



This adventure is set aboard the USS *Enterprise*, although any Federation ship would do. Any time period may be used for this scenario since it does not depend on political or military interaction with any known intelligence. The referee must paint a picture of horror and the macabre, while at the same time allowing the PCs a maximum range of options. Players may find that mystery and horror, on which this adventure is based, are eternal qualities of the universe, outliving the petty squabbles between rival life forms.

MESSAGE FROM STAR FLEET

While their ship is patrolling its quadrant, the characters receive a message from Star Fleet Command. Its text is terse:

From: Admiral Javovic, Star Fleet Command

To: USS *Enterprise*

Something of an emergency has prompted this change to your routine patrol orders.

On Stardate 7117.3, the commercial freighter Tamura Dream entered a previously unknown region of space. This region, anomaly 1124-3 on your screens, somehow affected the crew of the Tamura Dream, killing over half the crew of 20 before the ship could escape the region.

The surviving crew reported hysteria and "maniacal death" among the victims. Apparently the region of space itself was somehow responsible.

This anomaly must be explored to determine its affect on our spacefaring culture. You are ordered to perform initial exploration of the region to determine if there is intelligent life within it, whether the region is moving, and if it is moving, whether it poses a threat to any populated worlds.

Star Fleet estimates your time of arrival to the anomaly to be seven hours at Warp 6. We'll expect a report within eight hours.

Good luck, Enterprise. Javovic out.

On the viewscreens is depicted a region of space outside the *Enterprise's* regular patrol route. The region is claimed by no known species, and no Federation ship has ever logged a voyage through there.

The trip will take seven hours at Warp 6. Travel times at other speeds must be determined by the referee. During the trip, the characters may wish to review the logtapes from the freighter. Unfortunately, Star Fleet will not release transcripts of the interviews its personnel made with the surviving crewmembers. If pressed, Admiral Javovic will tell the ship's captain that the tapes haven't been fully evaluated by the psychological staff at Star Fleet Headquarters. In short, the crewmembers must go in with what little information they already have.

Abaddon

An adventure
of horror in a unique
setting.

By Jeffrey Groteboer

ENTERING THE ZONE

At first approach the zone will appear to be an area of space two light-years across. Successful sensor scans, however, will show it to be of seemingly unlimited volume, however contradictory that sounds.

The closer the ship gets to the edge of the anomaly and the more time passes, the more the crew will be affected—one by one crewmembers will go insane. The referee should roll randomly against nonplayer characters' Psi Potentials. Those that fail the roll will go mad—each in his own way. Be creative, but don't overdo it. Each person affected will do something extremely bizarre, then suddenly fall into a coma (to eventually die if sufficient time passes).

One of the affected NPCs should be a crewmember regularly assigned to the bridge and known by the PCs.

Sitting on the edge of the anomaly won't yield the player characters any helpful information—to decipher the mystery of the zone and the mysterious affliction of the crew, the ship will have to enter the zone.

As the ship enters the anomalous region, the referee should paint pictures of horror in the minds of the major characters. Their skin will crawl, and the hairs on the back of their necks will stand up. Some people will get nervous and edgy, jumping at sudden motions and sounds. Some will jerk their heads back and forth randomly, as if they were somehow aware of something looking over their shoulder.

Inside the zone, the mysterious insanity and its associated collapses will continue, bewildering the medical staff. Medical personnel performing scans and analyses will find no chemical or hormonal imbalances, and no wounds.

Even Vulcans will be affected by the emanations of the zone, although not to such a serious extent as humans. Vulcans will not go insane, but will be bothered by strange feelings they can't identify.

CONTACT

After a few minutes inside the zone, the sensors will begin to pick up strange anomalies and undecipherable readings. Seconds later, a vision will appear on the bridge. The bridge crewmember who collapsed will appear near the large viewscreen for a few minutes, hovering in space, his visage ghostly. He will try to speak, but the only intelligible words the characters will hear will be "Help me...the horror...the loneliness...."

After theorizing a bit on the occurrence, the characters may notice that some of the sensor gibberish suddenly clears, and the sensors detect a solid mass ahead. Characters with moderate skill at sensor use can identify the mass as a small, apparently rogue, planet, as no star is present. Indistinct life forms are readable. A successful scan will show them to be humanoid, although definitely not human. To find out more, the characters will have to beam down.

THE PLANET

The landing party materializes in a park surrounded by buildings. The referee should describe a serene setting, similar to the quad of a small university: grass, sidewalks, trees, and flowers with clean, modern buildings surrounding them. At first, all they see are surprisingly Earthlike flora and fauna. Then suddenly, as though class were letting out, hundreds, then thousands, of apparitions float out of the buildings and traverse the quad. They are dressed in various styles spanning across the galaxy and through thousands of years of history.

