

= Unending =

" Unending " is the season finale of the tenth season and series finale of the science fiction television series Stargate SG @-@ 1 , and the show 's two @-@ hundred sixteenth episode overall . Written and directed by Robert C. Cooper , the episode originally premiered in the United Kingdom on Sky One on March 13 , 2007 , and in the United States on June 22 , 2007 on the Sci Fi Channel . The episode attracted approximately 2 @. @ 2 million viewers on its American broadcast , a ratings success for the Sci Fi Channel .

The episode begins with the mass suicide of the Asgard race , who try to preserve their legacy by giving all of their accumulated knowledge and technology to the SG @-@ 1 team and the crew of the Earth ship Odyssey . When the ship is attacked by Ori warships , Lieutenant @-@ Colonel Samantha Carter creates a time dilation field that speeds up time within the ship , and it takes fifty years until a defense against the Ori weapons can be found .

= = Plot = =

The members of SG @-@ 1 and General Hank Landry (Beau Bridges) are travelling on the Earth ship Odyssey to the Asgard home world , Orilla , when the Asgard Thor beams aboard . He reveals that after millennia of genetic manipulation , a disease has brought his race very close to extinction , and SG @-@ 1 accepts his offer to upload the sum of all Asgard knowledge into Odyssey as a way to preserve the Asgard legacy after their mass suicide . However , Orilla and Odyssey are soon attacked by Ori warships . Orilla erupts with huge explosions , and after Odyssey escapes to the next planet with a Stargate and beams the bulk of its crew down , the Ori fire a final energy beam upon the ship . Lieutenant @-@ Colonel Samantha Carter (Amanda Tapping) activates a localized time dilation field that makes time look frozen outside the field to give SG @-@ 1 and Landry time to find a defense .

During the initial months on board , Vala Mal Doran (Claudia Black) repeatedly tries to seduce Daniel Jackson (Michael Shanks) . Daniel finally confronts Vala for what he believes to be her insincerity , teasing , and mocking of him . Vala 's upset reaction makes Daniel realize the honesty of her feelings , and they share a passionate embrace . As the years pass , each team member attempts to deal with the isolation . General Landry develops a gardening hobby ; Carter learns how to play the cello ; Daniel continues the translation of Asgard information in the database and develops his relationship with Vala ; and Cameron Mitchell (Ben Browder) and Teal 'c (Christopher Judge) exercise and train while Mitchell is growing more frustrated and angry . After many years , General Landry succumbs to old age and dies .

After fifty years Carter has devised a way to reverse time within a localized field , however the Odyssey 's power source (ZPM) is almost completely depleted from maintaining the time dilation field for fifty years . Mitchell however hypothesizes that the power of the Ori energy beam could provide the required energy to reverse the time . This , however , will mean the loss of any memories of the last fifty years ; additionally , whoever volunteers will remain at their advanced age . Teal 'c , who as a Jaffa has a much longer lifespan than the other team members , volunteers to remain behind and perform the rescue , protected within a separate field . As the group prepares their plan , Vala and Daniel exchange a last embrace , assuring each other of their love . When everything is in place , they deactivate the time dilation field and , after the normal timeline is restored , Teal 'c prevents Colonel Carter from activating the time dilation field . Odyssey leaves before it is destroyed , saving SG @-@ 1 and the Asgard 's legacy .

Back at the SGC (Stargate Command) , Teal 'c refuses to reveal any of the events on the ship , much to Vala 's disappointment . As the episode , the season and the series come to a close , SG @-@ 1 contemplates Teal 'c's joking words of wisdom in the gateroom and says " indeed " all at once . General Landry wishes the team God @-@ speed , and SG @-@ 1 steps through the gate on their next mission .

= = Production = =

" Unending " is the fiftieth Stargate SG @-@ 1 episode written by Robert C. Cooper , and the second episode of the series directed by Cooper . Being the series ' tenth season finale , " Unending " was the fifth season finale to potentially serve as Stargate SG @-@ 1 's last episode , although the writers originally anticipated another renewal of the series and planned to end the season with a cliffhanger . However , the Sci @-@ Fi Channel announced the series ' cancellation in August 2006 , approximately one month before " Unending " was written . The network opposed the idea of a cliffhanger leading up to a possible movie , and since the producers never intended " to blow up the SGC and kill everyone " , the episode 's theme and name were chosen to give " a sense of ending without it being an ending " . This move also allowed for the fan conspiracy theories surrounding a possible real Stargate in the underground Cheyenne Mountain Complex to continue . The option to end the series with a two @-@ parter was considered but rejected , as Cooper felt this would have made the ending less special . The buildup of the Ori arc in Seasons 9 and 10 would eventually get a pay @-@ off in Stargate : The Ark of Truth , a film produced after the end of the show . The cast and crew knew by the end of the episode 's filming on October 5 , 2006 that more films would be produced .

