

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 sits inside his small shuttle, inside the wormhole, waiting. 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 him, he shudders and spasms, his shroud flickering on and off, breath hissing through his tightened lips, eyes fixed and staring. Around, he sees --

-- the environment change in sudden FLASHES. For moments at a time, austere rocks are replaced by level ground, green lawns, stone paths, swaying trees, clear blue sky, great walls that meet - the corner of some massive structure.

This sight flashes in and out, just like the view which 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. Gets to his feet, walks cautiously to where the crystal was. There is now 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, travelling at tremendous speed, stars and planets flying by at warp. The object shakes and rattles from the stress of the journey. The bright LIGHT grows until...

WHITE OUT

then **FADE IN**

6 STOCK - 8x03 "AVATAR 3"

An indistinct shape hovers, 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. 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 full-figured, wearing a skimpy outfit that would make a *dabo* girl blush.

The pair stand 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...

FACITY

Who is he?

DEZ

I don't know... yet.

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

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

8 INT. EVEN ODDS - QUARTERS

Beginning in darkness, 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.

Jake backs away on his bunk, pulls the bedclothes with him. Pif rears back and raises his front paws appeasingly...

PIF

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

JAKE

Right, same here. Friend.

PIF

Good, sorry. 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)

Pif, you know how I feel about
cheating. 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, 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, everyone does. 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, 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. Meanwhile Jake begins to get out of bed and get dressed, rather bemused and lost...

9 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

The turbolift door opens -- Pif leads Jake onto a standard freighter bridge. Dez stands tall and strong...

PIF

...and here we are! Jake Sisko?
This is Captain Zin Dezavrim,
everyone calls him Dez.

This man distinctly resembles Ben Sisko in build and manner - it throws Jake off again. He smiles, warm and welcoming. Facity gets up to greet Jake from her station...

FACITY

So, Jake Sisko. What brings you to
the other side of the galaxy?

...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 Sleadow. Why don't you and I go get something to eat? I'm sure we can find something fit for human consumption.

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. We're at least three months from the Anomaly at top speed in a straight line, and we have business that can't wait.

JAKE

Three months?!

DEZ

The Anomaly threw you a hundred parsecs in an instant. But don't worry, Jake. We're heading to Ee after Drang, once we've met with the clients. I'm sure you'll be able to find transport there.

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, slightly annoyed glance from Facity...

JAKE (v.o.)

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

10 **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 - he
called it "retrieval" - and took
me to meet the rest of the crew.

11 **INT. EVEN ODDS - SICKBAY**

Jake lies on a biobed as a Cardassian male, GLESSIN, runs instruments over him. Cool and calm, a solitary person, carrying a medical tricorder in his badly scarred hands...

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.

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

Jake sits around a central mess table with Dez and some more aliens. There are two Ferengi males, FEG and TRIV...

JAKE (v.o.)
Feg and Triv came through back in
the early days, looking for new
profit. They're the accountants -
no surprise there.

...a young and innocent Wadi male, COAMIS...

JAKE (v.o.)
Coamis is almost as new as me -
he's an archaeologist, and he's
only been on board six months.

...and a huge Dosi female, BRAD. She towers over the rest with her muscles and warpaint, but she is quite girly...

JAKE (v.o.)
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.

13 INT. DRANG CAVES

Blending into the rock wall is a strange non-humanoid alien
- about a metre tall, tripodal, made of a lumpy, fungus-
like material with bulbs that rotate in all directions -
its eyes. The HISSING and SPITTING sound is closer now...

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.

14 INT. EVEN ODDS - SHUTTLEBAY

Jake's damaged shuttle sits on the deck, various panels
open and dead. A thin female Karemma (from 3x01 and 4x07) -
PREES - steps out of the shuttle in an oil-streaked boiler
suit, wiping her hands on a cloth, greets Jake and Dez...

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

A LIQUID METAL substance flows out from the machinery on
Jake's shuttle, gathering together in a puddle. Jake gazes
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.

15 **INT. EVEN ODDS - CORRIDOR / TURBOLIFT**

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

PIF
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.

Step into a turbolift, the doors close, the lift moves...

PIF (cont)
One of the few original parts left
is the C-D sub-deck, which just
goes to show...

The doors open again onto...

16 **THE WA**

PIF (cont)
...that whoever originally built
this ship were very alien aliens.

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

PIF
Welcome to the Wa. Which takes up
no space. It's infinite in here,
but the external dimensions of the
ship never change. Prees spends
every spare hour down here, still
can't work it out. Srral refuses
to come here at all.

