

Chimerical

By Mantrid Brizon
Aka, 'Ian Jacob Donahue'

Episode 18: Imperious

With their love for one another expressed and their relationship rekindled, the pair intend to start their life together, though they have no desire to live under Ra'kanishu's parent's roof. As they walked to the village, Tsanavi takes it upon herself to ask him to live with her. Although pleased by the prospect, Nish is uneasy. He insists upon earning the right to be with Tsanavi and living beside her in her family home. Though she tells him that it is unnecessary, she is equally pleased to see that he would be willing to try so hard to prove himself to her. His sincerity makes her heart ache for him all the more.

As they continue walking through the dimly lit road, Nish suddenly stops. Turning to her lover, she watches curiously as he reaches into his tunic, bringing out a balled fist. Having reached into a secret pocket sewn inside, Nish holds out a hand to her. He drops down to one knee and turns over his hand, uncoiling his fingers and revealing the

contents. His lips curl into a smile as he looks up at Tsanavi. She brings her hands to her snout, hiding her wide grin.

“Ra’kanishu loves you, Tsanavi. He wants to be with you for the rest of his life, and well beyond that. This one hopes that you would pledge to be his wife before a shrine of Mara.” He says softly.

She gazes down at the articles, a golden ring with an inset moonstone and a shining golden amulet with a modest inset ruby, a matching chain coiled in his palm. She reaches out with a trembling hand, taking hold of the ring. Slipping it onto her third finger, a custom that she knows is common to men, she is surprised that the ring is a perfect fit. Nish stands to his feet, unclasping the chain as he places the amulet around her neck, latching it behind her neck and slipping it underneath her dreadlocked ponytail.

“How did you know Tsanavi’s ring size?!” She asks in shock.

“This one remembered the size of your fingers.” He smiles.

“For so many years?”

“You’re surprised?” He chuckles.

“Yes.” She nods.

“You have no idea how important you are to me; how much this one loves you.” He says softly, resting his hands on her cheeks. “You are all that he has thought about for years.”

Her eyes watering, she leans forward to meet him as he bends over. Their lips press together and they share a very long and passionate kiss. Her tail whips from side to side as his arms wrap around her slender frame. After ending the kiss, she rests her head against his chest as he strokes her back.

“Yes, Ra’kanishu. Tsanavi would love nothing more than to be your mate. She will pledge with you before Mara.” She says.

“You have no idea how happy you make Ra’kanishu.”

“You might be surprised.” She giggles. “Ra, where did you find these?”

“Ra’kanishu acquired them in his travels and had carried them for some time to give to you.”

“And what if she was married with cubs?” She asks.

“Then a heartbroken Ra’kanishu would have given them to his mother and sister instead.” He answers.

“Hey!”

“This one will never lie to you.” He says.

Touched, she holds her lover tightly. With a new vigor, they race back to S’ran-ja. When Tsanavi grows tired and begins to lag behind, Nish stops for her and then carries her on his back. She nuzzles his neck and cheek as he brings her back home. Arriving in the village near dusk, Ra’kanishu and Tsanavi are quick to return to his family’s house. Though they have missed dinner, S’tari is quick to feed her

adopted son and his Suthay companion. Jadhi and Hiska-dar immediately notice the amulet around Tsanavi's neck and the ring on her hand. They glance to each other, but do not speak.

Returning from the kitchen, S'tari brings them sweetened loafs and dried meat. Thanking his mother, the pair sit beside each other as they eat, regularly sharing longing gazes. S'tari clears her throat, gaining their attention. As they turn their heads to her, she points a clawed finger at the amulet around Tsanavi's neck. She doesn't need to speak; the look in her eyes does it for her. They glance to each other for a moment before turning back to Nish's family. Taking a deep breath, Nish breaks the news to his family. Their eyes grow wide as he reveals his intent to move in with and marry Tsanavi.

Jadhi leans closer, her arms on the table and a wide grin on her face as she looks between the two. Though unexpected, his family couldn't be happier for the couple and they quickly gather around to embrace the two. S'tari snuffles as she holds her son, her chin on his shoulder as she glances to Tsanavi. Several hours later, Jo'dehki walks toward the treeline alone. Slipping on his tunic, he glances back at the nude wood elf witch, who lies in the clearing behind him. Holding herself up on her elbows, she looks toward the Cathay-Raht, her still damp skin gleaming in the moonlight.

"Do you still want to kill the Khajiit?" He asks.

"No. I'm done with that." She says with a pleased sigh.

“Good. This one apologizes for his volume. He hopes that he did not hurt you by not removing himself.” He adds.

