

= Rejoined =

" Rejoined " is the 78th episode of the American science fiction television series Star Trek : Deep Space Nine , the sixth of the fourth season . It originally aired on October 30 , 1995 , in broadcast syndication . The episode received a record volume of feedback from viewers for the series , both positive and negative , as it marked one of the first televised lesbian kisses .

Set in the 24th century , the series follows the adventures on Deep Space Nine , a space station located near a stable wormhole between the Alpha and Gamma quadrants of the Milky Way Galaxy . The plot of " Rejoined " expands on the Trill species , of which Jadzia Dax is a member . They are formed of a host and a symbiont , with the symbiont passed from host to host as the previous one dies . In the episode , Dax is reunited with Lenara Kahn , the ex @-@ wife of one of its former hosts . The two struggle with their feelings for one another because of the taboo in their species against reuniting with loved ones of former hosts .

The episode was the first that writers Ronald D. Moore and René Echevarria wrote together , and it was directed by main cast member Avery Brooks . In the first draft , Dax 's former partner was written as male , but after this was changed , the story was cleared through studio executives . The Trill taboo was intended to be an allegory for homosexuality and homophobia . " Rejoined " received a Nielsen rating of seven percent on the first broadcast in syndication . Reviews have been mostly positive towards the episode because of its message , but there was criticism that the plot was not exciting enough and there was a negative reaction from some viewers .

= = Plot = =

Captain Benjamin Sisko ( Avery Brooks ) notifies Lieutenant Commander Jadzia Dax ( Terry Farrell ) that a group of Trill scientists will be arriving soon at Deep Space Nine to perform experiments related to wormhole physics . The Trill are a species formed of both a humanoid host and a symbiont , which are implanted into them . The symbionts live far longer than the hosts , and are moved into a new host when the old one dies . Jadzia is the eighth host of the Dax symbiont . Sisko tells Dax that the head scientist is Lenara Kahn ( Susanna Thompson ) , and offers to grant Dax a leave of absence while the Trill scientists are aboard , but she turns it down . Upon Dax and Kahn 's first meeting , Major Kira Nerys ( Nana Visitor ) notices that they are very familiar with each other ; Dax tells her that Kahn used to be her wife . Dr. Julian Bashir ( Alexander Siddig ) later informs Kira about the non @-@ association rules that Trill follow regarding the family and friends of former hosts , and says that hosts of the Dax and Kahn symbionts have previously been married to each other .

A party is held for the team , and Dax and Kahn warm to one another 's company once more . Afterward , they begin to socialize as they work together on Kahn 's wormhole experiment aboard USS Defiant . They agree to have dinner , but to also bring Bashir along as a chaperone . At the dinner , Bashir feels out of place and is effectively ignored by the two Trills . Returning to the tests , Kahn creates the first artificial wormhole in history and Dax hugs her in celebration . Kahn 's brother Bejal ( Tim Ryan ) , who is on the science team , speaks to her separately and highlights his concerns regarding her contact with Dax . Despite this , Kahn goes to Dax 's quarters and a discussion between the two leads to a kiss ; Kahn leaves before it goes any further .

Dax confides in Sisko that she knows she is in love with her former wife . He tells her that Trill customs mean that if they resumed their relationship , then they would be exiled from their homeworld and their symbionts would never be joined with a new host , but that she will have his support either way . Kahn and Dax continue to work on the experiment , but it goes wrong and Defiant is severely damaged . Kahn is injured in the explosion , but Dax rigs a force field across a plasma fire that allows her to reach Kahn , coming to the realization that the relationship is worth exile . After returning to the station , Kahn recuperates from her injuries . She decides against resuming her relationship with Dax , and ? with the experiments complete ? departs with the science team , leaving Dax heartbroken .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing and directing = = =

" Rejoined " marked the first time that longtime Star Trek writers Ronald D. Moore and René Echevarria wrote a script together . They had been hired by executive producer Michael Piller following separate unsolicited manuscripts submitted during the third season of Star Trek : The Next Generation , and had remained on the staff of the franchise since . In Echevarria 's first draft of the story , there was no lesbian element as Dax 's former lover was male . The Trill taboo against reuniting relationships from past hosts was suggested by Piller early on in the creation of Deep Space Nine , in order for the society to prevent an " aristocracy of the joined " , where joined hosts never met anyone that they did not already know .

It was Moore 's suggestion to make Dax 's former partner a woman in order to tackle the taboo against homosexuality by way of the on @-@ screen taboo against re @-@ association . At that stage , they intended to make no reference in the script to any characters having a concern about Dax 's relationship with a woman so as to focus the story . Clearance was sought for the plot , first from showrunner Ira Steven Behr , then executive producer Rick Berman , and finally from the studio executives . Moore later explained that they agreed to the idea , saying that Star Trek stood for making statements like those in " Rejoined " .