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

And don't touch anything. Okay?
Can't stress that highly enough.
Just... don't.

JAKE (v.o.)

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

17 **INT. EVEN ODDS - DEZ'S QUARTERS**

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

FACITY

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.

FACITY

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.

FACITY

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

...I read the documents he was carrying. He's Benjamin Sisko's son, did you know that?

FACITY

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...

18 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

Dez shows Jake plans on a bridge wall-screen...

DEZ

The Drang are violent brutes who spent the chaos of the Quadrant War stealing whatever they could from anyone. Apparently their legends say that 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 sense to hire us to get it back. 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! As Dez continues to explain MOS...

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! Of course I can't help thinking Dad wouldn't approve of this.

(a little bitter)

Still, 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?

19 INT. DRANG CAVES

Jake's feet hit the stone ground RUNNING. Terrified, being chased 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 SHOOTs down the last Drang in the pack with his phaser. The Drang collapses - the others don't even notice and keep chasing Pif. Glessin rolls his eyes at their stupidity and returns to cover.

Hidden behind some large pottery, Coamis is curled up in a ball, terrified. Nearby, Brad works her way through the various riches, tagging them with transporter tags.

Pif leads the Drang right past Stess, who is still blending against the wall. 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, see a primitive COMPUTER CONSOLE. Dez flicks a switch and the panel dies...

DEZ
Shields are down.

FACITY (comm)
Getting transporter lock now.

Brad beams up, carrying a large ceramic EGG. Then Glessin, Coamis, Stess and Pif... leaving some very confused Drang chasing nothing.

By their console, Jake hears more Drang footsteps - then one turns the corner. He instinctively raises his phaser --

-- and SHOOTs the Drang down. Only once the Drang falls does Jake realise what he has done, and stares at his own hand, dumbfounded.

Dez grabs a large rock, 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...

20 INT. EVEN ODDS - TRANSPORTER ROOM

Feg and Triv stand at the edge of the transporter platform, lifting off the retrieved items, making room for more.

As each crew member materialises, they collapse to the deck 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 BEAM IN. 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. I've read
about them. He was going smaller
towards the end.

(emphatic)

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. Brad
walks up and plants a big smacker on his lips.

Jake, still 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 it now -
Jake is part of the team.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

21 EXT. SPACE - EVEN ODDS

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...

22 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.

23 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 were Dad's morals 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?

Jake throws his own pegs in the pile - he is really part of the crew now. The whole room is soon getting involved. As they all 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.

24 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... today was a bad day.

DEZ

Standard salvage operation. Team one, ops centre - see 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.

They move out - Dez with Jake, Pif with Facility. All five parts of Stess waddle in various directions, Brad nearby.

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, Facility and Pif come trotting over...

FACILITY

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, face going pale as he realises...

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.

BACK TO SCENE

Jake turns, 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 bemused, not seeing the significance...

JAKE

These were Nerys's people, Dez!
The Jem'Hadar slaughtered them,
and here we are picking through
their bones 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

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

...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

And I guess... it's not like we 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.

Jake nods, grateful, falling for Dez's line.

Dez looks up - sees Facity nearby, watching them. She heard what he said. She knows he is lying, and he knows she knows. He turns away from her judgement...

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 segments of STESS waddle around a building.

Brad holds out a scanner, looks at its screen, worried...

BRAD

Wait, I think I'm getting --

BOOM

One part of Stess is vaporised instantly by the explosion - she stood on a Jem'Hadar LANDMINE.

SHRAPNEL flies out in all directions, SHREDS another part of the Friagloim to pieces.

Brad is thrown backwards to the ground, lands with a breathless OOF, but is mostly unhurt.

The remaining three parts of Stess emit a gurgling alien SHRIEK, and a WAVE of energy bursts from them all, hitting the other crew - and they COLLAPSE in shock.

Dez shakes off the energy wave, gets up and runs towards Stess, cradles one of the dying parts in his arms...

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.

And Jake watches on from where he fell to his knees...

25 INT. EVEN ODDS - DEZ'S QUARTERS

Jake walks in, tentative - Dez looks up from where he was lying in his bed. Nearby are an almost empty bottle and glass - he has been drowning his sorrows....

JAKE
Thought I'd see how you're 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

Stess didn't regret a thing. In sickbay, earlier, she told me... Friagloims rarely get to leave their 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 some things you can't control. Try 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 recognise me. When he finally realised who I was, he clapped me on the back, insisted on buying me a drink.

DEZ (cont)

We got drunk together... 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 can't answer)

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

Jake hesitates... then nods. He'll think about it.

26 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.

