamma Quadrant?

PIF

Gamma...? Oh right, your people are from the other side of the Anomaly. What were you doing in there? I didn't think anybody was travelling through these days.

JAKE

It's... a long story.

9 **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

A standard freighter bridge layout, like any other. In the centre is Dez, tall and strong. He distinctly resembles Ben Sisko in build and manner. He is eager to meet Jake.

Standing next to him is a Cardassian male, GLESSIN. He is cool and calm, a solitary person. He is carrying a medical tricorder in his badly scarred hands. Jake catches with surprise to see him. AS the lift door OPENS...

PIF

... and here we are! Jake Sisko?
This is Captain Zin Dezavrim,
everyone calls him Dez. And this
is Allo Glessin, our resident
medic. We call him Allo Glessin.

FACITY

So, Jake Sisko. What brings you
out this way?

Facity gets up to greet Jake from her place at the rear wall of consoles, but Dez steps over her, taking control. That's not like him, and Facity doesn't especially like it.

DEZ

This is our first officer, Facity
Sleedow. And since Pif already
made the introductions, and
Glessin looked you over while you
were asleep, why don't you and I
go get something to eat? I'm sure
we can find something fit for
human consumption.

JAKE

Ah, alright. Thank you.

Jake smiles a neutral smile, still not quite sure what is going on here, although they all seem pleasant enough. Dez leads him back out to the turbolift, noticing but ignoring a confused and slightly annoyed glance from Facity.

10 **INT. EVEN ODDS - MESS HALL**

Jake and Dez sit at one end of the room, talking over food.

At the other end of the room are more aliens, glancing over with interest at this new arrival. There are two Ferengi males, FEG and TRIV, a young Wadi male COAMIS, and a huge hulking Dosi female, BRAD. She towers over the rest with her muscles and warpaint, but she is actually quite girly.

DEZ

I hope you don't mind, but I read the document you were carrying. It was the only way to find out who you were. I know why you went into the Anomaly. I just wanted you to know that I respect your privacy. As far as the crew knows, your ship just had an accident in the Anomaly, and we rescued you.

Jake nods mutely, not sure what to say.

DEZ

The thing is, I found your name in our library. Or, your father's name. His role in the Quadrant War is well documented. And... Facility would have my head for telling you this, but the *Even* is... we're not exactly... we're wanted by the Dominion. For what we do.

JAKE

Wanted? As in...

DEZ

We're in the retrieval business. Salvage, courier security. Mostly we hunt down items of value that have been lost or stolen and we... return them to their rightful owners. We've crossed the Dominion on occasion, and if we run into them again there could be trouble. And since you're going to be with us for a while, I thought it would be best to let you know up front.

JAKE

Actually, I was hoping to get back to DS-Nine as soon as possible.

Dez shakes his head, sympathetic. He doesn't want to have to disappoint Jake, who he already likes.

DEZ

Your shuttle is beyond repair. Whatever happened to it fried every system. We only have one dropship, and that's about to be refitted for the Drang job, so I can't spare it. I'd take you back myself, but we're at least three months from the Anomaly at top speed in a straight line, and that's not an option anyway. We have business that can't wait.

JAKE

Three months?!

DEZ

The Anomaly threw you a hundred parsecs in an instant. Don't worry, Jake. We're heading to Ee after Drang, once we've met with the clients, maybe hit a few salvage sites. I know you'll be able to find transport there.

Jake nods, grateful but disappointed, Dez smiles sadly, trying to take Jake's mind off it with more MOS chat.

JAKE (v.o.)

So, that was my introduction to the *Even Odds*.

11 **INT. DRANG CAVES**

Jake and Dez RUN at full pelt down a tight, dark rocky passage. They are both scared but exhilarated, being chased by something we cannot see. We hear it though - THUDDING, running footsteps and HISSING spits and GRUNTS.

JAKE (v.o.)
Dez filled me in a little more on
the kind of work they do, and took
me to meet the rest of the crew.

12 **INT. EVEN ODDS - SICKBAY**

Jake sits on a biobed as Glessin runs instruments over him.

JAKE (v.o.)
Glessin was apparently a survivor
of the Cardassians' attack on the
Founders' homeworld, four years
ago. He doesn't talk about it, and
people mostly respect that.

13 **INT. EVEN ODDS - MESS HALL**

Dez introduces Jake to Feg, Triv, Brad and Coamis.

JAKE (v.o.)
Feg and Triv came through back in
the early days, looking for new
profit. They're the accountants -
no surprise there. Coamis is
almost as new as me - he's an
archaeologist, and he's only been
on board six months. And Brad-
ahkla's specialty is gems, but she
also handles ship's security as
the need arises. One look at her
and most people fall into line.

14 **INT. DRANG CAVES**

A larger area of the caves, with the growling, spitting
noise sounding much closer now. Blending in against the
rock wall is a strange alien - about a metre tall,
tripodal, and made out of a lumpy, fungus-like material
with bulbs that rotate in all directions - its eyes.

JAKE (v.o.)
This is Stess. She's one-fifth of
Arislelemakinstess, a quinteth
Friagloim. Yeah, I know. According

to Dez, she's basically a multi-part walking mushroom. She's also an empath, and she runs recon and first contact, so to speak.

Three man-sized LIZARDS stand in the caves, spitting and growling, waving their CLUBS around and not noticing Stess.

Stess draws herself in, tensing up... then RELEASES herself in a sudden burst. Invisible ENERGY shoots out, straight at the lizards. They collapse in a crumpled mess on the rocks.

15 **INT. EVEN ODDS - SHUTTLEBAY**

Jake's damaged shuttle sits on the deck, various panels open and dead. Stess stands next to it with another alien just like her - another part of her. Dez is introducing Jake to them for the first time. A thin female Karemma - PREES - steps out of the shuttle in an oil-streaked boiler suit, wiping her hands on a cloth, and greets them.

JAKE (v.o.)

Prees is a Karemma, she's the ship's main engineer - if you don't count Srral, anyway.

Out of an open panel on Jake's shuttle, a LIQUID METAL substance flows out from the circuits and machinery, gathering together in a puddle. Jake looks in amazement - this liquid is a living being called SRRAL.

JAKE (v.o.)

I can't even explain what he is, but apparently he's never met a machine he couldn't live in.

16 **INT. EVEN ODDS - CORRIDOR**

Jake walks along the ship's corridor, which is strangely constructed in lots of different styles. They reach a section of bulkhead that is clearly Cardassian. Jake stops, looks at it, and caresses it. It reminds him of DS9.

PIF

Did Dez tell you anything about the C-D subdeck, or the Wa?

JAKE

Umm, no. What's the Wa?

PIF

We don't know. Come on.

(walking again)

Ship's about two-hundred years old, been through so many hands she's barely recognisable. But she always adapts to any new parts. Makes herself compatible. One of the few original parts left is the Wa, which just goes to show...

They step into a turbolift.

PIF (cont)

...that whoever originally built this ship were very alien aliens.

The turbolift doors close, and open again onto...

17 **THE WA**

Jake and Pif step out into WHITE SPACE, dimensionless, with smudged coloured PATCHES at various intervals.