Terry Farrell was happy with the story line , saying that it made sense for Dax to have this issue because the symbiont had been in both male and female hosts , adding that " Gender wasn 't the issue . For the worm / symbiont , it was a matter of the being it was embodied in . " She was pleased to be able to " stand up " for the LGBT community . A similar story had been approached during the first appearance of the Trill in The Next Generation episode " The Host " . In this story , however , when the symbiont is transferred from a male to a female host , the Trill is rejected by the character who was the Trill 's female partner , Beverly Crusher . The subplot featuring Kahn 's artificial wormhole was described as a " macguffin " by Moore , and simply a way to get the character into " Rejoined " . This was not the first subplot to be considered for the episode , with the main plot from " Bar Association " originally thought of as being suitable to appear in either " Rejoined " or " Crossfire " . Instead , the plot , which involved Rom forming a trade union , was expanded into the main plot of its own episode .

The episode was directed by main cast member Avery Brooks , who played Benjamin Sisko in the series , who later said that " Rejoined " was his favourite of the episodes he directed . He said that the episode was about love , and the choices that result from that , and that it was an extraordinary story about losing someone you love and having that person restored to you some time afterward . Following the death of Jadzia in the sixth season finale , " Tears of the Prophets " , Farrell suggested that the symbiont could be moved to a male character resulting in a similar situation as " Rejoined " between the new Dax host and Worf , as the two were in a relationship at that point . Instead , the symbiont was placed in a new female host called Ezri , as the producers did not want Kira Nerys to be the only female main character . The prejudice against re @-@ association first highlighted in " Rejoined " was mentioned in the seventh season episodes such as " Afterimage " .

= = = Visual effects and guest stars = = =

Visual effect supervisors Gary Hutzler and Glenn Neufeld were busy completing post @-@ production work on the opening episode of the fourth season , " The Way of the Warrior " . In their place , visual effects coordinator David Takemura led on the visual effects work on both " Rejoined " and " The Visitor " . For this episode , his two main tasks were the creation of the artificial wormhole and the sequence where Dax uses a forcefield as a walkway to reach a trapped Kahn . Takemura was relieved that the wormhole was intended to be artificial in nature , as it meant that he did not have to attempt to re @-@ create the detail already seen in the Bajoran wormhole on the series . Once he came up with the basic design , visual effects company VisionArt completed it .

For the forcefield scene , Farrell was shot " skating " down a board painted blue against a blue

screen . A mixture of liquid nitrogen and hot water was used to create a fog around the ground . VisionArt combined these shots with the force field and footage of the engineering set on board the Defiant , while a staff animator added a " plasma glow " around her feet as she made contact with the field .

Before appearing in " Rejoined " , Susanna Thompson had previously appeared in two The Next Generation episodes ; " The Next Phase " and " Frame of Mind " . She later appeared in Star Trek : Voyager as the Borg Queen , previously portrayed by Alice Krige in the film Star Trek : First Contact . Farrell praised Thompson 's part in " Rejoined " , calling her a " wonderful actress and a joy to work with . "

= = Themes = =

Writers on Deep Space Nine had previously hinted at a potential same @-@ sex relationship in the first season episode " Dax " , when Jadzia Dax says goodbye to Enina Tandro , a former lover of Dax 's previous male host , Curzon . The first take of the scene resulted in a situation in which it was unclear whether Dax and Enina were about to kiss . It was decided at the time that it was not appropriate , although the writers had hoped that there would be a time when the viewers would accept such a relationship . This theme was eventually realised in " Rejoined " . Allen Kwan has argued that Deep Space Nine is the only series of Star Trek that resists the heteronormativity typical of the franchise , citing both " Rejoined " and the Mirror Universe episodes as examples , even if the presented bisexuality is problematized .

During that 1995 / 96 television season there had been an increase in the number of homosexual characters appearing in major television series , and so the same @-@ sex kiss in " Rejoined " was reviewed in this context . An article published by the Associated Press suggested that the kiss in Deep Space Nine was not truly a same @-@ sex kiss due to " extenuating circumstances " ; namely , one of the characters was an " alien who used to be a man " . A similar opinion was offered by Jan Johnson @-@ Smith , author of American Science Fiction TV , who said that the situation was " ambiguous " as , despite presenting a same @-@ sex kiss , the episode was clear that Jadzia was " actually kissing the symbiont who has the memories of the former host , her male lover , not the current female host " .

For film studies scholar Jean Bruce , the ambiguity of the kiss is foreshadowed in an early scene revolving around a magic trick . On the one hand , the magic trick produces a " pleasurable surprise " , while , on the other , this mirrors the deception necessary , due to Trill norms , in the reacquaintance of the characters . At the same time , the juxtaposition of very different shots serves to " convey physical distance and the desire to bridge it " , which mirrors the fact that the Trills ' love for one another transcends gender , identity and death . Though the kiss is " informed by the fact that Dax was a man in her past life " , once it occurs , it can " never be taken back " , and remains the queer image of two women kissing .

