

Pieces of You

by Dave Biggins

INTRODUCTION

“Pieces of You” is an introductory adventure designed for the *Star Trek: Roleplaying Game*. In this adventure the characters deal with the consequences of a maverick scientist’s attempt to contact beings living in subspace. The adventure centers on the familiar setting of Deep Space Nine and is well suited for beginning players. Narrators will require the *Star Trek: Roleplaying Game Player’s Guide* and *Narrator’s Guide*.

This adventure is appropriate for civilians (particularly merchants), Starfleet officers, and/or members of the Bajoran militia. It need not take place on Deep Space Nine—instead the Narrator can shift the location to match his or her series. In the event your series is set on a starship, it can take place during one of the Crew’s ports of call. The archetype templates found on pages 22-27 of the *Player’s Guide* are suitable for use with this adventure. Make sure to allow players to spend their species skill picks (Int x 2) as per the sidebar on page 85 when using these archetypes.

BACKGROUND

In the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode “Schisms,” the crew of the *U.S.S. Enterprise* encountered Solanagen-based entities living in subspace. These entities performed medical experiments on the crew in an attempt to understand our dimension. Through the efforts of the crew, contact was severed and the entities were never heard from again—until now.

Doctor Brian Kaye, a brilliant scientist, learned of this encounter. Though saddened to learn no attempt at communication was made, he was thrilled with the prospect making first contact himself. Ignoring Federation protocols, he secretly designed a device to safely open a portal into subspace. Kaye hired a merchant (perhaps one of the PCs) to acquire the one part needed to complete his scheme—a molecular phase inverter.

Impatient with the wait, Kaye obtained a phase inverter on his own, activated the device, and entered subspace. Much to his horror, he learned the Solanagen-based entities viewed the denizens of real space as animals, scientific curiosities on which to perform medical experiments. Instead of being an ambassador of good will, Doctor Kaye found himself a subject for vivisection. So the subspace aliens could acquire more test subjects, they implanted Kaye with a chip, so he could “tag” his fellow organisms. Then, he was released.

DOCTOR KAYE, I PRESUME?

The story begins on Deep Space Nine, a space station administered by Starfleet. Here, on the Federation frontier, Doctor Kaye hoped to conduct his experiments quietly,

and far from official interference. He arrived several weeks ago, and obtained accommodations on the space station.

At DS9, one of the player characters hopes to turn a tidy profit selling a molecular phase inverter, the story’s “McGuffin.” In the event the character is a smuggler rather than a legitimate merchant, tell the player that the inverter was stolen (whether or not he did the stealing we leave to you). In the event none of the characters are merchants but rather members of Starfleet or the Bajoran militia, then drop the inverter entirely; they stumble on the story when Doctor Kaye appears.

His or her customer is Doctor Brian Kaye, a maverick exobiologist rumored to have been discharged by Starfleet for unorthodox first contact procedures. The PCs know him on sight (unless they play Starfleet or Bajoran militia officers, in which case they’ve never seen him before). On the Promenade, he ambles up to them, disheveled and hollow-eyed. He grabs a PC and rants hysterically about an “enemy outside of space.” Due to his hysteria, the PCs cannot get him to clarify his statement coherently. He continues grasping the character and raving, until he is in some way incapacitated (by a nerve pinch or hypospray, for example). If told that they have his inverter, the wild-eyed Doctor only screams “It’s too late!”

Doctor Kaye requires medical treatment. If the PCs leave him to his own devices, station security intercepts him and throws him into the brig. In the event the PCs are station personnel, Captain Sisko (in a “walk-on” role) assigns them to investigate Doctor Kaye’s sudden lapse in sanity; if officers from a visiting starship, they can be “loaned” to Sisko for the job—they’re already emotionally involved. If the PCs are civilians, have them overhear bits and pieces of the information below in Promenade gossip (skip over “The Infirmary” scene).

The Infirmary

When Doctor Kaye regains consciousness, he is both calm and lucid. He has no idea of what transpired on the Promenade but would like to be released soon. If the PCs bring up the subject of the inverter he was attempting to acquire, he begins to sweat profusely as his heart rate begins to skyrocket. He has no explanation for this reaction. He only wants the inverter taken away. A successful TN 10 Empathy or Telepathy test confirms he is telling the truth. A character making a successful Medicine (Psychology) test at TN 10 theorizes that he subconsciously block some traumatic event from his memory.