They walk forward, Jake looking around himself in total confusion. Whatever direction he walks, the walls seem to be in the same place. He looks back after a while of walking, and the lift entrance has not moved.

PIF

Welcome to the Wa. Which takes up no space. It's infinite in here, but the external dimensions of the ship never change. Oh, and don't touch anything. Can't stress that highly enough. Just don't. Prees spends every spare hour down here, still can't work it out. Srral refuses to come here at all.

Jake continues to look around, confused and intrigued.

JAKE (v.o.)

It was a hell of a tour. And this is one weird ship. But at least everyone seems friendly.

18 INT. EVEN ODDS - DEZ'S QUARTERS

Dez and Facility are in bed together, clearly post *delicto*. But Facility is not happy about something Dez just said.

FACILITY

You want him to what? He's been here a day.

DEZ

He's smart, he's adaptable. He's just finished an archaeological dig on Bajor. The crew likes him. He'll be an asset to the team.

FACILITY

But Drang is in three weeks, Dez. And do you remember the last stranger we trusted? Miss Vash-oh-so-pretty? And how did that turn out for us, exactly?

DEZ

This won't be like that. Jake's a good kid.

FACILITY

He seems nice enough, sure, but you've been acting weird all day. What is going on? Don't even think about lying to me, Zin Dezavrim.

DEZ

He's Benjamin Sisko's son, did you know that?

FACILITY

Sisko... Didn't he head up the Anomaly's Alphie station, Federation Nine? The one the Cardassians built...

DEZ

Sisko died. Or he was whisked away
by the aliens who allegedly live
inside the Anomaly.

FACITY

And Jake went looking? Poor kid.

DEZ

I want to help him. My father...

He breaks off, unable to continue. Facity realises this is
very serious for him, and doesn't press it.

19 INT. EVEN ODDS - MESS HALL

Facity sits across the table from Jake, quizzing him MOS on
details for the upcoming raid. She is pleasantly impressed
with Jake's quick wits and intelligence.

JAKE (v.o.)

Dez wants me to join him on the
raid on Drang. I don't want to be
a freeloader, I'm happy to pay my
way. But everything's moving so
fast. I keep having to stop and
remind myself this is actually
happening to me.

20 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

Dez shows Jake plans and schematics on a bridge wallscreen.

DEZ

The Drang are violent brutes who
spent the chaos of the Quadrant
War stealing whatever they could
from anyone. They don't seem to do
anything with it, they're happy
just to have it. Apparently their
legends say the end of the
universe comes after a great war,
and whoever has the most "stuff"
will win favour with the gods.

(beat)

Unfortunately for them, they stole the Yaron Oracle. And the Yarons had the good sense to hire us to get it back. But there'll be plenty of other stuff that's worth grabbing too.

Jake is excited to be included, and doesn't want to let Dez down. Plus, it's fun!

JAKE (v.o.)

Jake Sisko, fortune hunter. That's about the silliest thing I've ever written. If only Nog could see me now! He'd be so jealous! But... I can't help thinking Dad wouldn't approve of this.

(a little bitter)

But he can't exactly be reached for comment, can he? And let's not forget I wouldn't be here at all if he hadn't gone off on his grand destiny. Maybe he didn't have any choice, maybe they just took him. But if he did have a choice... would he have said no?

21 INT. DRANG CAVES

Jake's feet hit the stone ground RUNNING. He is terrified, being chased down by angry Drang, but can't help being exhilarated at the same time. He shares a grin with Dez. Pif DARTS down a tunnel, HOWLING loudly, leading a group of hissing, slavering Drang on a chase through the caves.

As they run past the opening of a stone storeroom, Glessin leans out and calmly SHOTS down the last Drang in the pack with his phaser. The Drang collapses to the ground - the others don't even notice and keep chasing Pif. Glessin rolls his eyes at their stupidity and returns to cover.

Elsewhere, Coamis is curled up in a ball, hidden behind some large pottery. He is terrified, not cut out for this. Large and imposing Brad works her way through the various riches nearby, tagging them with transporter tags.

Pif leads the Drang right past Stess, who is still blending against the wall. The Drang notice neither her nor their already-unconscious friends. Stess POPS one of her bulbs rhythmically against a band around her middle.

Dez hears the signal through a comm system in his ear, and nods to Jake. They turn a corner and see a primitive computer panel. Dez flicks a switch and the panel dies.

DEZ
Shields are down.

FACITY (comm)
Getting transporter lock now.

Brad is beamed up, carrying a large ceramic EGG. Glessin disappears, followed by Coamis, Stess and Pif, leaving some very confused Drang chasing nothing.

In his tunnel, Dez grabs a large rock and hefts it over his head. They hear more Drang footsteps - then one turns the corner. Jake instinctively raises his phaser and SHOTS the Drang down. Only once the Drang falls does he realise what he has done, and stares at his own hand, dumbfounded.

Sympathetic to his shock, Dez SMASHES the rock into the console, crushing it beyond repair. Then he GRABS Jake's arm and drags him running back down the tunnel again.

22 INT. EVEN ODDS - TRANSPORTER ROOM

Feg and Triv are standing at the edge of the transporter platform, lifting off the retrieved items, making room before the next crew member materialises.

As each appear in turn, they collapse to the platform and try to catch their breath. Facity appears in the doorway.

Coamis is still shivering in a terrified ball - Glessin glances at him, then at Facity, and subtly shakes his head. Coamis isn't going to work out.

Jake and Dez are the last to appear. Facity gives Dez a glare - something went wrong down there, or there wouldn't have been so much running. Still exhilarated, Dez can only grin back. Facity turns to the others and says lightly...

FACITY

Anyone bring me anything nice?

BRAD

Will the Yaron Oracle do?

Brad holds up the large ceramic EGG she is holding. Facity grins. Glessin pulls out a large ceremonial knife.

GLESSIN

Pretty, but I don't think it's worth much beyond the intrinsic.

JAKE

I just had time to grab this.

He holds up a small, palm-sized BOX, sort of like a Faberge egg, but breathing. Glessin's eyes go wide with amazement.

GLESSIN

That's a Giani'aga box. He was going smaller towards the end. It's priceless.

A moment of shock, and then Facity WHOOPS with delight. The whole crew are soon pounding Jake on the back and ruffling his hair in congratulations. Facity walks up and plants a big smacker on his lips. Brad positively giggles.

Jake, still somewhat shaken by having shot a Drang, soon gets caught up in the celebrations. He grins. The raid was a success. Facity looks to Dez again and smiles. She accepts now - Jake is part of the team.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

23 EXT. SPACE

The *Even Odds* is an alien freighter vessel, about the size of the *Defiant*, but a bit piecemeal looking, as if it's had numerous replacements and upgrades. Another alien ship comes up along side for a scheduled rendezvous.

24 INT. EVEN ODDS - TRANSPORTER ROOM

Dez and Facity stand at attention, dealing with three other alien dignitaries, the YARON. They are green and ordinary, and they all look very haggard and worried. Dez reverently hands the Yaron Oracle to them, and they are overwhelmed with gratitude and relief. One of them starts to cry.