“Oh, that’s fine! It was a pleasant surprise.” She exclaims, waving a hand.

“Because it sounded like it hurt.”

“It wasn’t a scream of pain.” She grins.

“Good! Stay safe in your travels, darling. If you ever visit S’ren-ja, it would be nice to... Reconnect.” He winks.

“I’ll keep that in mind.” She coos.

He passes through the forest, his Khajiiti night eyes allowing him to see the way. Standing in the pitch dark, he looks toward the horizon. In the distance, several Senche feast on the slain creatures that attempted to kill them earlier. With the beasts distracted, Jo’dehki slips past them, dashing quietly through the field and toward the road to S’ren-ja. Eventually he enters the village and walks toward Nish’s family home. He climbs the stairs and enters the home quietly, hoping not to wake anyone inside. Gently closing the door behind him.

He stands before the door and looks around the single large room. Though a place has been set aside for Jo’dehki, as there was the night before, Nish is not there. Stepping further into the room, Jadhi looks around the partition. She grins when she sees the Cathay-Raht standing near the short dinner table.

“Where is Nish?” He asks in a whisper.

“With Tsanavi, at her home. He has moved in with her.” She quietly answers.

“How nice of him to leave without telling this one his plan.” Jo’dehki sighs.

“Don’t worry about Ra. He has always been very willful, but he means well, and you can yell at him tomorrow. You should get some sleep.”

“Care to keep Jo’dehki company?” He winks.

“Nice try, but Jadhi can smell her on you.”

“Jo’dehki can wash. Besides, it was necessary to stop a Khajiiti hating witch.” He quips.

“Yes, Ra and Tsanavi told us.”

“It meant nothing, not like it would with you.” He assures her.

“This one thinks you say that to every female.”

“Only the very attractive ones.” He grins.

She chuckles, disappearing behind her partition. Jo’dehki sighs and walks toward his bedroll, slipping off his tunic before climbing in for the night. It takes only a few moments before Jo’dehki is fast asleep. He slowly wakes, opening his eyes to the light beaming in through the windows. Sitting up, he is surprised to find that the partitions and bedrolls have all been put away, except for his own. Sitting at the short table, Nazahn sits tea as S’tari hums to herself in the kitchen. Jo’dehki collects his tunic, slipping it over his body.

“What time is it?” Jo’dehki asks.

“Nearly noon. We thought that you could use the rest after your... ‘Valiant battle’ with the witch.” Nazahn answers.

“Ah yes... It was a fine battle, indeed. This one had few so great.” Jo’dehki jokes. “Where is Nish?”

“Probably working in the fields with Tsanavi.”

Jo’dehki climbs out of the bedroll, stretching his muscles and yawning. Rolling it up, he places it in a cupboard with the others before leaving the house to find Nish. He walks down the steps, first looking toward the boulder to see if he is there. With Nish nowhere to be found, he is left to wander the village aimlessly. He wanders past the large town center, glancing toward a large patch of farmland in the distance. Turning, he heads for the farmland only to stop when he hears a familiar voice.

“Why must you bother me?” Jadhi sighs.

“This one only wants to see how his attractive servant is doing.” Kazkhar replies.

“Jadhi is *not* your servant, now go away! Bother Dahlni instead.”

“This one will look for his future wife later. At the moment he wants your attention.” Kazkhar says.

“Is there a problem?” Jo’dehki asks in a low growl.

Kazkhar stands behind Jadhi as she holds a weaved basket in her arms, filled with harvested grain. Two Suthay-Raht stand off to the side and watch the two, little grins on their faces. They must be the dimwitted entourage that he has heard of. Kazkhar quickly turns, his hand near Jadhi's lower back as though he were about to grab her if she walked away. Kazkhar steps up to him, followed by his two friends as Jadhi watches in the background. The Suthay-Raht both crack their knuckles as they stand on either side of their leader, forming a crescent before the towering Cathay-Raht.

"Why don't you mind your own business. Go drink mead and bed a whore." Kazkhar jeers.

"Jadhi is my friend, and that makes this my business."

Jadhi grins as Jo'dehki speaks, thankful that he would be concerned and grateful for his presence. She steps further back as the three thugs collectively move toward him.

"This one gets the feeling that none of you have ever been far from your homes. Perhaps you should return there while you can and stop trying my patience." Jo'dehki warns.

"Who do you think you are?!" The leftmost goon shouts.

"Do you know who you are speaking too?!" The rightmost goon adds.

"Jo'dehki does not care. He is an arse, and this one will treat him as such."

“You will show me some respect, you bastard.” Kazkhar growls.