Robert C. Cooper intended the episode as " an emotional tribute to the ten seasons that [had] come before " and " the last chapter in the book ? but not necessarily in the series of books . It was a chance [...] , using science fiction , to show people one version of what the future might be like for these characters that they 've spent so much time with and loved so much . " By killing off the Asgard race , Cooper gave the episode an element of tragedy that reflected his feelings at the time . Producer Brad Wright wanted all of the characters to get a last shot in the spotlight instead of focusing on only one character . Because of fan vocality about team episodes , Cooper decided to put the characters through several decades of life and see their relationships develop and evolve . The references in " Unending " to the events of season 2 's " The Fifth Race " , another Cooper @-@ penned episode often named as a fan favorite , were intended , as were the callbacks to season 9 's " The Ties That Bind " (the Daniel @-@ Vala argument , see below) and season 10 's " Line In The Sand " (the solution of using the Ori beam) . The period aboard the ship was originally significantly less than fifty years , but the actors ' last @-@ stage makeup , which Cooper only saw minutes before filming , looked so old that Cooper was forced to increase the number of years in the script .

Cooper originally wrote the developing romance between Daniel and Vala in " Unending " by having them have sex without a confrontation . Claudia Black and Michael Shanks protested against this intended story , as Shanks felt that " [t] here 's always been this underlining , keeping [Vala] at arms length because of the fear of getting too close . " Cooper rewrote the scene to show Vala 's vulnerability to Daniel , and have Daniel share his true feelings of a relationship . The actors decided to play the confrontation scene as genuinely as possible , with both characters being neither completely in @-@ character nor totally out @-@ of @-@ character . The scene was rehearsed a lot and was filmed over the course of six hours . Cooper was nevertheless concerned that Daniel appeared too edgy and mean , although his feelings were motivated by the two years of torment with Vala , and losing his wife nearly ten years before . Daniel 's line , " You better not be messing with me " , was only said in one take by Michael Shanks . Since Cooper prefers to follow up on such emotional scenes with a laugh , the immediate next scene shows Vala coming out of Daniel 's room , where she encounters a disbelieving Mitchell jogging by . In Cooper 's mind , Daniel held a crying Vala in another scene because she had gotten pregnant and had lost the baby . To contrast the obvious relationship between Daniel and Vala , Amanda Tapping and Christopher Judge subtly played their scenes as if their characters also had a romantic relationship .

To give the Odyssey an unnatural ghostship feeling of solitude , many wide angle shots and VisFX matte extension were used with no additional music . Robert C. Cooper often listened to the CCR song " Have You Ever Seen the Rain ? " during the making of the episode and decided to play it over the first montage , showing the passage of time . The tone of the second montage was set with a cello . Stargate composer Joel Goldsmith later accompanied the hand movements of the hired cellist with different music during post @-@ production . A third montage was filmed but not included

in the final cut of the episode since the last table scene already supplied the needed sentiment . Each time period included the same shots to help the audience focus on the differences that characters have gone through . The last scene at Stargate Command was the last filmed Stargate SG @-@ 1 scene , shot at two o 'clock in the morning , for which every member of the crew came back .

= = Reception = =

The broadcast of " Unending " on the British channel Sky One on March 13 , 2007 pulled in around 518 @, @ 000 viewers , making Stargate SG @-@ 1 the third most @-@ watched program for Sky One during that week . " Unending " attracted approximately 2 @. @ 2 million viewers on its first American broadcast on the Sci Fi Channel on June 22 , 2007 , the best performance for SG @-@ 1 since the September 22 , 2006 mid @-@ season finale .

Reviewers were generally satisfied with the conclusion , and some like Bill Keveney of the USA Today felt the episode does not stray far from " the series formula ? a mix of sci @-@ fi adventure , relationships and humor " . Jason Van Horn of IGN enjoyed the humor , " the amount of heart and pure emotion running rampant this episode " , which he thought served as a symbol for the entire show that will stay in the public mind through re @-@ runs and DVDs . Two scenes that stood out for him as " powerful " , " heart @-@ wrenching " and " the icing on the cake " , were Mitchell 's breakdown and Vala 's seduction of Daniel signaling " the beginning of a very long lasting and loving relationship " . Vala 's emotional response to Daniel was interpreted as an example of her character growth , while another reviewer felt the " Vala / Daniel argument [was] a tad overwrought [although] the motivation is clear " . The emotional death of Landry appealed to several reviewers , as did the resolution via Teal 'c's heroic sacrifice .

The " clever , ground @-@ breaking " , " fitting " and " hugely satisfying " episode reminded hdtvuk.tv 's Ian Calcutt of Star Trek : The Next Generation 's finale " All Good Things ... " , while TV Squad 's Richard Keller noted strong similarities to a two @-@ part episode of Star Trek : Voyager named " Year of Hell " . He was " extremely sad to see [the series] go " , but could not overlook the mediocrity , predictability and lack of originality of the series finale . TV Zone 's Anthony Brown , who considered the episode " curious [ly] low @-@ key " , regretted the planned direct @-@ to @-@ DVD films , as " the whole thing inevitably loses its punch as the reset button 's pressed [...] , rather than providing the genuine emotion of an actual ending " . Maureen Ryan of The Chicago Tribune thought that the episode went out on " a strange note " with a disappointing last " string of banal clichés " dialogue exchange , although the cast and the established goodwill of their characters could partly make up for it . Mary McNamara of Multichannel News lauded Cooper 's direction , lighting , costuming , the " haunting " music and sound , the production values and special effects . She acknowledged the SG @-@ 1 finale as a " true ensemble / team piece " with " a poignant and satisfying conclusion " , and despite not making it into the top ten of series finales , the episode was " very good " and " respects and rewards the ten year commitment viewers have made to the series " . David Bianculli from the New York Daily Times gave the episode two and a half out of five and saying the franchise stopped " Without warning " thanks to this episode .