In the event that one of the characters works in sickbay and scans him with a medical tricorder, have them make a TN 15 Investigate test. If successful, he discovers tetryon emissions coming from Doctor Kaye—subatomic particles existing ordinarily in subspace. With an Extraordinary Success, the character pinpoints the source as a microchip im-

planted in the dermis of Kaye's right hand. With a successful TN 10 Medicine (Surgery) test the chip can be removed for analysis. Lacking a doctor in the group, Doctor Bashir (in a "walk-on") can make these skill tests.

The chip is not a product of the technology of any known species. Analysis takes quite some time, requiring an extended Systems Engineering (Robotics) test, each turn represents an hour. When the total reaches 30, the Crewman discovers the chip's function: it is a molecular assembler that disperses nanites into Doctor Kaye's sweat glands. The nanites are designed to emit tetryons when in contact with carbon based organisms.

A scan of player characters who made physical contact with Doctor Kaye—a TN 10 Investigate test—reveals that they also now emit tetryons. The others do not, unless they touch Kaye or another PC. Neither the PCs nor Doctor Bashir can devise a way to neutralize the nanites (though you can ask for a nearly impossible Medicine test).

The scene ends when either Doctor Kaye passes out from exhaustion or Doctor Bashir insists Kaye needs his rest. They can come back later. Questioning stops until "Bad Memories."

On the Promenade

The PCs may want to question possible friends and acquaintances about Doctor Kaye. Questioning merchants on the Promenade, they learn Doctor Kaye was a friendly and outgoing individual who took an active interest in the traditions of each of their peoples. As to what caused him to go mad, no one knows for sure. His neighbors have little more to offer.

There is one notable difference—Quark. When the PCs ask him about Kaye, he becomes evasive. He doesn't want to answer questions about Kaye, pretending to be busy. PCs can attempt a TN 10 Savvy reaction test to detect the lie. Even if this fails, when Quark says he doesn't know any Kaye, Rom disagrees with him. Under duress, Quark admits that Kaye "may" have asked him where he might "obtain" a phaser inverter, and that Quark "might" have "acquired" one for him. Quark doesn't know why Kaye wanted the inverter.

Characters who investigate his quarters find it in shambles. What was once a moderate sized machine lies smashed in pieces on the floor. An extended Repair test is needed to piece the machine together. A second extended test, this time using Space Sciences (Subspace Theory), is needed to learn its function—a device meant to open a portal into subspace. In both tests, the desired test result is 25, with each turn representing an hour's work.

Bad Memories

Doctor Kaye's recent memories can be regained in three ways: extensive psychological counseling, hypnosis, or a mind meld. He agrees to psychological counseling immediately. Hypnosis or a mind meld requires some convincing on the Crew's part. This can be roleplayed, as a character tries to convince Doctor Kaye of his or her discretion, or as an opposed Persuade (Oratory) Test versus Doctor Kaye's Willpower reaction. It's important for the

PCs not to push too hard or else Doctor Kaye closes up and offers no assistance.

Roleplaying an extensive counseling session with Doctor Kaye requires the character prod him into thinking of events before the mental "blackout." Information should be doled out slowly and in order:

- He read of a situation where he felt a potential first contact went to waste.
- This event took place on a Federation starship.
- The entities approached the Federation crew, not vice-versa.
- The beings exist in subspace.
- Doctor Kaye built a portal into subspace and met the beings.
- The beings are curious about life in normal space but do not recognize us as life-forms.
- Upon a table he saw a partially dissected humanoid.
- One of the beings poked Doctor Kaye with a glowing rod and he lost consciousness.

Alternatively, this can be revealed bit by bit with an extended Medicine (Psychology) or Persuade test at TN 10. For every five points the PC tallies, read one of the bullets listed above. In the event of a Dramatic Failure, Doctor Kaye ends the session in a fit of terror. Assume each turn equates to fifteen minutes of time. Talking him into another counseling session requires the opposed Persuade (Oratory) test described above.