“Earn it.” Jo’dehki grins.

With a puny roar, Kazkhar throws the first punch. Jo’dehki steps aside, and the unskilled Ohmes-Raht tumbles forward, landing in the dirt. Jo’dehki laughs aloud as he looks down at the dust covered instigator. Before Kazkhar can rise to his feet, he places a foot on his buttocks, holding him down. The two goons look on in horror as their leader grunts, struggling to rise from the dirt. The leftmost goon, with black and white tuxedo fur and yellow eyes rushes Jo’dehki, attempting to tackle him to the ground. Pushing off of Kazkhar, who gasps for breath, he steps to the side.

The goon trips on his own leader and falls to the ground in a heap. Jo’dehki looks on, distracted by their ineptitude. The remaining goon takes a breath, gaining the courage to act. His rust colored fur, dotted with black spots, bristles as he prepares his claws. He growls as he slashes at Jo’dehki, swiping his face and gashing his cheek. With an angry growl, Jo’dehki punches the Suthay-Raht in the face, knocking a tooth loose. He is almost certain that one of his red eyeballs is about to explode from the force of the blow as he lands in the dirt.

Jo’dehki kicks the downed minion, jabbing his claws through his tunic and into his stomach. As the blood runs from the puncture wounds, Kazkhar claws Jo’dehki as well, slashing at the back of his neck. Jo’dehki, however, hears

him coming and spins around, an arm outstretches as he jams his forearm into Kazkhar's throat. Falling to the ground, he gasps for breath, but there will not be a reprieve. Jo'dehki grabs him by the throat and lifts him from the ground, taking a claw and cutting a 'J' into his face and running it underneath his chin.

"Let him go!" The tuxedo furred Khajiit shouts.

"Alright!" Jo'dehki chirps.

He heaves the Ohmes-Raht at the Suthay-Raht, slamming them together and dropping them to the ground like stones. Not quite finished, Jo'dehki approaches the two, pulling Kazkhar from the ground and throwing him once again, landing him in a pile of compost near the fields. He rolls the other Khajiit over, stomping on his chest twist and knocking the wind out of him. He rests his foot over the goon's throat, applying gentle pressure.

"Next time you wish to pick on Jadhi, or anyone from Ra'kanishu's family, you must deal with me first." He warns them.

He walks casually toward Jadhi, resting a hand on her upper back as he extends the other, presenting the land to her.

"Let this one walk with you for a moment." He says softly.

She grins wide, giving him a single nod. The two depart, returning to the family home. Kazkhar pulls himself from the compost heap, stinking of rotted vegetable peelings and putrid animal carcasses. Leaving his goons on the ground, he storms into the fields, his eyes scanning the horizon as he walks through the rows of crops. Near the end of the field, he sees Tsanavi holding a basket. Sheaves of cut wheat are tossed into the basket from a person obscured from view by uncut stalks. She turns to Kazkhar and steps back, giving him a wide berth. He turns the corner to see Nish kneeling on the ground.

“You!” Kazkhar growls, pointing a finger.

“Hello there!” Nish replies.

“You son of a whore!”

“Watch how speak about my mother.” Nish grumbles, rising to his feet.

“S’tari is not your mother!”

“What is your problem?” Tsanavi asks.

“Stay out of this you Imperial loving wench!” Kazkhar yells, turning and pointing his finger at her.

Suddenly Kazkhar is knocked to the ground, a closed fist having ramming into the side of his face. Landing on the ground, he spits blood from his mouth, his lip split.

“Don’t you *ever* talk to her like that again!” Nish roars.

“You will live to regret that.” Kazkhar grumbles, wiping his bloody lip.

“You will not, if you don’t calm down and leave us be.”

Kazkhar rises to his feet and takes a step toward Ra’kanishu, who quickly brings up a hand. An icy mist swirls in the palm of his hand, his skin turning sheet white from the cold destruction spell.

“Do you know what it looks like when fur is frozen solid? When the skin beneath cracks and the blood freezes? Take one more step and you will. Please!” Nish taunts him with a twisted grin.

Tsanavi sets down the bucket, walking around the sheaves strewn on the ground and standing beside her lover. He draps an arm over her shoulders and holds her close as they both glare at the Ohmes-Raht. Kazkhar cannot win and he knows it. He takes a step back, his finger waving in the air as he speaks.

“This isn’t over.” He warns the two.

“Yes, it is, now go away.” Tsanavi retorts.