Under this, Jake, Glessin and Pif stand respectfully at the back of the room. Pif is whispering to Jake.

PIF

Dez says that when the Drang stole the Oracle, the entire Yaron race was struck by a kind of planetary insomnia. Total shutdown. Famine, drug dependency, mass suicides. They'll do anything, pay any price to get it back.

Jake sympathises, but as the Yaron hand over an alien briefcase filled with pegs, which Dez graciously receives, he can't help feeling uncomfortable with it.

JAKE (v.o.)

Maybe my uneasiness with this is because I'm an Alphie, as Facity says. I was brought up with a clearly defined code of right and wrong. But do I really think the *Even's* crew is immoral somehow, just because they get paid for what they do? That would make me kind of condescending, I think.

25 INT. EVEN ODDS - MESS HALL

Most of the crew is there, including Jake and all five parts of Stess, mostly just hanging out.

JAKE (v.o.)

And those morals were Dad's before they were mine. Maybe that's why I'm here. None of these people know or care who my father is. They see me for me. I like that.

Facity strides into the room and throws a padd down onto the table between them, and takes a seat with a confident smile. Pif picks up the padd in a paw, and inspects it.

JAKE

So do any of these doors lead to the Alpha Quadrant?

FACITY

Not that I've heard, Jake. Sorry.

BRAD

It's the Q. Has to be.

JAKE

You know about the Q?

PIF

They're kind of hard to miss.

FACITY

I think it's the Iconians.

DEZ

Haven't they been dead about a million years?

FACITY

Wanna bet?

The whole room is soon getting involved in the betting. Jake grins and throws his own pegs in the pile. He is really becoming part of the crew now. As they continue to laugh and bond, sharing drinks and stories...

JAKE (v.o.)

That was a really nice afternoon. We spent hours swapping tales. I told them about B'Hala. They told me some of the legends of the retrieval business, like the lost planet of the Eav'oq, known only by their crystals that melt at a touch. The tombs of Luw, where the dead speak. Or the Ascendants, the mythical crusaders who destroyed entire planets for sacrilege. It's hard to believe I've been here for two months already, but that day, I felt like part of the family.

26 **EXT. PLANETARY COLONY - DAY**

Dez, Jake and others stand on the outskirts of an abandoned settlement, set in a pleasant, bucolic landscape. The few buildings present are a bit damaged and crumbled though.

JAKE (v.o.)

Today was a bad day.

DEZ

Okay, people. Standard salvage operation. Team one, ops centre - check how thorough they were pulling out. Team two, maintenance areas. Team three, living quarters. The Jem'Hadar won't have left much behind, but there might be something left over from the original inhabitants.

People move out towards the buildings - Pif and Facity together, Dez and Jake together. All five parts of Stess waddle off in a variety of directions as Brad follows.

Jake is checking walls and surveying buildings. The place is deserted, it feels empty and dead. Jake squints at the patterns on the walls - something feels familiar to him. After a few moments, Facity and Pif come trotting over.

FACITY

Hey, look what we found!

Facity sweeps back her long hair, and we see she is wearing a BAJORAN EARRING. Pif has one in his big floppy dog-ear.

Jake stares in horror, his vision starting to SWIM and his face going pale as he realises what this means.

27 FLASHBACK - 2x26 - "THE JEM' HADAR"

Third Talak'talan hands a padd to a stunned Major Kira.

TALAK'TALAN

I hear they fought well... for a spiritual people.

28 BACK TO SCENE

Jake turns and runs a few steps before collapsing to his knees and RETCHING. Worried, Pif, Facity and Dez run up to him. Pif gently nuzzles his cheek in an attempt to soothe.

DEZ

Jake, what is it, what's wrong?

JAKE

(struggling)

New Bajor... this is New Bajor!

The others seem a bit bemused, not seeing the significance.

JAKE

These were Nerys's people, Dez!
The Jem'Hadar slaughtered them
all, and here we are picking
through their bones looking for
things to sell!

Dez glances to Pif and Facity. They get the message - let me talk to him alone - and move quietly back to work. Dez sits down beside him on the ground, gently talking to him.

DEZ

Jake... we knew before we came
that the Jem'Hadar had taken this

settlement from someone else. Yes, it's terrible, but it happened to a lot of people and that was years ago. You can't do anything for them now, and we're not hurting anybody by taking a few things.

JAKE

(weakly)

I want to go home.

DEZ

I know. And we've just got a couple more places to hit, then we'll be at Ee. You'll be able to buy a shuttle there.

Jake doesn't respond, so Dez keeps talking. He knows what Jake wants to hear, so he says it.

DEZ

Maybe we can just skip over those places entirely. Seeing this job through someone else's eyes... it puts a different spin on things.

Jake snuffles, falling for Dez's line.

JAKE

Well, you do do salvage work... and there's nothing wrong with taking things nobody wants...

DEZ

Well, it's not like we really need it anymore. Once we sell the Giani'aga box, we'll be rich. We won't need to go scrabbling in the dirt for pegs anymore. It might be nice to be able to help people just for the sake of helping.

Nodding slightly, Jake accepts that. Dez looks up and sees that Facity is still nearby, and she has heard what he said. She knows he is lying, and he knows she knows. He hangs his head a little, feeling guilty for lying to Jake.

JAKE

Can we go back to the ship? This place makes me feel sick.

DEZ

I'll get Srral to beam you up.

Elsewhere, two parts of Stess are waddling around a building. Brad is holding a scanner, looking at it worried.

BRAD

Wait, I think I'm getting -

One part of Stess steps onto a landmine, and it instantly EXPLODES, vaporising her. Shrapnel shreds another part to pieces. Brad is thrown backwards, but is mostly unhurt.

Hearing the explosion, Jake and Dez get up and run towards it, as do the others. The remaining three parts of Stess have collapsed in shock - Dez runs to cradle one of them.

DEZ

I've got you. You're going to be alright. I've got you.

Dez looks to Facity again - he knows Stess is going to die.

29 INT. EVEN ODDS - DEZ'S QUARTERS

The door OPENS and Jake walks in tentatively. Dez looks up from sitting on his bed. A nearly empty bottle and glass are near - he has been drowning his sorrows.

JAKE

I... thought I'd see how you were doing.

DEZ

Fine. I'm mostly drunk, I think. Can't expect any better than that.

JAKE

Do you think this is your fault? Because it's not. There's no way you could have known.

DEZ

I should have sent the dropship in for a closer look. I should have spotted the transport inhibitor on Drang. I should have thrown Vash off the ship before she robbed us.

JAKE

Earlier in sickbay, Stess told me she didn't regret a single thing. Friagloims rarely get to leave their home planet, and she loved her time here. She didn't hold you accountable for her death.

DEZ

I'm the captain. I'm not going to run away from my responsibility.

JAKE

I know. Believe me, I grew up knowing how important that is. But there are some things you can't control. Keep trying and you'll drive yourself crazy.

DEZ

My father was a ship's captain. I know he did well, but he turned away from his responsibilities. His wife... me. I was your age when I went looking for him.

