

One of Our Colonies is Missing

A Scenario for **STAR TREK FATE**

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Inspired by *Shadow Over Innsmouth* by H.P. Lovecraft



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Introduction

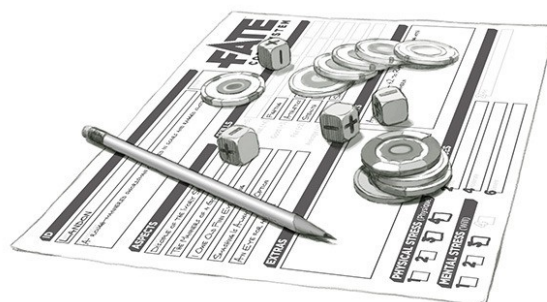
This is a one- (or possible two-) shot scenario intended for convention play. Players are assumed to have a basic understanding of *Star Trek* tenets – they will portray the officers newly-assigned to the U.S.S. *Archer*, the flagship of the Nguyen Exploratory Expedition to the Delta Quadrant.

This scenario serves as an introduction to the *FATE Core* rules system by Evil Hat Productions.

Quick-Play Rules

It is highly recommended that you utilize the (extremely) easy quick-play rules (*FATE Core*, p. XX). You'll find a blank quick-play character sheet on p. XX.

In brief: each player will define their name, high concept aspect, and high skill. You will also want to decide which PC holds which bridge station or department head position (Captain, Chief Medical Officer, Tactical, etc.). If/when someone wants to play one of the common *Star Trek* aliens, teach them about aspects and stunts by giving them examples of what might work for their chosen species.



That should take about ten minutes, give or take. Once you've got those basics down, you're ready to start the Prologue (p. XX).

Presentation

Whenever I write scenarios or adventures for RPGs, I find it useful for myself to get all my ideas down on paper, scene-by-scene. This makes up the bulk of this document, and it probably looks a little rail-road-y. **It's not supposed to be.** Think of it as an example of how the story can flow.

Once you have a handle on the NPCs and the various plot elements, you might (as I do) find the Scenario Overview to be of more use for navigating your play session. The scenes are still outlined, but without all the nitty gritty.

One more thing, before you dive into the mission itself: I've outlined the Big Secret of Obed III upfront, as is typical for any Lovecraftian adventure. You should familiarize yourself with what's going on beneath the surface, so that you can skillfully dole out revelations as the story progresses.

The Mission

The *Archer* is the flagship of the Nguyen Exploratory Expedition, which is tasked with retracing the U.S.S. *Voyager*'s path through the Delta Quadrant. The action starts at Deep Space 21, on the edge of the Beta Quadrant (outside of XX space). The PCs' first mission will be to investigate the loss of contact with the colony on Obed III, the third planet in the Obed system (named after Samuel Obed, the scientist who founded the colony nearly two decades ago).

▲ The Truth

The Obed III colonists have mingled socially and biologically with an indigenous, amphibious species.



Colonial Logs

In early colonial logs, the PCs can find mention of the 'reptilian inhabitants' discovered to live within Obed III's prodigious oceans. Eventually, the logs take to calling them **Anurans**. There appear to be several sub-species of Anurans, as there is great variety in their physiology.

When they first discovered the Anurans, the colonists kept their distance, in keeping with Federation policy regarding indigenous sentient species. However, as the Anurans came closer and closer to the colony, first contact became inevitable. Shortly after this, the logs simply stop.

Medical Scan

Upon a thorough tricorder scan (coupled with the knowledge gleaned from the colonists' logs), the away team concludes that the Anurans can somehow manipulate the physiology of other races. It is unknown whether this is an intentional act, or a natural biological function of their species. It is also unknown how the changes are instigated, whether through touch, mere proximity, or some other exchange. It could even be transmitted through the water of Obed III.

The exact process may be important to your players, but it's not the focus of the story. Some mysteries will remain mysteries.

Prognosis

What is clear, however, is that all of the colonists (apparently the youngest first, perhaps due to metabolism) are becoming more and more like the Anurans every day, and may well end up indistinguishable from them in a rather short amount of time. A talented doctor (making a series of Good [+3] Medical rolls) can theorize that he may be able to extract the Anuran DNA in the *Archer's* sickbay (although nothing can be done while still on the planet).