Nonetheless , " Rejoined " was still considered controversial because of its subject matter , which depicts two women who engage in a same @-@ sex romantic relationship , and included one of the first televised lesbian kisses . During the course of the episode , no characters register concern about Dax being involved with a woman , only that she was an ex @-@ spouse . David Greven , literary critic and author of Gender and Sexuality in Star Trek , said that " Rejoined " was one of the better @-@ received episodes of Star Trek that dealt with homosexuality as a theme , but that the franchise overall had typically avoided LGBT issues . Bryan Fuller , who also wrote for Deep Space Nine , said that the franchise had usually avoided those story lines because of the paranoia of the studio regarding homosexuality . Dale Palmer , in an essay on gender and sexual politics , suggested that the choice was made to have a female same @-@ sex kiss on screen because a male one would have alienated the main viewer demographic for the series .

= = Reception and legacy = =

== Broadcast ==

" Rejoined " was first broadcast on October 30 , 1995 , in broadcast syndication . It received Nielsen ratings of 7 percent , placing it in eighth place in its timeslot . This was lower than the share received by " Indiscretion " , broadcast in the week prior with a 7 @. @ 2 percent share and " Little Green Men " in the week afterward with 7 @. @ 7 percent .

== Fan , cast and crew response ==

When the episode was originally broadcast , there was a strong negative reaction from some viewers . As Deep Space Nine was shown in syndication , one channel in the Southern United States took the step of editing out the kiss from the initial broadcast . Echevarria 's mother told him that they should have issued a parental guidance warning before broadcasting it . More responses were received at the production office from viewers than for any other episode of the series , resulting in several staff members having to take turns on the phones in order to cover the load . The staff found that although the majority of the phone calls were negative about " Rejoined " , the letters were mostly positive . Terry Farrell said in a 2015 interview that " Rejoined " was her favourite episode of all time and that she still had people thanking her for the episode , because " it gave them strength , and that it made them feel like they weren 't alone , it inspired them to be themselves ? all the things I was hoping it would do . "

== Critical response ==

Zack Handlen reviewed the episode for The A.V. Club in 2013 , praising the natural manner in which the romance was progressed , saying that this was " refreshing " to see . He felt that the relationship did not appear to be manipulative for the sake of male viewers , but added that the ending was expected and that the episode never communicated to the audience the need to care about the duo . Handlen wrote that the overall story itself was " shallow " , as the episode suffered from an " enervating lack of fun " which was only saved from " complete tedium " through " strong acting and an admirable lack of stigma " . Jordon Hoffman , reviewing the episode on his website , commented that Farrell 's acting " really steps up to the plate " for this episode , and gave " Rejoined " a rating of five out of five .

Keith DeCandido , in 2014 review on Tor.com , compared " Rejoined " structurally to The Next Generation episode " Lessons " , which also had a " love @-@ interest @-@ in @-@ danger climax " . He praised the episode , saying that at the time of broadcast it was considered " radical " and said that both Farrell and Thompson managed to get across the romantic message . He called it a " Trek message " episode , but said that it was one of the better ones as it " shines a light on an inadequacy in our own culture via an alien culture , but in this case it muddies the waters a bit because the taboo actually makes sense on the face of it . " He gave " Rejoined " a rating of eight out of ten .

== alien kisses ==

Dara Gellman , an independent Canadian video artist , used the kiss sequence in " Rejoined " as the basis of her 3 @-@ minute 1999 project alien kisses . In this piece , the kiss scene is manipulated ? the video is slowed , the image enlarged and digitized ? and trance music is added . New media scholar Carolyn Guertin argues that this serves to make the footage " even more alien " , presenting queerness as " unearthly " . Jean Bruce argues that , despite the inherent ambiguity of the scene in the episode , " the image is still one of two women kissing , which opens up the possibilities of queer desire on its own terms " . Similarly , Guertin argues that Gellman translates the ( not truly queer ) scene into an " expression of gay love that is alien and apart , but no less erotic for being so " . In using the scene in isolation , alien kisses , Bruce argues , " strips away the gender equivocation by imposing a new queer vision " . She suggests that alien kisses works as an "

antidote " to the " ultimately tame treatment " Star Trek has offered of queer themes , and as a " suggestion " that Star Trek acknowledge the desires of queer viewers and fans " beyond the occasional titillating episode " .

= = Home media release = =

The first home media release of " Rejoined " was on a VHS cassette alongside " Indiscretion " on March 25 , 1996 , in the United Kingdom . The first release within the United States was on a single @-@ episode VHS release on August 1 , 2000 . It was released on DVD as part of the season four box set on August 5 , 2003 .