

Avatar Fan Fiction – Decision, by Jerathai

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“Jesus, Jake, I can’t believe you’re questioning this. It’s a gift from Eywa. Literally!” Norm was exasperated with his friend.

“We don’t know that she feels like giving it yet, do we?” Jake replied stubbornly. “It didn’t work for Grace, did it?”

Norm said quietly, “It’s not the same thing, and you know it. If that bastard Quaritch...” He couldn’t finish the sentence. He’d felt an incredible respect for his mentor – both of them did. The pain of Grace’s loss was still too fresh.

Jake responded just as softly “Then it never would have been necessary. We never would have found out.”

The xenobotanist exploded again “And now that we know, what? You’re just going to let this opportunity slide by?” He pointed at his wheelchair-bound friend’s useless legs furiously. “Jake, get real. You are never going to get your legs back now. Even if by some miracle you got off of Pandora and back to Earth, RDA goons would shoot you dead on sight. *If*,” he stressed the word, “they were feeling generous.”

“I know,” the former marine said quietly.

“Then what is it? Why? Why are you passing up a chance to have a life again? A real life?” Norm was so agitated he was waving his hands in the air for emphasis.

Jake replied stubbornly, “I don’t like feeling that I’m running out on you guys. I don’t do that to friends. It’s not me.”

Norm was exasperated and started pacing the room to work off some of his frustration. Max stepped up to take his place. “Jake, you’re not running out on us.”

That got the former corporal’s attention.

The scientist continued, and enthusiasm started lighting his face. “In fact, we’re gonna be all over you like a wet t-shirt.”

Toruk Makto was puzzled, “Come again?”

Max gestured, “Just think of it, Jake! With you as the chief of the Omaticaya, we’re allies! I can’t even begin to imagine what kind of stuff we’ll find out! You’re going to be learning so much, and you’ve got to tell us everything!”

Norm waved a hand in vindication. “There, you see?”

Jake was leery. “I don’t know, guys. The Na’vi don’t need or want anything from us, you know that.”

Norm strode over to Jake in a couple of swift strides. Surprisingly, he put his hands on the arms of the wheelchair and got right in the crippled man’s face. “No, they do *not* need anything from us. But we sure as hell need them,” he said in a quiet and serious tone. He let the arms of the wheelchair go and stood up straight.

“What do you mean? Why do we need them? You’re not thinking about the unobtainium...” Jake demanded.

The scientist looked at him seriously. “No, I’m not. I’m thinking about something a hell of a lot more important.” Both Jake and Max were confused. He met the marine’s gaze steadily. “Jake, these people – these wonderful, blue skinned, ten foot tall people – have got something that we, for all our technological wonders, don’t have. Selfridge had it backwards. We should have been begging them to teach us from the start, not the other way around.”

He spoke in a low and fervent tone. “Jake, the Na’vi may live in trees, and eat beetle grubs, and not wear enough cloth to make a postage stamp out of, but they are *alive*. They know how precious life is. We don’t. We lost that knowledge somewhere along the way. They don’t even let a dumb animal suffer, while we, “ he looked at his friend significantly, “see one of our own injured and walk right by without doing a damned thing.”

Jake looked aside with a stony expression, unable to deny the truth.

“We lost it, Jake,” Norm continued quietly, “and if we humans are going to survive, we have to get it back. That’s why we’re here, on Pandora. That’s what every single person left on this base is willing to spend the rest of their life trying to rediscover, so that maybe someday we can have something to send back to Earth that can save us from going the way of the dodo.”

Jake looked up at his friend, and Norm laid it out. “Jake, *you cannot help us here*. You’re not a scientist. But as the Omaticaya Olo’eyctan – as Toruk Makto – you could help us find our answers decades faster than we would on our own.”

The marine said stubbornly, “You know the RDA isn’t going to just walk away and let this go.”

The xenobotanist matched his friend's stubbornness head on. "No, they're not. And that's why the Na'vi need you even more." His tone got softer, almost pleading. "Jake, we can be your eyes and ears on this side of the fence. But if we're going to keep the Na'vi alive long enough for them to teach us how to live again, then we need you to keep them that way. They need you. The Omaticaya need you." Norm dropped his tone so that only Jake could hear him. "Neytiri needs you."

Jake looked up at his friend with pain in his eyes, "Norm...."

The loss was too fresh, too painful. The scientist had to look aside to hide the tears that threatened to come. "Yeah. Thanks." Even saying her name hurt too much.

There was a long silence before Jake said "You guys really mean it? I'll be more help to you on the other side of the fence? You don't think I'm running out on you?"

Max grinned at him, an open, honest smile. "Dude, we are gonna be on your ass so hard you'll wish you never *heard* the word 'scientist'! You think keeping a videolog was bad!"

Jake couldn't help it; he had to chuckle. "Well then," he said to his friends, "I guess I'd better go check with the dragon lady."

Norm couldn't help but smile, as Jake had intended. "Get the hell going, marine."

Jake wheeled himself around, got into the link bed, and pulled the clamshell shut just as he heard Max say "Launching."

Toruk Makto opened his eyes in the gray light of a new dawn on Pandora. His right side was warm; he turned to see his mate curled up against him and smiled. He was content to watch her until she awoke. When her eyes opened, he whispered "I See you."

Neytiri smiled happily and reached across his chest to hug him, "I See you." They shared a long, sweet kiss, and then she laid back down next to him, content to hold him closely.

Jake stroked the line of tiny phosphorescent spots on her forearm that had shifted to match his; a line that marked her as his mate. After a minute or two he asked softly, "Do you think Eywa would be willing to move my spirit into my dreamwalker body permanently?"

Neytiri rose up on one elbow with a start, looking deeply into his eyes. She started crying with joy when she saw that he was serious, and threw herself onto his chest.

Later, when the sun was well up, they sought out Mo'at at the Tree of Souls. Jake dipped his head briefly in respect to his mate's mother and asked "Mo'at, you said that Eywa could move a Sky Person's spirit permanently into a dreamwalker body, as long as she had enough time. Do you think that Eywa would be willing to do that for me?"

Mo'at was about to reply when movement high above caught her attention; she looked up. Then she smiled and pointed. "I think you have your answer, Jakesully."

Jake and Neytiri looked up to see a veritable cloud of atokirina descending. They landed on him just as they had in the forest, months ago.

The Omaticaya Tsahik said simply, "Tonight."