However, none of the colonists will wish to go with the PCs back to the *Archer* – they are dead set on remaining with their new brethren on Obed III.

Is This a Bad Thing?

As presented in Lovecraft's original novella, the existence of the Deep Ones equates to mind-shattering horror. However, in the *Star Trek* setting, the mere presence of (and biological merging with) these creatures doesn't necessarily have to be negative.

The Anurans are a sentient species with a complex verbal language, and an equally complex aquatic society. However, they are technologically primitive, lacking anything more than iron age tools. As such, they should be granted all the grace and passivity that the Federation's vaunted Prime Directive outlines: the *Archer's* crew should do nothing whatsoever to affect their cultural and evolutionary development.

However, the functional biology of the Obed colonists has become (irrevocably?) compromised: the original colonists are feeling a deep and growing urge to 'return' to the sea, to live forever in the Anurans' aquatic cities and to worship their dubious deities. Even the most accepting ideologies will see that this represents an oppressive corruption of the colonists' free will.

★ Prologue: Arrival & Briefing



The crew assembles at DS21, where the *Archer* and several other Expedition ships are docked. The ship has recently been overhauled at Utopia Planitia (Mars), in preparation for its new mission.

Pick two players that were already assigned to the *Archer* – the rest are transitioning from other assignments. The new crew members will probably approach the ship via shuttle pod (in the spirit of every *Star Trek* thing ever), despite perfectly functional transporters. Be sure to play up the sense of awe and gravitas as they approach their new home.

Each character should report to either (a) the bridge, or (b) their designated department (e.g., Main Engineering). Here they will meet their new shipmates, some of which are provided as NPCs on p. XX.



Orders

After getting acclimated to their new assignments, the Captain and First Officer are ordered to report to Admiral XX's office aboard DS21. Here they will receive their mission briefing:

- A decades-old Federation colony on Obed III has gone silent. Their last transmission was almost a year ago. The *Archer's* first assignment is to investigate the situation on this colony, and reestablish communications.
- Related to the above objectives, they are also to inspect and, if necessary, repair the Barclay-type subspace transceivers that lie along their course.

Background on the Colony

The Obed Colony was founded almost twenty years ago by Samuel Obed, a noted human scientist. Accompanying him on the mission were several dozen scientific specialists, and over two hundred colonists, from a variety of Federation species and social backgrounds.

Deep Space 21

Aspects

- *Frontier Station and Repair Facility*
- *Well-Armed and Patrolled*

Ships Assigned

- Three starships assigned at all times for rotating patrol duty.
- 45 *Valkyrie*-class fighters
- 7 runabouts
- 16 personnel shuttles

Crew Complement: 586 total

- 6 Command
- 60 Science
- 100 Tactical/Security
- 160 Engineering
- 50 Medical
- 90 Flight/Flight Support (*Valkyrie* pilots)
- 120 Starfleet Marines (garrison)

★ Scene One: The Ferengi

When the *Archer* comes into sensor range of the first subspace transceiver, they detect a Ferengi cruiser alongside the device. (Perhaps pass the helmsman or sensor operator a note to make the announcement.) Moments after they detect it, the cruiser escapes at high warp; however, one of its crew is left abandoned, holding onto the transceiver, in an EVA suit. The *Archer* can give chase to the cruiser, or hail and (presumably) take the unfortunate straggler on-board.

Crewman Zok is a low-ranking officer of the Ferengi Alliance. He drew the short straw, "... as you Hewmons say," and was assigned to pick the transceiver clean of any valuable technology. The *Archer* arrived before he could procure anything, and he was apparently deemed by his shipmates to be an unfortunate liability. Due to his abandonment, Zok will be fairly forthcoming about Ferengi activities in the area, as well as certain other details:

- His cruiser, the *Avarice Five*, was assigned a long-term scavenging mission in the unaligned sectors of the Beta Quadrant. He swears adamantly (but unconvincingly) that, as far as he knows, they were unaware of Federation interests in the area.
- If asked about the Obed Colony, he knows of its existence: his ship stopped there several days ago, and he was on the landing party. They found the colony's buildings in shambles, contrary to what one could normally expect from a Federation installation. The colonists attacked them with phasers, and Zok's DaiMon (Krom) ordered them to withdraw. With trembling eyes, Zok tells of "young Hewmons with deep, dark eyes. And, the way they moved... it was unnatural!" He mimics a shambling, zombie-like gait.