This is a big thing for Dez to talk about this - he only can because he is drunk. Jake realises that, and listens.

DEZ

I worked my way across fifty light years to see him. I had this plan, you see... that everything would be alright once I got to see him. That he'd look at me and be sorry he went away. And one day, there he was, standing on his shuttle pad, yelling orders to his crew...

JAKE
What happened?

DEZ
He didn't remember me. When he finally realised who I was, he clapped me on the back and insisted on buying me a drink. We got drunk together... and then he wished me luck and said he hoped I'd find my way home alright.

Jake sympathises, and catches the implication too - Dez is likening his own father to Jake's. Is that true?

DEZ
I want you to stay, Jake. You're one of us now, you belong with us.

Jake is blinking back tears, moved by Dez's admission.

DEZ
Think about it at least, will you? Now's probably not the best time to make a decision, but will you think about it?

30 EXT. EE MARKETPLACE - DAY

A wide shot of a huge open marketplace, selling just about anything you can think of. It feels as if the whole planet is one big market, and it is packed with milling ALIENS of all kinds, browsing the stalls and eating at food vendors.

31 INT. EE ALEHOUSE

A busy public house, packed with more varied ALIENS. Sat together at one table are Jake, Coamis, Pif and Brad. They slam down some mysterious alcoholic shots and throw them back, followed by coughing, spluttering laughs.

All four are quite thoroughly inebriated, especially Jake who isn't used to these things.

COAMIS

Where did Fig and Trev disappear to? I lost track after that fifth spinewater.

PIF

Found a buyer for the Giani'aga box. Seven-and-a-half thousand pegs, thank you very much.

BRAD

Oh, I saw so much stuff I want to buy. I could shop for weeks on this planet. And it's all thanks to this wonderful human.

Brad, Pif and Coamis all raise another TOAST to Jake.

PIF

To Jake, the *Even Odds'* newest fortune hunter!

With a cheer, they knock back their drinks with more coughs and splutters. Brad lifts a huge hand and SLAPS Jake on the back, making him BELCH loudly. The rest of them laugh again. Then Brad flutters her eyelashes at Jake, flirting heavily and drunkenly. He smiles nervously back at her.

JAKE

I do love Nog, though. I'll have to have a last drink with him in Vic's. I'll have to say goodbye to Kasidy too. I remember when we were trying to burn graffiti into a wall in the docking ring, and Odo popped out of nowhere, scared us out of our wits... he's my best friend in the whole galaxy. But he'll understand. They both will. They want me to be happy.

He turns to Coamis, ready to convince him of this, but finds the Wadi man has already passed out on the table.

Suddenly, the ambient chatter in the bar quietens. Jake and the others turn to see that a new customer has walked in.

It's the TOSK. The reptilian alien looks quite different to how we saw him earlier - confused, tired and worn, very stressed and anxious about something.

JAKE
(whisper)
Tosk...

PIF
Uh-oh. Where there's Tosk, there's Hunters.

BRAD
Those things are trouble. I think they should ban them from public places, or someone's going to get seriously killed. Or worse.

Jake notices the rest of the bar feel similarly - the atmosphere is not welcoming. Seeing the Tosk's agitated state, he feels sorry for him.

JAKE
I'm going to say hi.

PIF
How about you don't?

BRAD
I agree. You should stay away.

JAKE
No, I'll be careful. I need some air anyway.

Unsteadily, Jake gets up from the table. The Tosk has already turned to leave, but Jake forces his drunken legs to follow him through the crowd and out of the bar.

32 EXT. EE MARKETPLACE - DAY

Jake steps out of the bar door into the marketplace, and looks around for the Tosk. He has already disappeared.

JAKE
Where'd you...

But then Jake catches sight of him far away in the crowd, and sets off to follow him. Jake continues to push his way through the crowd, trying to keep sight of the Tosk. He loses sight of him at times, but then spots him again.

Just as he thinks he has lost him again, a hand GRABS him by the shoulder and DRAGS him into an alleyway between buildings. Jake finds himself pinned against a wall by the Tosk, who stares at him expectantly.

TOSK

Will you tell me the purpose?

As Jake gazes into the maddened eyes of this Tosk...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

33 EXT. EE MARKETPLACE - DAY

As the Tosk excitedly holds Jake up against the wall.

TOSK

The new purpose, other than the
Hunt. Do you know what it is?

JAKE

I don't... I just... No.

The Tosk sags with disappointment, and lets Jake go. The Tosk is becoming unhinged, desperate with confusion. Jake is still rather drunk, but fighting past it to help.

JAKE

My... my name is Jake. Are you
sick? Are you being Hunted?

TOSK

Yes! And the Hunt should be all.
But there is more! I don't know
what it is, I have to find it,
it's here, I feel it, but I don't
know why and I can't find it!

JAKE

Look, maybe if you told me what
made you think there was something
else, aside from the Hunt...

TOSK

It was the closest system to the
Anomaly, and there was something
on the ground, and I touched it.
At first there was nothing, but
gradually this feeling grew...

Yet another new alien interrupts, stepping into the alley. This is WEX, the grey alien girl we saw at the end of 8x22. She gapes directly at Jake, as if she knows him.

WEX

What are you doing here?

JAKE

Excuse me? Have we met?

Wex blinks, shakes her head, correcting herself, then looks anxiously between Jake and the Tosk.

WEX

You shouldn't be out in the open like this. Not if the Tosk is being Hunted. It's not safe.

JAKE

Uh, we were having a private conversation...

WEX

I'm Wex. Forgive me for intruding. It's just I've had dealings with Tosk before. Is there a problem, something I can help you with?

Mystified but willing to consider it, Jake turns to Tosk.

JAKE

Tosk, maybe Wex has some ideas. It can't hurt to talk to her...

Tosk is still too frazzled to know what to do, so Jake turns to Wex and explains on his behalf.

JAKE

Tosk is being Hunted. But he's recently started feeling like he has some other purpose, and he doesn't know what to do. You can see what it's doing to him.

WEX

You should come with me. I came to Ee... well, it's a long story, but I'm here to see a wise woman with healing powers. It's said that her very touch brings peace.

Jake looks to Tosk. The desperation is clear in his eyes.

JAKE
Okay, let's go.

34 **EXT. EE SHANTY TOWN - DAY**

A shanty-town of dilapidated huts and shacks. As Jake, Tosk and Wex walk into this place, Jake looks at the people living rough. He hates to see people living like this. Wex approaches a human-looking MAN standing outside his hut.

WEX
We're looking for the leader of
the Sen Ennis.

MAN
(pointing)
Straight back, two lights in the
window. Tell her Umi says hello.

Nodding her thanks to the man, and glancing to Jake and Tosk to follow, Wex leads them further into the settlement.

After a while, they reach a house with two lights in the window. They pause. Tosk is eager, almost desperate to know what is inside, so Jake reaches out and knocks on the door. It opens, and there stands an older Bajoran woman - OPAKA.

OPAKA
Come in. I've been waiting.

Wex is pleased to see her, but dignified. Tosk is ecstatic with relief - he knows that Opaka is his new purpose.