27 INT. EE ALEHOUSE

A busy public house, packed with more varied ALIENS. Sat
together at one table are Jake, Coamis, Pif and Brad. All
four are quite thoroughly inebriated, especially Jake, who
isn't used to these things.

They SLAM down some mysterious alcoholic shots and throw
them back, followed by coughing, spluttering LAUGHS...

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.

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.

The rest of the bar feel similarly - the atmosphere is not welcoming, lots of mutters and whispers.

Seeing the Tosk's agitated state, looking around urgently for something, not finding it, Jake feels bad...

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...

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 him, spots him again. Just as he thinks he has lost the Tosk once and for all --

-- a hand GRABS him by the shoulder, DRAGS him into an alleyway between buildings, PINS him against the wall. As Jake gazes scared into the maddened eyes of this Tosk...

TOSK

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

JAKE

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

Tosk sags with disappointment, and lets Jake go. 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...

Another new alien is just walking past the alley's open end, but stops in surprise at the sight of Jake and Tosk...

...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 around anxiously at the nearby crowds...

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 back 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

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 touch brings peace.

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

29 INT. EE SHACK - DAY

A knock on a rustic old wooden door, one of many in a rough shanty town. After a moment, the door creaks open...

...and reveals 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.

But Jake is simply stunned...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

30 INT. EE SHACK - DAY

As Opaka guides them into her home, Jake blurts out...

JAKE

You... you're Kai Opaka!

OPAKA

I was Kai. I've been simply Opaka
Sulan for some time now. Please,
everyone, sit down.

They do. Opaka smiles benevolently as Jake gets more and 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's had quite 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. I
have heard tales of the leader of
the Sen Ennis. But if I may ask...
how did you escape this moon, if
it was impossible?

Opaka smiles, about to launch into her story...

31 **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 on creaking old bones, 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.

32 **INT. ENNIS SHACK - DAY**

Inside the meagre shack is a thin cot, and on it lies a new alien, semi-conscious, muttering an alien language.

Female, tall and thin, covered in a silvery metallic BIO-ARMOUR plus singed robes. A big jagged CRACK across her chest looks bruised around the edges. The eyes are large and faceted, seeming to glow with a golden inner LIGHT.

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.

33 **INT. ENNIS SHACK - DAY**

Opaka enters the shack again, on 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.

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

Opaka sits, already wary...

RAIQ

I am Raiq. When I asked to see
this tribe's leader, they told me
of you, and how you brought peace
to this world. Do you worship the
True, the Unnamable? Is that how
you control?

OPAKA

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,
dangerous manner that makes Opaka hesitate to answer...

OPAKA

Raiq... why do you ask me these
questions?

RAIQ

Answer me, woman! 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
we find it, we will be judged and
burn in Their eyes. Then we will
be all-seeing, as They are.

OPAKA

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

Raiq turns a cold and dangerous look on Opaka...

RAIQ

Only Ascendants may worship the
True. I am responsible to Them
during my quest, to destroy any
who worship falsely.

RAIQ (cont)

Long ago, we cleansed a hundred
stars of heresy against the True.
There are fewer 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...

34 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. As they walk...

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

Raiq is impassive, striding onwards. But Opaka stops dead,
so thankful she can barely breathe...

35 INT. EE SHACK - DAY

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 turns surprised at this, but Opaka just accepts it as
a *fait accompli*...

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?

They all turn to look at Jake, expectant... but this is all moving too fast for him.

JAKE

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

He's picking up that lying thing...

36 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 in the background.

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 can call it our good deed for the day.

Facity is amazed at that - has Dez 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?

37 **INT. EVEN ODDS - CORRIDOR**

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, the Tosk 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 (cont)

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...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

38 EXT. SPACE - EVEN ODDS

The patchwork freighter surges through space at warp...

39 INT. EVEN ODDS - QUARTERS

OPAKA sits on the cot, quietly meditating. The door CHIME signals - she stands to go to the door. Jake is there...

OPAKA
Jake, come in.

He does, sits on the bed with her. He's obviously in pain, but not sure how to talk about it... 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 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 work their way through...

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.

(bitter)

But I guess it was really about you all along. This whole trip, all the ridiculous things that 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.

She reaches out to comfort him, but too soon --

FACITY (comm)

Bridge to Sisko - we're here.

Jake snuffles away the tears - back to work.

40 EXT. IDRAN PLANET - DAY

Back where we started. The Tosk's ship has touched down, rather more gracefully than the first time. The hatch opens and the Tosk clambers out, looks around again...

And nearby, numerous figures materialise in a transporter beam - Dez, Facity, Jake, Opaka, Wex, Pif, Glessin, Brad.