The *Avarice Five* will make every effort to avoid the Federation starship, unless the *Archer's* crew promises that they will face no repercussions for interfering with Starfleet technology. Zok can easily be returned to his ship, or kept in the *Archer's* brig.

XX IMAGE OF SUBSPACE TRANSCEIVER XX

★ Scene Two: Away Team Investigation

Note: *The bulk of this adventure will take place on the surface of Obed III, so it's essential for the enjoyment of all the players that each PC be on the landing party. This should be easy to do: there's every reason to have security, medical, engineering, and science represented. If there's any trouble coming up with a reason to include a PC (Captain, Helm Officer), you can say that (a) the crew member has family on the surface, or (in the case of the Captain), (b) Starfleet has relaxed its policy of keeping the Captain on-board the ship during away missions (for some reason).*

The Obed Colony lies on the northeast coast of a large continent. Samuel Obed was interested in studying both terrestrial and aquatic life, which are abundant.

The away team is greeted by Obed himself, a man of 83, in excellent health by any standard. He welcomes representatives of the Federation, without discrimination.

What You'll See

The colony buildings, while functional, are a bit decayed. Obed and the other colonists will chalk this up to the salty, damp weather conditions. However, the PCs will note that the science labs show signs of disuse. In addition, some of the smaller buildings are without power, and the colonial engineers seem content to sit or roam around listlessly, spending time eating, drinking, or exploring the beaches near the water.



The PCs will find the colonists in good health, although their demeanors (physical, social, etc.) are troubling:

- Older colonists (over 50) are largely unaffected.
- Those of middle age (35-50) walk with a creeping, low-stepping gait, and their eyes are unnaturally wide.
- Young adults (20-35) exhibit epidermal changes: patches of rough scales, ridges around their eyes – even gill-like slits on their necks.
- Children (0-20) spend a lot of time in the ocean water, and are reticent to return to their homes when summoned by their parents. Their physical changes are minor, but will appear when they reach young adulthood.

Obed III (and Colony)

Aspects

- Class M, Temperate
- Cold and Damp This Time of Year
- Coastal Colony
- Scientists, Farmers and Families
- Suspicious Inhabitants

General Statistics

Population: 250

- 12 scientists
- 33 engineers and maintenance specialists
- 205 colonists of various professions (mostly farmers)

Layout: Six large buildings serve as common areas, science labs, solar power distribution, equipment storage, etc. About a dozen outlying buildings are for accommodation, recreation, and education. Some families have their own houses (prefabricated or built from local resources), some live in common housing within the main complex.

And, that's just what the PCs will witness with the naked eye! Upon tricorder scan (Fair [+2] overcome, Computers & Sensors), a **basic success** will reveal that the physiology of the colonists has been changed on a molecular level. If they **succeed with style** (or scan the children directly), they will conclude that some of the young children have direct Anuran ancestry.

Colonial Logs

At any time, the colonists will offer no opposition to the away team if they wish to go over the colony's logs. However, the logs cease several months after first contact with the Anurans (see The Truth, p. XX).

Questions and Answers

Obviously, it's impossible to predict everything the PCs might try to glean more information from the colonists, but here are some guidelines on their perspectives, and the facts of the situation.