35 **INT. OPAKA'S HOUSE**

As Opaka guides them into her small home, Jake takes a moment before he actually recognises her.

OPAKA
Please, sit down.

JAKE
You... you're Kai Opaka!

OPAKA

I was Kai. I've been simply Opaka
Sulan for some time now.

Opaka smiles benevolently as Jake gets more excited. She is calm, serene. Her presence does indeed seem to bring peace.

JAKE

But you were stuck on that moon,
years ago, where the runabout
crashed. You couldn't leave, it
would've killed you. How... how?

OPAKA

Will of the Prophets.

Jake's face falls - he has had enough of the Prophets.
Opaka sees his reaction, and learns something about him.

OPAKA

Jake... it is good to see you. As
I said, I have known for some time
you were coming. Some months ago
now, my dreams began to change...

WEX

It is good to meet you, Sulan. If
I may ask... how did you escape
this moon, if it was impossible?

Opaka smiles, about to launch into her story.

36 EXT. ENNIS SETTLEMENT - DAY

Another shanty-town, much like Ee's, on a windy, rocky plain. Opaka sits on the ground, tending to some meagre plant life, when an ENNIS colonist runs up eagerly.

ENNIS

Sulan! You must come! Zlangco saw
a ship crash, right before his
eyes! An alien was inside!

Nodding, Opaka gets up and follows the Ennis. As they walk:

OPAKA (v.o.)

Those poor people, locked in their cycle of warfare, unable to ever die from it. I died many painful deaths trying to talk to them. But slowly, they began to wonder about this... strange alien woman who refused to take arms against them. I simply spoke to them of finding the good within themselves. They eventually began to listen.

37 **INT. ENNIS SHACK - DAY**

A cot carries another new ALIEN. Female, tall and thin, covered in a silvery metallic bio-armour. The eyes are large, faceted, seeming to glow with a golden light. A big crack across her chest armour seems to be slowly healing. She is semi-conscious, muttering an alien language.

Her name is RAIQ, and she is an ASCENDANT.

OPAKA (v.o.)

For days, the alien raved in and out of consciousness, calling desperately to her gods, crying out for judgement. Insisting that they find her worthy. But in time, the trance broke.

38 **INT. ENNIS SHACK**

Opaka enters the shack again, another day, to see the Ascendant sitting up in her bed, healed. Other Ennis leave the room, only too happy to leave the alien to Opaka.

RAIQ

You have been with me. You saved my life. Sit.

It is an order, not a request. The alien's manner is hard, intense, imperious. She expects to be obeyed. Opaka sits.

RAIQ

When I asked to see the tribe's leader, they told me of you, and

how you brought peace. Do you
worship the True, the Unnamable?
Is that how you control?

OPAKA

(already wary)

I do not control. I walk with the
Prophets, the gods of my world.
But the people on this world know
nothing of the Prophets. They are
only just beginning to learn the
joys of faith, in themselves.

RAIQ

These people don't worship? You'd
swear it?

(Opaka nods)

And these 'prophets' of your home.
Do they live in the stars? Do they
see all?

Yes and yes, but there is something about Raiq's intense
and dangerous manner that makes Opaka hesitate to answer.

OPAKA

Why do you ask these questions?

RAIQ

Answer me! Do your prophets have
eyes of fire? Will you die and be
burned?

OPAKA

No!

Raiq seems satisfied at last. She sits back, and changes
the subject like her outburst never happened.

RAIQ

I will trust you. I will leave as
soon as I've rested, but you and
your people will be rewarded for
saving the life of an Ascendant.

OPAKA

Ascendant... Where are you from?

RAIQ

Our world is lost to time. I was born on the Quest, and I will die on it. As my ancestors did.

OPAKA

What do you seek?

RAIQ

The Fortress. The home of the True, hidden among the stars. When I find it, I will be judged and burn in Their eyes. Then I will be all-seeing, as They are.

OPAKA

And you wanted to know if I or the Sen Ennis worship the True.

RAIQ

(cold, dangerous)

Only Ascendants worship the True. I am responsible to Them during my quest, to destroy any who worship falsely. Long ago, we cleansed a hundred stars of heresy against the True. There are few of us now. But since you and yours do not shame the True, you have nothing to fear from the Ascendants.

(leans back)

I need to rest now. Tomorrow, I will decide on your reward.

And the conversation is over, just like that. Opaka is not a little worried by what she heard. She gets up to leave.

39 **EXT. ENNIS SETTLEMENT - DAY**

Raiq strides away from the settlement, towards her vessel, leaving Opaka to jog behind. The ship is small, sharp and metallic, as dangerous-looking as its occupant. It has no obvious engines or weapons, just smooth silver.

RAIQ

I have made my decision. When I depart, I will destroy the network that keeps you here. The false organisms that relate to cellular function will also be deactivated.

OPAKA

I don't understand. I thought we were dependent on these microbes.

RAIQ

You are. If your bodies were to be flushed of them, you would die. What I propose is dormancy. Death would again become an option, and your people could procreate.

This is wonderful news - Opaka is so thankful she can barely breathe. Raiq is impassive, striding onwards.

RAIQ

This is the reward. Once it is done, the Ascendants owe you nothing.

40 **INT. OPAKA'S HOUSE**

Opaka is finishing her story, as the others listen rapt.

OPAKA

...And so we were free to leave.

JAKE

Why didn't you go straight home?

OPAKA

Because I have always known that the Prophets would send for me when they were ready.

(smiles)

And here you are.

Jake is not overly pleased with that idea - that he is here because of the Prophets. Opaka notices that the Tosk has not said anything, even though he looks eager to speak.

OPAKA

Is there something you have to
tell me, Tosk?

TOSK

(in a rush)

You are the new purpose, Oh-Paka.
You have to come with me, back to
the system nearest the Anomaly, to
the planet where I touched the
crystal.

Jake is surprised at this. But Opaka accepts it right off.

OPAKA

Alright. I just have to speak with
Zlangco and the others, make sure
they know what remains to be done
here. I can leave tomorrow.

Jake spins, surprised again. Wex suddenly speaks up.

WEX

I would like to go with you. I
know that you have no reason to
allow it, but I feel strongly I
should be with you... if that's
agreeable to you, of course.

OPAKA

Of course you must come. Will we
all be travelling together?

This is all moving too fast for Jake.

JAKE

I... don't know. Let me talk to my
captain. It's not really up to me.

41 INT. EVEN ODDS - TRANSPORTER ROOM

Dez and Facity stand by the door, obviously just having
been roused from bed. Jake talks urgently to them as Wex,
Tosk and Opaka wait patiently on the transporter platform.

JAKE

We can take Tosk's ship with us. That system he described, it has to be Idran, three light years from the wormhole. We could drop them off, and they could make it back to Bajor on their own from there. So... what do you think?

Dez thinks it over for a moment, looking at the guests.

DEZ

I think you're right, it makes sense. We'll call it our good deed for the day.

Facity is amazed at that. She thinks he has lost his mind.

JAKE

Great, thanks Dez.