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, closes her eyes to concentrate, just
feels... then points their way with authority.

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

DEZ
Feel what?

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...

41 EXT. IDRAN PLANET - DAY

Opaka leads the way, supported by the Tosk as her old body
struggles with the terrain. The others follow with caution,
looking around - Pif trots happily along chatting MOS.

They reach a CAVE in a cliff-face. Opaka pauses... 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...

42 INT. IDRAN CAVE

The only LIGHT is the bobbing beams of the crew's palm-
beacons. Everyone looks around, searching for anything of
interest - but there's nothing. Opaka stands with her hands
against the far rock wall, eyes closed...

OPAKA

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

WEX

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.

Tosk is immediately in action, running back out of the cave entrance, shrouding as he goes...

43 EXT. IDRAN PLANET - DAY

A gust of wind RUSHES past the tense and alert Glessin and Brad at the mouth of the cave, heading towards --

-- a quartet of armed and armoured HUNTERS (1x06 "Captive Pursuit") stalking towards them...

44 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...

45 EXT. IDRAN PLANET - DAY

The Hunters start to chase after Tosk...

LEAD HUNTER
Tosk! I have him!

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

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

The lead Hunter fires his weapon with a loud CRACK --

-- and Tosk UNSHROUDS, falls to one knee, skin smoking.

The Hunters SHOOT again --

-- Tosk drags himself upright and LEAPS in the air --
-- and the shot goes to waste. Dez breathes with relief.
But Tosk is tired and injured, and the third SHOT gets him.
The entire bottom half of his leg is BURNED OFF --
Opaka and Brad SCREAM at the sight --
As the Tosk tumbles to the stony ground, he looks up --
-- and the four Hunters approach and stand over him.

LEAD HUNTER
You die with honour, Tosk!

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

JAKE
No!

Jake starts 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 - then stalks back to the cave.
Facity glares at Dez - couldn't he have been a bit more
tactful? Chastened, Dez turns and follows Jake inside...

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...

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

PIF

What are those?

FACITY

Rocks. The ones you were so amazed by earlier.

Jake walks over - and sees an arrangement of small rocks set into the wall, too regular to be a natural formation.

He touches one, and dust brushes off, revealing something glittering, like a jewel. He brushes more dust off them...

JAKE

Brad, look at these.

(Brad approaches)

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

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?

An idea suddenly occurs to Jake, and as Opaka turns to him in the low light, he sees that she 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, 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...

MONTAGE

...as Jake points to stones in turn, figuring it out in his
head. Opaka, Brad and the others offer suggestions MOS.
Glessin has joined them as well now. Until at last...

BACK TO SCENE

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.

JAKE

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

With a sigh, Jake gently touches the last stone, and --

WHITE OUT

In a big WASH of energy, the cave is gone, replaced by...

47 INT. EAV'OQ CHAMBER

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

48 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.

49 INT. EVEN ODDS - MESS HALL

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

50 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

Prees, running the bridge, stares in amazement as the energy surges past smoothly. 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...

SRRAL (comm)

Ship now less than thirty-eight
light-minutes from Anomaly. Also
three-point-three light years from
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)
Now registers more than seven-
thousand life forms, no matching
bio-signature on file.

51 **INT. EAV'OQ CHAMBER**

Dez, Jake, Opaka and the others stand astonished --

-- at rows and rows of a new alien race, stretching away into the distance, arranged on steps like a choir but all seemingly asleep, yet still singing. Opaka steps closer to them, enchanted by their ethereal song.

Behind, an enormous elaborate window, and through it trees and paths and blue sky - what Tosk saw when he touched the crystal, what Jadzia saw when she first met the Prophets.

The nearest alien stops singing, slowly opens its large single eye. It stands, unfolds 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.

These are the EAV'OQ.

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.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

52 EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - ESTABLISHING

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

53 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. 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 his strange lolloping gait. Opaka walks with him, followed by Jake and Wex. Dez turns to his crew and begins issuing directions...

54 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.

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, 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. 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.

DEZ (cont)

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...

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

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...

JAKE (v.o.)
We stayed for three days. Three
peaceful, wonderful days.

After a few moments, Dez speaks into his comm MOS and the
crew transports away...

56 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...

JAKE (v.o.)
But the Eav'oq were waking up, and
they had their lives to get back
to. And so did I.

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 who have been touched by
the Prophets. 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.
(more)

OPAKA (cont)

It seems obvious to me now, that their Fortress, hidden among the stars... it is our own Celestial Temple. And that an Ascendant was the one 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