The characters each have a 5% chance of recognizing one of the apparitions. If anyone does, the apparition will be a dead relative or historical figure. If the ghost knows the character, it will try to communicate. The theme of the communication attempt will be the same as the message communicated by the apparition on the bridge: horror, loneliness, fear, etc. After a short, terrifying conversation, the ghost will continue on its way, drawn away by an irresistible compulsion against its will, leaving only questions.

Soon the ghost of the bridge crewmember reappears and tries to explain what is happening. The ghost states that his mental and psychic essence—his soul or spirit, if you will—has been forcibly drawn from his body, and that other souls continue to arrive from the *Enterprise*. He says this planet is a world of the dead, and compares it to being in hell.

If possible, one of the landing party, preferably an NPC, should go mad at this point, suddenly collapsing, writhing in inhuman contortions, seizing up, and finally going limp. The PCs will see the NPC's ghost rise from his body and float away. It looks back, with its arms outstretched toward its body, as if yearning to return.

The player characters should now realize their peril. Their souls are somehow being stolen by the zone. If they remain here, they will eventually all collapse and die, condemned to spend eternity with the other millions of ghosts here.

OPTIONS

Leave Now:

They may "chicken out" and leave the planet, resulting in the eventual death of a large number of crewmembers and

a lot of unanswered questions. This will yield scorn from the admiral upon the ship's return and will spell the end of a captain's career.

Mind Meld: A Vulcan may try to mind meld with a passing ghost to get more information. If so, the Vulcan will gain an image of a spirit sitting on a huge throne, along with other images of terror which defy description.

Follow the Leader: They could follow the ghosts into a building, where they will find empty rooms and halls resembling a university. If the PCs continue exploring, wandering from building to building, they eventually find a spirit which sits still on a huge throne. This presence on the throne is the only spirit which will talk to them for any length of time. The spirit identifies itself only as the "Abaddon," and explains that the characters will soon join the other spirits in the massive overmind which makes the zone possible. If any character rolls his Trivia: Earth Literature or Trivia: Earth Religions skill successfully, he remembers that Abaddon was the angel in the bottomless pit in the final book of the Bible.

This creature then reveals in his conversation the nature of the zone: It is a giant brain which uses souls, sapient life forms' Psi Potential, as individual cells. The brain acquires more souls to increase its cogitative capacity. Soon, it will be strong enough to begin the assembly of locomotion appendages. Essentially, the zone is a huge creature which is building itself, soul-cell by soul-cell, and its goals are not friendly to humanoid life! Should the characters try to kill the Abaddon, they will find that their phasers do not affect it. In fact, the entire planet is impervious to any physical attack. If the PCs leave the presence of the Abaddon and return to the quad, they will once more meet a throng of moving souls. One of these will be recognizable to anyone who rolls his Trivia: Earth History skill or less on D100 (if no one rolls it, the person with the lowest roll succeeds). Characters who succeed recognize the spirit of Colin Endem.

COLIN ENDEM

Colin was a leader of psi research for the Federation 60 years ago. He pioneered some of the core theories on psi powers in humans and was leader of the Federation Project on Extradimensional and Psionic Research on Rigel. Fifty-eight years ago he disappeared from the Federation and was presumed dead.

Colin will speak to the PCs even if they don't talk to him. He explains that he's trapped here with these other beings, and that the PCs will soon be captured as well. If the PCs have not come up with a plan to free their ship, Colin will suggest that he and the captured crew join their psi strengths together to hold the Abaddon temporarily. While it is held, the ship can escape the zone. The captured crewmembers realize this would spell their eventual deaths, as their bodies will soon fail without their souls.

The PCs may be able to formulate a better plan. While the Abaddon is held, Colin and the crewmembers can take control of the soul-mind and use it to add substance to the Abaddon's body. The *Enterprise* crew can then trap it, using the transporter (beaming it up and then "holding" it in transit). Once the transporter has "captured" it, the crew can disperse/kill it by scattering it, one atom at a time, throughout space.

CONCLUSION

Once enough of the Abaddon is dispersed/dead, the souls it has collected will disappear to wherever souls are supposed to go. The souls of any crew whose bodies are in a coma will return to the bodies. If a soul's body has died or been seriously injured, the person will not recover. The zone will dissolve once the Abaddon is dead. The visage of Colin Endem will appear on the bridge and thank the PCs for their assistance. His last words will be, "May you each find your own inner peace." Ω