DEZ

Except I think Wex could find her own ride. I know Trellians are into self-discovery, but it seems a little suspect, to be honest.

WEX

(speaking up)

If I may... my family is very wealthy. I can pay. Quite well.

DEZ

Fine.

Facity remains quite astonished at this turn of events, and drags Dez by the arm out into the corridor.

FACITY

Dez, may I have a word?

42 INT. EVEN ODDS - CORRIDOR

They are alone in the corridor, and Facity is not happy.

FACITY

Explain.

DEZ

You weren't listening, my sweet.
What did the Tosk tell us?

FACITY

He told us he's insane! What's gotten into you? I know you care about Jake, but you're taking this father figure thing too far.

DEZ

Facity, he touched a crystal that disappeared. That melted. But first, it implanted something in his mind.

FACITY

So? I think it damaged his mind -

Her jaw drops in amazement as it occurs to her.

FACITY

You think he found the Eav'oq planet? One of the crystals?

DEZ

The lost world of the Eav'oq. It's only the greatest retrieval legend there is. And if it really is, then I want to be there to see it.

The smile slowly creeps over Facity's face.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

43 EXT. SPACE

The *Even Odds* now surges through space at warp speed.

44 INT. EVEN ODDS - QUARTERS

Jake sits alone on his bunk, writing on a padd with a stylus. He is pensive, trying to figure out his thoughts.

JAKE (v.o.)

Things are weird. We're hurrying,
for one thing. Suddenly our agenda
is blank, so we're heading
straight for Idran at top speed.

45 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

Dez and Facity are both hard at work, excited and eagerly checking up whatever they can find on the Eav'oq legend.

JAKE (v.o.)

Dez has been a bit distant with
me, too. Probably just still
dealing with Stess's death.

46 INT. EVEN ODDS - MESS HALL

Feg and Triv sit at the table, their eyes glittering with joy as they count through thousands of pegs before them.

JAKE (v.o.)

But I can't stop thinking about
this prophecy business. I feel...
lost. Angry. Tired of caring. And
I'm not sure who to talk to.

47 INT. EVEN ODDS - QUARTERS

A different set of quarters, but practically identical. Opaka sits on the cot, quietly meditating. The door CHIME signals, and she stands to go to the door. Jake is there. She is pleased to see him, but notes the anxious look.

OPAKA

Jake, come in.

He does, sits on the bed with her. She can see that he is in pain, and sympathises, wants to help. He is not sure how to talk about what is on his mind, so he just starts.

JAKE

Why haven't you asked me about my father? What happened to him?

OPAKA

I thought it might be a painful subject for you.

JAKE

But he's in the Celestial Temple. He's with the Prophets. Isn't that supposed to be a good thing?

OPAKA

For him, yes, I believe so. But for you... the last thing I'd want to hear is how someone else feels happy about my personal loss.

JAKE

But... you're the Kai!

OPAKA

So I don't care that you miss him? I'm sorry for your pain, Jake. You didn't ask for your father to be the Emissary, and I regret the unfairness of it to you.

He listens, not sure if that helps him or not. Tears are starting to come now as the disappointment hits him.

JAKE

I was looking for him. In the wormhole. I read this prophecy, that I would return with a Herald who spoke with the Prophets. I thought it was about him.

His bitterness and anger are coming out through the tears.

JAKE (cont)

But I guess it was really about you all along. This whole trip, all the ridiculous things that have happened to me... it was never about finding my father. Or even about finding myself without my father. It was all about finding you. It makes me feel... pointless. Like it was all planned out for me. Like I'm just a puppet for the Prophets to pull around however they want.

OPAKA

Jake... I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

JAKE

It's not your fault. It's just the way things are, I guess.

She looks on with sympathy as he tries to convince himself.

48 EXT. IDRAN PLANET

Back where we started. The Tosk's ship has just touched down, rather more gracefully than the first time. As the hatch opens and the Tosk clambers out, numerous figures materialise in a transporter beam nearby. Dez, Facity, Jake, Opaka, Wex, Pif, Glessin, Coamis and Brad.

Excited, knowing his purpose is near, Tosk steps up to Opaka... and doesn't know what to do next. He looks around at the others in desperation, and they look back at him. It is just desolate rock emptiness all around.

TOSK

I... don't know! This is the place, I know it is, but...

Opaka looks around herself, seeming to feel something. She closes her eyes to concentrate, then looks back at Tosk.

OPAKA
(pointing)
It's that way. Do you feel it?

DEZ
What is?

OPAKA
I really couldn't say. I sense...
pagh. Spiritual energy. But I've
never in my life had such a strong
sense of it. Shall we?

The Tosk nods eagerly, relieved to be doing something.

49 EXT. IDRAN PLANET - DAY

The crew walk over the rocky plains, Opaka leading the way, leaning on Tosk as her old body struggles with the terrain. The others follow with caution, looking around, except for Pif who trots happily along chatting MOS.

The crew reach a cave in a cliff-face. Opaka looks around, then walks into the cave confidently. Tosk follows her without hesitation. The others wait, a little startled.

PIF
No screams. Guess it's safe.

DEZ
Glessin, Brad, stay here.

Dez raises a palm-beacon and leads the way into the cave.

50 INT. IDRAN CAVE

The only light is the bobbing beams of the crew's palm-beacons. The crew are looking around, searching for anything of interest or use. There is nothing. Opaka stands with her hands against the far rock wall, her eyes closed.

OPAKA
I still feel it, this is the
place. But there's no-one here.

COAMIS

There are some rocks sticking out
over here. I can't quite -

PIF

Rocks?! That's amazing! I haven't
seen anything like that since -

DEZ

Quiet, Pif. Keep looking.

TOSK

What about the writing?

They all turn to him - Tosk points to a part of the wall,
where there are some seemingly innocuous marks scratched
into the rock. Tosk looks at the marks, squinting, almost
understanding. Jake comes closer and does the same.

DEZ

It's not writing. It's too random.

TOSK

It is. Look, there it says, "and
from the now to the beginning, in
order touch the eras..."

(straightens, confused)

But Tosk know only *ochshea-hos*,
the Hunter's word.

Then the Tosk turns to them with a look of wonder.

TOSK (cont)

That is it! I know the language,
that is my purpose! To bring you
to see it, to know what it says!

OPAKA

(pleased for him)

Then you've fulfilled it well.

DEZ

What else does it say?

Tosk turns eagerly to the wall to translate more, but
suddenly Glessin's voice comes over the comm.

GLESSIN (comm)
Dez... Hunters.

The crew look to each other with sudden worry. Opaka doesn't understand. Tosk is immediately in action, running back out of the cave entrance, shrouding as he goes.

51 **EXT. IDRAN PLANET**

At the mouth of the cave, a gust of wind rushes past the tense and alert Glessin and Brad. Some distance away, a quartet of HUNTERS (1x06 "Captive Pursuit") stalk forward.

Dez appears in the mouth of the cave, soon followed by the others, and Glessin points to the Hunters.

52 **HUNTERS' POV**

The infra-red-like visors of the Hunters' helmets detect the figure of the Tosk, running sideways along the plain, away from both the cave and the Hunters.