Kazkhar turns and dashes through the field, returning to his family home. Hopefully he will find his mother, Abaimba. He knows that her wealth and influence can aid, as it always does. Jadhi turns back, glancing over her shoulder as she hears Kazkhar grumbling to himself,

entering his home and slamming the door behind him. Jo'dehki rests a hand on her shoulder, gaining her attention. She turns her eyes to him, and he flashes her a warm smile.

"Do not worry about him. He will not trouble you again." Jo'dehki assures you.

"Jadhi isn't worried." She grins.

After many hours in the fields, Ra'kanishu and Tsanavi are walking home after a long day. As they return to the home she once shared with her parents, but now shares only with Nish, she notices that he is looking toward his family's house.

"Do you miss it there?" She asks sheepishly.

"No." He says, turning back to her. "This one was just wondering how they were doing."

"Did you want to visit before we return home?"

Nodding his head, she takes his hand and the pair walk toward the house, climbing the steps before knocking on the door. Nazahn opens the front door, his eyes widening in surprise.

"Hello, son. Tsanavi. Why did you knock? You could have simply walked in." He says to the two.

"Formality?" Nish shrugs.

Nazahn embraces his son before doing the same to Tsanavi, welcoming them into the home. Inside, the family are already eating their dinner. Jo'dehki sits beside Jadhi, whispering something into her ear which causes her to giggle. Her eyes turn to her brother and Tsanavi, waving them over. Nish takes a seat beside Jo'dehki, as Tsanavi takes a seat atop Nish's lap. He wraps his arms around her waist, holding her close as her tail sways.

"It's good to see you, Jo'dehki." Nish says.

"Hello, my friend." Jo'dehki nods, a dismayed look on his face.

As Jo'dehki turns his head, he can see the bandaged gash upon his face. Nish looks visibly concerned.

"What happened to you? Are you alright?" Nish asks.

Jo'dehki merely shrugs his shoulders. Glancing at the Cathay-Raht, Jadhi quickly answers for him.

"Kazkhar decided to pester Jadhi while she was collecting wheat for her family. He was quite insistant, but Jo'dehki came to her rescue. Kazkhar and his idiot friends were brazen, but Jo'dehki was more than a match for the three of them." She begins.

"Kazkhar paid us a visit as well." Tsanavi begins.

“He thought it wise to insult my Tsanavi, but Ra’kanishu showed him otherwise. It would have been more interesting were it not for someone beating him up and throwing him into compost, whoever that may be.” Nish says, grinning at Jo’dehki.

“He needed to be taught a lesson.” Jo’dehki replies.

As he speaks, he reaches up a hand and rests it on his bandage, wincing in pain as he does. Nish’s smile fades. He reaches out with a hand, his palm glowing an off-yellow hue. Jo’dehki pulls back, turning his head away.

“Don’t be difficult. Ra’kanishu is trying to help you.” He laughs.

Peeling away the bandage, Nish waves his hand just over Jo’dehki’s face, closing his wounds and leaving him without a single mark.

“Thank you.” Jo’dehki murmurs.

Nish and Tsanavi sit with his family and Jo’dehki for a while, visiting with everyone until the sun begins to set. Tsanavi leans over, whispering into his ear, her whiskers tickling his face. Glancing at his lover, he gives her a kiss before sliding her from atop his lap and rising to his feet.

“Well, it has been fun seeing you all, but we need to get home. Dinner will not cook itself.” Nish says.

“Are you hungry? S’tari could cook for you!” His mother eagerly offers the couple.

“Thank you, but uh... There are others things we would like to do as well. We would rather be home for that.” Tsanavi adds.

“Oh...” S’tari struggles to conceal a grin. “Well, off you go then!”

“We will visit again very soon, and you can always see us whenever you please. That goes for you too, Jo’dehki. You are still my closest friend.” Nish says to him.

“Fine.” Jo’dehki mutters.

The pair take their leave, waving back to the others once more before leaving the house. As the door closes behind them, Jo’dehki turns his eyes to the wooden barrier, glaring at it. Jadhi suddenly rests her hand on his shoulder, gaining his attention. She gives him a gentle squeeze, her innocent eyes turned up to him.

“Please do not be angry with him.” She begins.

“Who said that Jo’dehki was angry?” He says defensively.

“Your eyes, your actions. Ra did not abandon you by choosing to be with her.”

“Didn’t he? He left me here and never told me where he went.” He retorts.

“Imagine yourself in his place, returning to a long-lost love who still cared for him. Wouldn’t you rekindle it? What would you do if you had the chance to spend your life with a woman you loved, and who loved you in return?” She poses.

“This one does not know, but he would like to find out.” He grins.

Jadhi quickly looks him over, her lips curling into a little smile.

“Perhaps one day you will.” She coos.