Facts (unknown to the PCs unless discovered)

- **Has anyone been hurt?** The Anurans haven't harmed anyone outright, beyond changing the colonists' genetic makeup to match their own.
- **How is it possible that the colonists' physiology is changing to match that of the Anurans?** Unknown to any colonial scientist, let alone the primitive Anurans. This is, in fact, a natural biological function for them ... mere proximity (for an extended time) is enough to effect change in a non-Anuran.
- **Where are the Anurans?** The Anurans live at the bottom of Obed III's oceans, and only come out at night, to socialize and mate (only consensually) with the human colonists.
- **Have you visited the Anurans?** None of the colonists have yet developed the necessary physiology to descend to the incredible depths at which the Anuran cities lie. (Desmond is about to.)
- **Can you communicate with the Anurans?** Yes; after some initial difficulty, the Universal Translator was able to decode their complex speech patterns. If/when the PCs meet the Anurans, they will have little trouble communicating with them. However, their names remain unintelligible, even processed by the U.T.
- **Can we meet them?** The Anurans are a terribly shy species – it took them months to warm to the colonists' presence. Samuel and the colonists advise that, if the Starfleet officers wish to make contact, they send only one representative (out of uniform and unarmed) to accompany the colonists to the beach after nightfall.

Attitudes (how the colonists will react to the PCs)

- **Samuel Obed** (and other elder colonists) are genial, yet docile. They welcome the Federation and Anurans equally.
- **Scientists** (in fact, specialists of any kind) seem to be content to give up their chosen professions in favor of getting to know the Anurans better. They spend their days gathering what food they must to survive, and otherwise pining for the night, when they can be with the Anurans.
- Some of the **younger** colonists (20-somethings) may even speak in hushed tones of a day when they can descend to the depths to be with their ocean-borne brothers.
- **Jeremy Alexander**, however, has a different opinion of what's going on, and will open up to an individual PC if plied with drinking company.

Jeremy Alexander

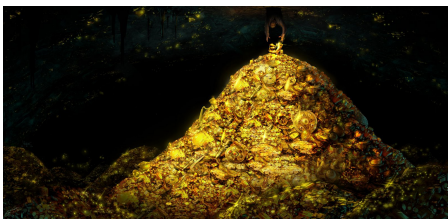
Jeremy is the oldest colonist (88), and Samuel Obed's estranged husband. In the last few years, Jeremy has taken to distilling and drinking a potent liquor in a small shack outside of the main colony. He keeps to himself, and rarely speaks to any of the colonists unless he has to.



Any of the colonists, including Samuel, will speak somberly of old Jeremy – they feel deep regret that he seems to shun their new way of life and avoid their aquatic friends.

The old man will be extremely resistant to a team of Starfleet officers invading his home and his privacy – however, an individual PC can make an impression on him, and get him to open up enough to disclose his feelings...

- The Anurans are **not what they appear to be**. They seem innocent and simple at first, due to their lack of tools and technology. However, Jeremy has seen his friends and colleagues abandon their very way of life as they spend more and more time with the aquatic natives. He will name several individuals, male and female, that he knows have mated with the Anurans. “Not that there's anything wrong with that,” he says... “But now, the children just want to live near the ocean, and no one wants to repair the solar generators or take care of the farms like they used to...”
- The Anurans seem to possess **great material wealth**, as evidenced by the elaborate gifts they bring to the colonists (gold, jewels, and other precious objects). Jeremy is troubled that his colleagues have been tempted and swayed by such trinkets, as they formerly upheld the Federation ideals of socialist progress – working for the common good, as opposed to material wealth.



It's possible that Jeremy will come off as a bigoted old man, especially in light of Federation ideology (which he espoused, at least at one time). Don't make it easy on the players by telling them right from wrong – this is a difficult situation without a clear moral guideline. He sees his fellow colonists changing more than he can understand, and those that have been touched by the Anurans will probably never be as they once were.

Other Notable Colonists

- **Greg and Jenn Adams**, a human couple with two children, **Alice** (11) and **Benjamin** (7). The children are largely unaffected by contact with the Anurans. The entire family displays great empathy for and familiarity with them, as though the Anurans are long-lost cousins.
- **T'Lok**, a female Vulcan biologist, who originally accompanied the colony to study the local (non-sentient) life. Since getting to know the Anurans, T'Lok has lost interest in returning to Vulcan, where her husband and family live. Her face is colored by a subtle green, which could be attributed to high blood pressure (it's actually the beginning of an Anuran epidermis).
- **Desmond** is a brash young human male of 21, who has visible gills on his neck, and webbing between his fingers. He is disinterested in Starfleet and the Federation, and only wishes to be with people his own age, or be near the water, where he spends countless hours swimming, or simply gazing into the ocean longingly.