53 **EXT. IDRAN PLANET**

LEAD HUNTER
(pointing)
Tosk! I have him!

They start to chase after him, and Dez shouts out.

DEZ
Wait! You don't understand, we
need him!

They ignore him, and keep running. The lead Hunter fires his weapon with a loud CRACK of discharge. The energy shoots at open air, but hits the shrouded Tosk, who unshrouds as he falls to one knee, his skin smoking.

He drags himself back up and LEAPS in the air to avoid another shot. But he is injured, and the third shot gets him. Part of his leg is disintegrated, and he falls to the ground with a GRUNT. Opaka and Brad scream at the sight.

As the Tosk lies on his back, he sees the four Hunters approach and stand over him, looking down at him.

LEAD HUNTER

You die with honour, Tosk!

Tosk smiles, his purpose satisfied. The Hunter FIRES again - and the Tosk is dead, a smoking hole in his chest.

JAKE

No!

Jake tries to run after them, but Facity holds him back. From a distance, the *Even Odds* crew watch the Hunters wrap Tosk's body in a ceremonial shroud and carry him away.

DEZ

Well, that's just great. Could the timing have been any better?

Jake gapes at Dez appalled, disgusted at his attitude. Jake turns and stalks back into the cave. Facity glares at Dez again - he could have been a bit more tactful. Chastened, Dez turns and follows Jake inside. Facity sighs.

FACITY

Glessin, if you could keep watch for another minute. The rest of you, let's see if we can find anything else.

Saddened by what they have seen, she leads them inside.

54 **INT. IDRAN CAVE**

Bobbing palm-beacons again. Facity stands looking at the scratches on the wall, sighing with frustration.

PIF

What are those?

COAMIS

Rocks. The ones you were so amazed by earlier.

Dez walks over to them, and sees an arrangement of small rocks set into the wall, in two curved vertical lines, too regular to be a natural formation.

He touches one, and dust brushes off, revealing something glittering, like a jewel. Suddenly excited, he begins brushing more dust off them.

DEZ

Brad, look at these.

JAKE

That one's kejelious. It's a Bajoran building material. I saw it at B'Hala. That greenish one, it's grem. And that red one...

BRAD

It's temonis. I had a box made from it as a child. And the dark blue one's semi-precious, it's called dezomin.

FACITY

(to Opaka)

Are you getting any kind of... ah... feeling about this?

OPAKA

I still sense *pagh*, but nothing new or different. Though it is quite unusual that these pieces appear to coincide with materials used on Bajor, don't you think?

BRAD

What's that one?

JAKE

Not sure, but I know it's from the end of the Sh'Dama Age...

An idea suddenly occurs to Facity, and as Jake turns to her in the low light, she sees he has had the same idea.

JAKE

From the now to the beginning, in order touch the eras. That's what he said, isn't it?

They grin. Anticipation grows in the small cave as everyone realises they are onto something. Jake shares his wonder with Opaka and they step closer to the wall, ready to work.

OPAKA

Before Aclim was Eyisla, and
before that was Tumika...

JAKE

Wait. So that's... kejelious, then
dezomin, then grem...

Jake keeps thinking, pointing to stones in turn, figuring it out in his head, as everyone waits with bated breath. Opaka, Brad and the others offer suggestions MOS. Until...

JAKE

And the...ah, Sh'Dama Age was
first, right?
(Opaka nods)
Okay, then we're ready.

Jake shivers with nerves. He turns to Opaka, Dez, Facity, Brad. They nod to him, encouraging him.

He turns back to the wall, and touches the stones in turn, whispering the names as everyone holds their breath. Even Glessin has joined them now.

JAKE

Elmoda... kleeb-wef...
(glance at Brad)
...temonis... fusion-stone...
(glance at Glessin)
...jevonite... kejelious...
dezomin, grem, ashflake... and
whatever this one is.

As Jake touches the last one with a sigh, there is a bright white LIGHTS, and in a big WASH of energy, the tiny cave is gone, replaced by...

...An enormous hall, towering and massive, made out of a pure white marble, with a sweet alien SINGING sound.

56 **EXT. SPACE**

The wash of ENERGY engulfs the *Even Odds*, hanging in orbit over the planet. It fills all of visible space.

Elsewhere, a Starfleet comm relay (like the one in 3x15 "Destiny" but slightly more advanced) is swept up in the energy and ripped to shreds by the advancing wave.

57 **INT. EVEN ODDS - MESS HALL**

Feg and Triv look up from counting their pegs as strange BIRDS suddenly materialise and flutter around the room.

58 **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

Prees, running the bridge, stares in amazement as the energy surges past smoothly, and computer panels on the walls morph into wide MOUTHS, singing the alien sounds.

PREES

Srral, report!

Srral's calm, processed voice issues from the comm system.

SRRAL (comm)

We are now less than thirty-eight light-minutes from the Anomaly. Three-point-three light years from our previous position.

Behind her, the WA seems to have leaked onto the bridge, its white space and coloured patches filling the back wall. Prees looks at the viewscreen, where the planet remains.

PREES

And the planet?

SRRAL (comm)

It now registers more than seven-thousand life forms, no matching bio-signature on file.

59 **INT. EAV'OQ CHAMBER**

Dez, Jake, Opaka and the others stand in the big chamber, gaping with astonishment. In front of them, stretching away into the distance, are rows and rows of a new alien race, arranged on steps like a choir but all seemingly asleep, yet still singing. They are the EAV'OQ.

Glessin turns around and finds an enormous and elaborate window behind them, and through it he sees trees and paths and blue sky - what Tosk saw when he touched the crystal.

Meanwhile, Opaka has stepped closer to the aliens, enchanted by their unconscious singing. The nearest alien has stopped singing, and slowly opens its large single eye.

It stands, seeming to unfold itself. Its body is tall, taller than the crew, thin and almost tubular. It stands vertically, and has eight pink limbs that seem too thin and ribbon-like to support its weight. Its one eye focuses on Opaka; the edges of the eye curl up, as if it is smiling.

It makes low, gentle noises, talking to Opaka. She steps towards it, no fear in her face, ignoring a cautious hand from Wex. The alien opens its upper limbs, and Opaka steps happily into its embrace. As the translator catches up...

EAV'OQ
...Welcome to you, my sister.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

60 EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - ESTABLISHING

A peaceful city of green lawns, stone paths, swaying trees,
and massive marble structures under a clear blue sky.

61 INT. EAV'OQ CHAMBER

Opaka steps back from her embrace with the Eav'oq, ITU. The
Even Odds crew is still amazed at the new surroundings.

ITU

My name is Itu, and I welcome you,
and thank you for bringing the
Eav'oq back to the living time. We
are young in the care of the
Siblings, who watch over us all
with Their Eyes of Light. We have
been waiting for one of Their
Chosen to come to us, and tell us
that the persecution is no more.

(to Opaka)

You are Chosen, my sister, I feel
the Siblings' sight upon you.

OPAKA

The Siblings... We call them the
Prophets.

ITU

They are surely as one.

