

## Avatar Fan Fiction – Auld Lang Syne, by Jerathai

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The first thing Jake saw when he opened his eyes was Neytiri's face. It was a good thing to wake up to. He felt her hand resting on his cheek. He smiled at her; as he had when he had woken up in the mobile lab, he whispered "I See you."

Joyous tears rolled from Neytiri's eyes as she returned his greeting "I See you."

Jake suddenly felt a tingling all over his body. He looked down at himself and saw thousands of tiny white rootlets withdrawing from his flesh. He raised a hand as soon as the Tree of Souls freed him; Neytiri clasped it and helped him to sit up. Immediately, Mo'at let out a high, ululating cry of triumph and thanksgiving. A deafening echo from the entire clan answered her. Jake winced as the sound pounded his over-sensitive ears. "Keep it down to a dull roar, will ya?"

He felt weak and light headed; Neytiri and Mo'at helped him to stand and supported him as they walked down from the dais through the crowd of ecstatic Omaticaya. It seemed like all of them were trying to press in close enough to touch him, to reassure themselves that their Toruk Makto and Olo'eyktan was still with them.

Mo'at shooed them away, scolding in friendly fashion "Back, you *skxwang*, the man has just been born, give him some air. He needs to rest!" The matriarch saw one particular face in the crowd and gestured with her chin. "A'san'ey! Bring food and water to my place, Jake needs to eat!" The woman scurried off with the agility of a prolemuris in her haste to do the tsahik's bidding.

Drums and singing – party sounds – erupted behind them as the two women steered Jake to a sheltered spot. Neytiri sat down as soon as they got there and tugged on Jake's arm until he sat between her legs. She wrapped her arms around him and insistently pulled back until he leaned against her chest. He closed his eyes and sighed with relief at being able to rest. He still felt only about half present.

Mo'at saw that and spoke softly. "Jake, are you all right? Can you tell us what happened? Did you speak with Eywa?"

The word captured his attention and he opened his eyes again. "Eywa...." he said in a distracted voice.

The senior tsahik nodded encouragingly. "What did Eywa tell you?"

It was as if the question opened a floodgate. She watched the new Olo'eyktan stare at something only he could see as he began speaking in an odd tone of voice. "The hunters are to fly to the dead Hometree. From there they are to fly at dawn, into the rising sun. After a time they will see a Tree on their right; they are to pass it by. After another time, they will see a Tree on their left; they are to pass this one as well. When they have passed the second tree and the sun is well up in the sky they will see a third Tree directly in front of them. This will be the new Hometree of the people. Under the shelter of the Tree, the hunters will find a herd of sturmbeest. They are to take the entire herd for the People."

Mo'at's eyes grew wide. Taking out an entire herd was, well, unheard of. But doing so would certainly remedy the impoverished state the Omaticaya were currently in.

Jake's eyes shifted as if he was looking at someone else who had started speaking to him and said "The Tree of Voices grows again." Both women gasped; Neytiri's arms tightened around Jake in startlement. He didn't notice and continued "Within the territory of the new Hometree, the new seedling grows. The People are to look for it."

Then, most disturbing of all, he looked right at – no, *through* Mo'at. "Eytukan sends a message." The tsahik's hands grasped at the ground in shock. Never before had one who had gone to Eywa ever sent back a direct message. "What... message?" she managed to gasp.

Jake looked directly at his mother-in-law with eyes that had both an eerie clarity and uncanny focus. "You are not to join him until you have many tales of your grandchildren to tell."

Mo'at closed her eyes and started rocking back and forth. Neytiri started silently crying, her worst fear at once confirmed and removed. The bond between a mated pair was so strong that the death of one more often than not meant the death of the other. She had known that her mother would not death-will herself while the clan so urgently needed her, while the Tree of Souls was in danger, but she had been desperately afraid that Mo'at would simply leave once that danger was past. Jake had effectively nailed Mo'at's feet to the floor, metaphorically speaking, as she now had a direct order from Eytukan not to death-will herself and the joy of knowing that she would have grandchildren. The elder tsahik finally burst into tears at hearing from her beloved mate once more.

Jake leaned back and closed his eyes as exhaustion began to overtake him. He spoke quietly to his mate. "Tell Norman that Trudy is safe with Eywa as well – and that Grace says she will kick his butt if he contaminates one more sample." He couldn't help but smile at the memory of the irascible scientist's playful scolding. Then he was asleep.

Neytiri held Jake's sleeping body to her chest and cried silent tears of joy with her mother at the confirmation that she and her beloved would someday be parents. Mo'at got a hold on herself as they heard footsteps approaching. A'san'ey appeared with two youngsters in tow, bearing enough food and drink for all three of them. The tsahik gestured significantly at the sleeping man. A'san'ey and her helpers deposited the meal and left silently.

Mo'at took a long drink of cool water, and chose a large fruit from the serving-leaf as she got up and came over to her daughter. She whispered into the younger woman's ear "Jake may want to mate when he wakes, but his queue will be exhausted from making tsaheylyu with Eywa. It will be three or four days before he is ready to make tsaheylyu with you again. He is simply exhausted from the transfer. He desires you as much as ever."

Neytiri nodded in understanding and acceptance; as long as Jake was alive and safe and in her arms, all else was secondary. Her mother grasped her shoulder in approval. "Now I must go and give the clan the good news." An honest smile, the first one since Hometree had fallen, appeared on the elder woman's face. "And I have grandchildren's names to consider."

The same smile appeared on her daughter's face, and Neytiri whispered joyfully "I See you, Mother."

"And I you, daughter" Mo'at said as she left.