

= Lonely Among Us =

" Lonely Among Us " is the seventh episode of the American science fiction television series Star Trek : The Next Generation that originally aired on November 2 , 1987 , in broadcast syndication in the United States . It was written by D. C. Fontana , based on a story by Michael Halperin . It was the first episode of The Next Generation to be directed by Cliff Bole .

Set in the 24th century , the series follows the adventures of the crew of the Starfleet starship Enterprise @-@ D. In this episode , as the ship is en route to an interplanetary conference with delegates from the Selay and Antican races on board , a non @-@ corporeal alien entity takes possession of various Enterprise crew members , including Captain Jean @-@ Luc Picard ( Patrick Stewart ) .

This episode marked the first appearance of Star Trek : Deep Space Nine recurring cast member Marc Alaimo in a Star Trek series , as well as the second appearance of Colm Meaney who would later play The Next Generation and Deep Space Nine character Miles O 'Brien . The Antican and Selay make @-@ up were created by Michael Westmore from designs by Andrew Probert . Following the airing of the episode , fans wrote in to complain about a scene referencing cannibalism . Reviews were mostly negative , with criticism directed at the writing in particular .

= = Plot = =

The Enterprise is en route to the planet " Parliament " with delegates from two warring planets in the Beta Renner system , the reptilian Selay and the canine Antican , when the ship encounters a strange energy cloud . Unseen by the crew , Lt. Worf ( Michael Dorn ) is hit with a strange energy discharge as the ship passes the cloud , causing him to become violent . Doctor Beverly Crusher ( Gates McFadden ) sedates Worf and brings him to the sickbay , but is also infused with the energy as she examines his body . Crusher begins to act oddly to those around her and goes to the bridge , asking questions about the ship 's navigational functions . When she questions Lt. Cdr . Data ( Brent Spiner ) at one of the science stations , the energy sparks between her and the console , leaving her confused as to why she is on the bridge .

The ship suddenly begins to malfunction and Captain Picard sends Assistant Engineer Singh ( Kavi Raz ) to investigate the cause . Singh is later found dead near a computer link , and Picard orders a murder investigation , considering the alien delegates to be prime suspects . Data investigates the murder in the manner of fictional detective Sherlock Holmes , and determines that the delegates were not responsible . Meanwhile , Counselor Deanna Troi ( Marina Sirtis ) uses hypnosis on both Worf and Crusher , finding that both recall being invaded by some entity during their blackouts . The ship suddenly drops again out of warp , and as Picard investigates the readouts at a bridge console , the strange energy transfers into him . The bridge crew becomes suspicious of Picard 's actions after noting that all Enterprise systems are back to normal and that Picard has ordered them to return to the cloud .

The senior officers attempt to plead with Picard to undergo a medical examination and to step down from command , but he refuses . When they return to the cloud , Picard announces that they had picked up an entity previously when they passed the cloud , and now Picard and the entity are one . Under its influence , Picard plans to transport themselves back into the cloud , and he shoots energy at the bridge crew when they try to stop him . The crew are unable to prevent Picard from beaming off the ship . The crew spend hours trying to locate Picard to no avail , so they are forced to accept he is beyond recovery and prepare to leave . However , Troi senses the Captain 's essence nearby , and Picard manages to signal the crew through the ship 's computers . Data is able to reverse the transport , reconstituting Picard without the entity . After determining that Picard is himself again , lacking the memories since he was taken over by the entity , the Enterprise continues onto Parliament .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing and casting = = =

The original story by Michael Halperin contained a different subplot involving a problem with the dilithium in the warp drive of the Enterprise . The diplomatic conference was added by D.C. Fontana when it was developed into a teleplay . Fontana had previously worked on Star Trek : The Original Series , including the episode " Journey to Babel " . " Lonely Among Us " was subsequently compared to " Journey to Babel " , which Fontana denied , saying , " I wrote ' Journey to Babel ' and I wrote this too , and I feel there is a difference . There 's a definite delineation and separation here , both in intent and content . " Director Cliff Bole did not recall much of the episode later , but did not think much of the script , saying " The subject matter affects the end product . There 's some better written shows , obviously . " It was the first episode of The Next Generation to be directed by Bole , who had previously worked on shows such as V and The Six Million Dollar Man .

Colm Meaney made his second appearance in The Next Generation after he originally appeared in the pilot , " Encounter at Farpoint " , as a conn ensign on the bridge . In this episode he played a security ensign , as it was not until season two that he began to play the recurring character of Miles O 'Brien , which would later become a series regular on Star Trek : Deep Space Nine . Another Deep Space Nine actor who made his first Trek appearance in this episode was Marc Alaimo , who played an Antican who was unnamed on screen , but referred to in the script as Badar N 'D'D . Alaimo went on to play several other roles in The Next Generation including as the Cardassian Gul Macet in " The Wounded " , before being cast as Gul Dukat in DS9 . John Durbin appeared as the Selay leader , and would also go on to appear as a Cardassian later in the series , as Gul Lemec in " Chain of Command " . Kavi Raz played Assistant Engineer Singh , although as he was unavailable for a re @-@ shoot , in one scene he was replaced by a wig on a chair .