★ Scene Three: They Only Come Out At Night



The *Avarice* Returns

Just before nightfall (or when a PC intends to return to the *Archer* in orbit), the *Archer* is attacked by the *Avarice Five* (utilizing a stolen cloaking device). Using hit and run tactics, the Ferengi cruiser delivers several punishing attacks, disabling key systems aboard the *Archer*, and forcing her to use the nearby asteroid belt for cover.

The away team learns of this battle through the comm. link, or via their tricorders' computer uplink... at least, until the *Archer* goes out of range, unable to communicate with or retrieve the officers from the surface. The away team is stranded!

Note: strand them no matter what. If they arrived by runabout, then a gang of young colonists sabotages the engines. Or, use the ubiquitous ion storm to disrupt the transporters/shuttlecraft engines.

Spending the Night

When made aware of the situation, the colonists welcome the away team to stay in one of the common buildings. A storm front comes in, and the area is subjected to heavy rain and icy temperatures for most of the night.

The colonists, of course, will brave the elements to meet with the Anurans on the beach nearest to the settlement. They 'advise' the away team that it is too dangerous for all of them to meet the Anurans just yet – but, if one officer wishes to come, she must be unarmed and dressed unassumingly (out of uniform).

When night has fully set in, the colonists will make their way to the beach. With all of the colonists going to the beach, it wouldn't be too difficult for the PCs to follow them at a discreet distance.

To Boldly Go...

Tonight, the first human will go (willingly, of course) with the Anurans. Desmond, a young man of 21, has developed the biological apparatus necessary to traverse the ocean depths and visit the nearest Anuran city. (Yes, this depth is quite extreme – if it makes you feel better, say this particular settlement is on a coastal shelf, rather than the truly deep ocean floor.) Desmond's agrarian family will wish him a tearful farewell, as the Anurans escort him into the waves.

A note on the Anuran visage: many of these creatures are truly horrific, and will cause PCs or anyone unfamiliar with them significant discomfort (a Fair [+2] Will check to regain composure – don't forget about Mental stress).



★ Scene Four: Confrontation and Resolution

At this point, you'll probably want some action to spice things up a bit. There are two options:

Option One: Righteous Gang

If any away team members try to interfere with Desmond's descent, a combined group of about 20 young colonists and Anurans will block the PCs from Desmond and the ocean. How can the Starfleet officers preserve their good standing with the colonists, and make a positive impression on the Anurans, as well? Will the PCs stop at nothing to 'save' the colonists, even to the point of taking them back to the *Archer* by force, to undergo a risky medical procedure to remove the Anuran DNA? Will the Anurans let the colonists go without a fight? (No.)

Option Two: Ferengi Landing Party

If the PCs are more complacent (content to watch events unfold), a Ferengi landing party disrupts the situation by marching onto the beach and demanding an audience with the wealthy Anurans. Their advanced sensors have detected the Anurans' sub-aquatic cities, along with their vast stores of wealth that the Ferengi cannot ignore.

DaiMon Krom will attempt to bargain with anyone who will listen, but when the Anurans aren't receptive to his advances, he will threaten to fly his vessel into the ocean itself (which it can), and take what he wishes (which his equipment will allow him to do).



It's likely that the Starfleet officers will take a stand, and the Ferengi will beam back to their ship. The *Archer* will enter orbit a few moments later, giving the away team the opportunity to beam back and defend the colony (and the Anurans) against the *Avarice Five*.

Resolution

The away team now finds itself with a very tense situation on its hands. Whether you choose to involve the Ferengi or not, the motives and destinies of the intertwined Anurans and colonists are enough to keep the PCs, as representatives of the Federation, scratching their heads and searching their hearts.

Basically, if they want to **interfere** with the continued assimilation (for lack of a better term) of the colonists into Anuran physiology, they have a **fight** on their hands. If they obey the letter of the **Prime Directive** and let nature take its course, they will have to **explain to Starfleet Command** why a key Federation colony is now (or very soon will be) lost, its inhabitants changed irrevocably into a completely different species.