DEZ

If I might ask, Itu... where have
you been? And why?

ITU

We have been hiding. For a hundred
years, our cities burned, our
people were killed, by a race of
fanatical beings who believed our
devotion to the Siblings to be
blasphemous.

Opaka shares a look of worried recognition with Jake.

ITU (cont)

The Eav'oq will not end sentient life for any reason. We could only turn to the Siblings for guidance, and They sent us a vision, and they told us to go away. We built this city in a fold of space. The Siblings showed us that we could hide ourselves here, if we managed a perfect unity of idea.

JAKE

And when I touched the stones...

ITU

I believe my eye itched. The unity was broken when I thought of relieving the itch.

Jake smirks, and Pif whistles. Itu turns back to Opaka.

ITU

Would you walk with me, sister? Soon, the others will awake. But I'd like to know about your world, and the Prophets. You're all welcome, of course.

DEZ

Actually, I was hoping to explore your city, with some of my crew.

ITU

Our home is open to you.

With a bow, Itu moves away in its strange lolloping gait. Opaka walks with it, followed behind by Jake and Wex. Dez turns to his crew and begins issuing directions.

62 **EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY**

Jake walks along behind Opaka and Itu, still gazing around in amazement, his thoughts all over the place.

JAKE (v.o.)

Have I been used, again? It's clear to me now that Dez only agreed to come here because he worked out that this was the Eav'oq world. But why did he have to lie to me about it?

(pause)

Because he wants me to like him, to respect him. So he's been telling me what I want to hear. And I've been letting him.

Wex jogs up to him, interrupting his reverie.

WEX

You seem unhappy. Is it... Tosk?

(no answer)

I thought I might take Opaka back to Bajor, in the Tosk vessel. It would be crowded, but it's not a long trip. Shorter now, I think. I overheard Prees tell the captain we're closer to the Anomaly now.

Jake still doesn't know what to say. Pif trots up on three paws, as his fourth is carrying a blue glass goblet.

PIF

Hey, Jake. Dez wants to get gone.

JAKE

Why? And where did you get that?

PIF

Everyone's at the transport point already. I'll see you there!

Pif trots on, ignoring Jake's question. Some anger and disappointment coming through now, he turns to Wex.

JAKE

Tell Opaka we'll be escorting her home in the Tosk ship, whenever she's ready.

63 EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY

Elsewhere outside the city, the *Even Odds* crew gathers. As Jake approaches them, he sees they are all holding bits of pottery, goblets, ornaments, other valuable things. Jake is disappointed with them. Dez sees that, and gets defensive.

JAKE

I don't guess I can talk you into putting those things back.

DEZ

You've got to understand, Jake. We discovered the Eav'oq. We'll be legends in the retrieval game! But it'll be short-lived. Before long they'll probably be selling it themselves. Right now, this is a huge opportunity for us!

JAKE

I'll take that as a no.

DEZ

It's our job. This is what we do, Jake. It's what we've always done.

JAKE

I know. I do, really. But it's not for me. Wex is taking Opaka back in the Tosk ship, and I'm going with them.

DEZ

Because of this?

JAKE

No. Maybe. Partly. Think about it, Dez. I know you know why.

DEZ

(angry, frustrated)

Don't patronise me. And you're right, I do know why. It's your father, you still want to go

chasing after your perfect father.
It's a dream, don't you get that?
Do you really think he's going to
give up whatever he's doing to be
with you? Because let me tell you,
it's not going to happen. He left
you, Jake. It's time for you to
wake up and make your own life!

Jake takes it calmly, doesn't get upset. He almost smiles.

JAKE

That's what I'm doing. I'm going
back to a place I feel strong,
where I have friends, and history,
and family. You've been a good
friend, Dez... but whether or not
my father returns, this is my
life, my decision. I'm leaving.

Dez stews a little longer, before seeing that Jake is
resolute. Finally he accepts it, and turns sad.

DEZ

We're going to miss you.

Pif trots up, suddenly worried by the downbeat tone.

PIF

Wait, what is it? What happened?

Jake crouches down to talk closer to the dog-like alien.

JAKE

Relax, Pif. It's... I'm leaving.
I'm not going back with you. I
just don't think I'm cut out for
the retrieval business.

PIF

That's crazy! You're great at it.
Tell him, Dez.

DEZ

I think his mind's made up, Pif.

Jake stands up, and Glessin steps forward respectfully.

GLESSIN

It's been a pleasure to know you.
I mean that very sincerely.

JAKE

Thanks, Glessin. I feel the same.

Brad promptly bursts into tears and throws herself onto Jake in a big bear hug, practically swallowing him up. He compassionately pats what he can reach of her back.

JAKE

Hey, none of that.

She stumbles back, sniffing. Jake turns to Facity, who is smiling at him warmly.

FACITY

I'll say goodbye to everyone for
you. Good luck, Jake.

JAKE

Thanks, Fac.

Jake crouches back down to Pif again, who is sulking.

JAKE

Thanks for everything, Pif.

PIF

I like you, Jake. I don't want you
to leave. You'll forget about us.

JAKE

How could I forget about you, Pif?
You're the fastest Aarruri I've
ever met.

PIF

(sulkily)

I'm the only Aarruri you ever met.

JAKE

Hey, do me a favour... tell Feg and Triv that my closest friend back home is Nog, son of Rom. Can you remember that?

PIF

(small smile)

They're going to hate that, aren't they?

JAKE

Oh yeah.

Jake reaches in and nuzzles his cheek against Pif's, then stands. He gives a last nod to his friends, then turns and walks back towards the waiting Wex. After a few moments, Dez speaks into his comm MOS and the crew transports away.

JAKE (v.o.)

We stayed for three days. Three peaceful, wonderful days. But the Eav'oq were waking up, and they had their lives to get back to. And so did I.

64 **EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY**

A later time, just outside the city, Jake, Wex and Opaka are just saying goodbye to Itu, with another big hug. Then they turn and walk back towards the Tosk ship, which now stands in a grassy park. Opaka is a million miles away.

JAKE

Sulan? Are you okay?

OPAKA

Oh... so many thoughts, Jake. To discover another world, another people whom the Prophets have touched. And to see how they worship, so like and yet so unlike Bajor. And the Ascendants... From Itu's descriptions, I have no doubt it was they who persecuted the Eav'oq millennia ago. It seems obvious to me now, that their

Fortress, hidden in the stars...
it is the Temple. And that an
Ascendant was responsible for
freeing me from the Ennis moon, so
that I might reveal the Eav'oq's
hiding place... Even you cannot
think these are coincidences,
Jake.

He doesn't answer, but no, he doesn't think that at all.

65 **INT. TOSK SHIP**

Clambering in through the hatch, Wex settles behind the controls of Tosk's ship as Jake and Opaka squeeze behind.

JAKE

You sure you know how to drive
this thing?

WEX

I told you, I've had dealings with
Tosk before.

Wex presses buttons, and the small ship starts to lift off.

JAKE

Going home.

66 **EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY**

The Tosk ship lifts off and turns slowly, heading back up towards the clear blue sky.

FADE OUT:

THE END