= = = Make @-@ up and costuming = = =

The Selay and the Anticans were nicknamed the " snakes and the dogs " by the production staff . The designs were created by Andrew Probert , who had previously been responsible for the design of the Enterprise @-@ D. The make @-@ up used on them were created by supervisor Michael Westmore , which involved full head pieces and hands for two Anticans and five Selay . Because of the limited space available , the Anticans were made internally in the Paramount make @-@ up studio while the Selay were outsourced to a different studio to sculpt the head . Once completed , a mold was made of the Selay head and the unpainted pieces were cast in latex and sent to Westmore to complete . It was intended to cast them out of lightweight polyurethane , but the first batch of Selay heads came out really heavy .

Westmore had time to re @-@ cast two of the heads from a soft foam rubber , but as each took five hours to make , there wasn 't enough time to re @-@ make all five . The heavier versions of the Selay heads were worn by actors in the background of the scenes , although Westmore described them as being " very uncomfortable " . The Antican mask didn 't allow for any movement at all with the exception of the actors being able to poke their tongues through the mouth opening . Although this is the only major appearance of either the Anticans or the Selay , they continued to be used as background extras in other episodes of The Next Generation and Deep Space Nine . Westmore repainted the Selay masks prior to reusing them in order to give the scales more of a three @-@ dimensional look .

This was the first appearance of The Next Generation era Starfleet dress uniforms . They were based on those used by the Royal Navy in the 18th century , but would be slightly altered when they re @-@ appeared during season two . One piece of a costume introduced in this episode which never returned was the surgical cap and eyepiece worn by Doctor Crusher .

= = Reception and home media release = =

" Lonely Among Us " originally aired in broadcast syndication on November 2 , 1987 . It received a

12 @.@ 1 rating , meaning that it was seen by 12 @.@ 1 percent of all households . This was an increase from the previous week 's " Where No One Has Gone Before " which received a rating of 10 @.@ 5 .

Following the broadcast , the producers received a significant amount of mail from fans criticising the apparent cannibalism on the part of the Anticans in this episode . Several reviewers rewatched the episode following the end of the series . Keith DeCandido reviewed " Lonely Among Us " for Tor.com in May 2011 . He gave it a score of three out of ten and was disinterested in the episode , finding the alien delegation subplot to be " mostly just silly " , and the majority of the episode was a " weak @-@ beer mystery that 's mostly an excuse for Gates McFadden and Sir Patrick Stewart to act weird and for Brent Spiner to be a silly Sherlock " . James Hunt thought that Spiner 's Sherlock impression was " completely brilliant " , in his review for the website Den of Geek in October 2012 . He thought that the episode shared some similarities with the third season of The Original Series , saying " By which I mean it looks cheap and appears to have been written by a child , in yellow crayon . "

Cast member Wil Wheaton rewatched the episode for AOL TV in November 2006 . He criticised the writing of Fontana in this episode , saying that around this time she appeared on a panel at a convention about how to solve " The Wesley Problem " , but when rewatching the episode he thought that " maybe instead of sitting on this panel and trashing me , D.C Fontana could have written intelligent dialogue for me and helped solve the " Wesley problem " herself . I don 't know , maybe she tried to do that and didn 't get a lot of support from the rest of the producers and writing staff , but even I know of Dr. Channing 's theory of not writing cliched dialogue for kids in science fiction , and then blaming the actor who is forced to deliver it . " Overall he criticised the " very stiff " dialogue throughout the episode , and called the set @-@ up " incredibly forced " . He did highlight that Data acting out as Sherlock Holmes laid the foundation of future episodes which would expand on this .

Zack Handlen reviewed the episode for The A.V. Club in April 2010 . He too thought that the alien delegation subplot was poorly executed in a comedic fashion , and said that this " combined with the slow pace and a number of dialog scenes that can be charitably described as ' character development ' ( or more accurately as ' padding ' ) , this is an unmemorable episode that shows a series still unsure of its greatest strengths . " He gave the episode a grade of C- .

The first home media release of " Lonely Among Us " was on VHS cassette , appearing on April 1 , 1992 in the United States and Canada . The episode was later included on the Star Trek : The Next Generation season one DVD box set , released in March 2002 . The most recent release was as part of the season one Blu @-@ ray set on July 24 , 2012 .