Probably the best (most egalitarian) solution is to establish positive relations with the Anurans, while finding a way to inoculate the away team and prevent future contact situations from ending with biological assimilation.

Epilogue

Think of a typical episode of *TNG*: after the conflict has been resolved, there are a few minutes left for a brief log entry, where Picard gives his assessment of the outcome/Data learns an important lesson/somebody makes a big speech.

Answer Questions

This is your opportunity to tie up loose ends. First, ask the players: is there anything that's still fuzzy, and if so, should we clear it up with some additional resolution? If they don't have anything, consider these plot elements:

- What happened to Crewman Zok? Did he decide (or have the opportunity) to return to his ship?
- Have the colonists reestablished contact with the Federation, or are they set on their path of uniting with the Anurans beneath the ocean (which will happen to all the colonists eventually)? Are these two goals mutually exclusive?
- What will the Captain put in her report to Starfleet Command regarding the disposition of the Anurans? Will a warning beacon be placed in orbit of Obed III, warning vessels not to interfere or initiate contact?
- What about old Jeremy? Since he apparently didn't want to unite with the Anurans anyway, would he appreciate the opportunity to return to the Federation? Also, why is he so immune to the Anuran assimilation (or is he)?

Scenario Outline

Prologue

- Crew assembles on the *Archer*.
- Captain and X.O. receive their mission briefing.

Scene One – The Ferengi

- They find Crewman Zok clinging to a subspace transceiver. He gives them a dire warning about Obed III, and perhaps wishes to return to his ship, the *Avarice Five* (although he resents being abandoned).
- They may meet DaiMon Krom at this point, if they successfully hail the *Avarice Five*. If not, Zok remains in the *Archer's* brig, and Krom will probably come up later.

Scene Two – Away Team Investigation

- Samuel Obed seems nice, and sane enough. Younger colonists, however, display very odd habits and traits. Also, the colony is in disrepair: their communications systems are down (as well as portions of the power grid), but none of the engineers seem particularly interested in repairing them.
- One disreputable colonist, Jeremy Alexander, is given to drinking the spirits he distills in his private hut, far from the colony itself. He is reticent to speak with a group of Starfleet officers, but one crew member may engage him and hear the tale of the Anurans (especially if said crew member joins him for a drink or several).

Scene Three – They Only Come Out At Night

- Due to a surprise Ferengi attack in orbit (probably), the away team is stranded on Obed III for a time.
- The colonists plan to meet the Anurans at the beach, and will only consent to take one unarmed PC with them. Anyone present will witness various colonists (Human, Vulcan, Andorian, etc.) being reunited with Anuran loved ones, some couples even going off to be alone in the night.
- Desmond, a young human colonist, will be the first colonist to visit the nearby aquatic Anuran city, having developed the physiological traits necessary to make the deep trek.

Scene Four – Confrontation & Resolution

At this point, there are two options for presenting opposition:

- If any away team members try to interfere with Desmond's descent, a combined group of young colonists and Anurans will block the PCs from Desmond and the ocean. How can the Starfleet officers preserve their ostensible good standing with the colonists, and make a positive impression on the Anurans, as well?
- If the PCs are more complacent (content to watch events unfold), a Ferengi landing party disrupts the situation by marching onto the beach and demanding an audience with the wealthy Anurans, who will become overtly hostile to the arrival of perceived aggressors.

Scene Four comes to a head with a very dicey diplomatic situation, as the away team must deal with colonists who aren't quite themselves, a new alien race with dubious motives, and hostile Ferengi bent on profit at any cost. I've left the resolution intentionally vague. It's up to the PCs to handle the situation with aplomb, or let it deteriorate. If the Ferengi are involved, a space battle is likely.

Epilogue

- Tie up loose ends; ask the players, ask yourself. What have the colonists done? How do the PCs feel about the Anurans? What about Jeremy? What about Zok, Krom, and the Ferengi cruiser?

Female Anuran (name unpronounceable) Anuran representative	Aspects		
	Skills		

Male Anuran (name unpronounceable) Anuran representative	Aspects		
	Skills		

	Aspects		
	Skills		

	Aspects		
	Skills		