An opposed Indoctrinate (Hypnosis) or TN Mind Meld test against the Doctor's Willpower reaction yields the same results. Play out the encounter as the PC pulls away the layers of the Doctor's subconscious. These methods are much faster; only one roll is required to get all the information above. On the negative side, they are far more risky. In the event of a Dramatic Failure, Doctor Kaye falls catatonic and should be removed from play for the rest of the episode.

If a character feeds this information into the station's computers, have the player roll a TN 5 Computer Use (Research) test. If successful, they learn of the *Enterprise's* earlier encounter with the Solanagen-based life-forms—that on stardate 46154.2 Solanagen-based entities kidnapped crewmembers of the *Enterprise-D* and performed medical experiments on them; they barely escaped the encounter.

TERRORS OF THE NIGHT

At some point in the story, night comes and the characters need their rest. This encounter could occur before the PCs have a chance to further question Doctor Kaye, which builds suspense, or afterward, which confirms their findings. Any character who made physical contact with Doctor Kaye have an eventful night ahead. Unless the PCs discovered their own nanite infection, the tetryons they now emit act as a homing beacon. Some time in the night, while they sleep, the character is abducted into subspace.

Abducted characters find themselves on the floor of an alien laboratory, sinister machines lining the walls. There appear to be no doors. Several hooded figures (one per player character) hover around a humanoid lying on an alien surgical table. The humanoid's thorax stands exposed,

as though she's being dissected. She appears conscious, yet oblivious to her surroundings. These Solanagen-based entities, wielding glowing rods, turn their attention from the specimen to the PCs...

Since the characters were in bed when abducted, they have neither communicators nor weapons. Treat the aliens' glowing rods as stunrods (page 185 of the *Player's Guide*). Despite their valiant efforts, the PCs cannot survive for long (if they best the aliens, simply send in reinforcements until all the PCs have been stunned).

The PCs wake up back in their beds feeling utterly exhausted and remember nothing of their ordeal. At the Narrator's discretion have seemingly innocent daily occurrences strike fear or panic into the PCs. For example, while having breakfast one of the PCs might freeze in terror at the sight of his knife, or a routine diagnostic might inspire horrifying feelings or anxiety.

In addition, temporarily modify their Health by -1. Medical exams reveal that they've undergone surgery—parts of their anatomy are missing! The missing organs are not life threatening, merely uncomfortable. A human, for example, might miss a kidney, while a Vulcan may miss his inner eyelids. The application of the proper medicine, reflected in a race-specific TN 5 Medicine test, counteracts the Health penalty.

With this revelation, the PCs might try a computer search of bizarre murders throughout the Alpha Quadrant. A successful TN 5 Computer Use (Research) Test turns up some interesting facts: a murder on Vulcan where the heart was removed; on Bolarus IX, the murder victim was found without a skeleton; the lungs were missing from a Human colonist on Rigel IV. Each of these crimes remain unsolved.

TAKING IT HOME

After proper research and the events listed above, the characters should be sufficiently curious to pursue the truth. The Crew can open a portal to the subspace laboratory using Doctor Kaye's machine. To repair the device requires a successful TN 15 Repair test. Reduce this to TN 10 test if they accessed Doctor Kaye's computer records earlier.

The machine thrums to life and creates a rippling effect like waves of heat in the desert. Determine who steps through the portal and what each brings with him. They suddenly reappear in the alien laboratory. Once the PCs enter the laboratory, Doctor Kaye's machine unexpectedly short-circuits. The portal closes and the characters find themselves trapped in subspace!

Initially, the laboratory is unoccupied, except for the humanoid. She sits on the surgical table, looking inquisitively at the characters. Her mind cannot comprehend fear, so she makes no attempt to flee throughout the scene, nor does she attack. She does not speak unless spoken to. When she does speak, she has no recollection of a life beyond the laboratory's walls nor any memories before the present.

Scanning her with a medical tricorder requires a TN 10 Investigate test. If successful, the character discovers

the humanoid is a golem: a conglomeration of "parts" from twenty-eight different Alpha Quadrant species. In the event of an Extraordinary Success, the character identifies the organs of the previously kidnapped characters. Furthermore, a successful TN 10 Medicine (Anatomy) test reveals a signal transponder implanted in the golem's brain.

The PCs may find themselves in a moral conundrum. Although the golem exists due to the medical crimes of the Solanagen-based entities, any attempt at redress would result in the death of an innocent, and apparently intelligent, life form.

Before a debate can begin in earnest, a concealed door opens and a group of Solanagen-based beings enter the laboratory. Their hoods are pulled back, revealing their arthropod-like features. They chatter excitedly to one another in a series of startled clicks. It takes a minute or two for the characters' universal translators to grasp the language. During the process, they pick out brief phrases:

- "...Pack-mentality..."
- "...Tool use..."
- "...No proof of intelligence..."

The entities draw their glowing stunrods and move toward the PCs.

DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION

If the characters attempt to talk, the aliens stop in mid stride. As the language adjustments continue, the entities catch words and phrases of their own language—and it surprises them. Although the entities explain their actions, they do not apologize for them. In their minds, they did not remove anything critical from each of the humanoids they "acquired."

The Solanagen-based life-forms equate intelligence with comprehension of language. Since the denizens of the Alpha Quadrant did not speak intelligibly, in their minds they possessed no level of intelligence. They designed the golem as a "biological probe"—it was to infiltrate the societies of real space and relay information concerning their behavior and social structure back to subspace. Since the characters demonstrate indications of sapience, they offer the golem to the PCs as their ambassador. Perhaps, they reason, if the PCs are intelligent, perhaps the golem is, too. Regardless of the PCs' decision, the Solanagen-based entities return the characters to normal space.

TALK IS CHEAP

Should characters let their phasers do the talking for them, play the combat out. Assume one entity for each character, with another two entities entering the laboratory each turn as "reinforcements." As before, the PCs can expect to be overwhelmed.

At some point the characters may try to find an escape to normal space using the same device used by the Solanagen-based entities. Particularly when it becomes clear they fight a hopeless battle. Finding the proper machine requires an extended Systems Engineering (Tetryon Emitter) test. When the tally reaches thirty, the character discovers the proper device. (Characters engaged in this search

cannot participate in combat.) Activating the equipment calls for a TN 15 System Operations (Tetryon Emitter) test. Alternatively, PCs remaining behind in normal space may try to repair Doctor Kaye's machine, accomplished with a successful TN 10 Repair test. The Doctor, if available, can repair his equipment in only five rounds.

If characters end up stunned yet again, they awaken back on Deep Space Nine with their organs intact (except for those stolen earlier). As far as the Crewmembers know, the Solanagen-based entities are never heard from again. A few days later, they find the golem wandering about the Promenade, undoubtedly putting together her report.

CONCLUSION

The end of the adventure can go in any direction. It could lead to sequels including acclimating the golem to the societies of the Alpha Quadrant (and giving her a name), or debating her validity as a sapient being. Or the actions of the Solanagen-based entities could cause rumblings in the UFP; some more violent species, or relatives of the earlier murder victims, might look for revenge. The characters may have also had an opportunity to make a new contact in the form of Quark.

Upon successful completion, award the characters the following:

- Determining the nature of the tetryon particles and assisting Doctor Kaye: 500 points divided amongst the players
- Putting an end to the Solanagen-based entities' actions (diplomatically or otherwise): 500 points divided amongst the players
- Working to resolve the situation peacefully, rather than through force: 100 points
- Attempting to role play: 100 points

SUPPORTING CAST

Solanagen-Based Entities

The antagonists of this story, these life-forms live in subspace. They abduct and conduct experiments on the inhabitants of the Alpha Quadrant out of scientific curiosity. They do not realize the subjects of these experiments are intelligent beings like themselves. Somewhat insect-like in appearance, they communicate in a series of rapidly varying "clicks."

Attributes: Agl 6, Int 10 (+2), Per 8 (+1), Prs 4 (-1), Str 6, Vit 6

Reactions: Quik +1, Savv +0, Stam +0, Will +2

Skills: Knowledge: Armed Combat: Melee Weapon +5, Culture +5, Engineering: Systems Engineering +5, Medicine +5, Science: Life Science +5, System Operation +5

Edges: Multitasking

Flaws: Low Pain Threshold

Health: 6

Courage: None