

43 Space Opera Adventure Seeds



Introduction

No matter how good a gamemaster is, sooner or later they're going to run into a blank when it comes to deciding an adventure for the next session. The great advantage, and sometime the greatest problem with space opera settings is that the range of adventure possibilities is huge. The sky (indeed, the entire galaxy!) is the limit.

43 Space Opera Adventure Seeds

offers just what its name suggests – forty-three different adventure ideas for you to use as a basis for your own scenario. These seeds can be used as-is, combined together with other seeds, or simply used as a springboard for your mind to come up with new and different adventures.

Most of the seeds included here simply present a situation, allowing the gamemaster to come up with an explanation that fits their campaign and the setting they are using. A few seeds do include suggestions on what is going on. As always the gamemaster is free to use or ignore the suggestions as they see fit!

Raising an Army

The aging leader of the planet the characters are visiting is raising an army and space fleet because he is convinced that a nearby planet is planning to invade. Some people are whispering that the old man has finally gone senile, as there is little independent evidence to suggest that an invasion is imminent. However few people are willing to say anything publicly against the leader as he is extremely paranoid about “spies” and has the law enforcement agencies out rounding up anyone saying anything contrary to what he is saying.

New Laws

Overnight a large group of new laws are brought into effect. The government claims that they are to protect its citizens and culture from any offworld interference. For offworlders currently on the planet the laws seem to born from extreme xenophobia, as they give the authorities the ability to detain anyone not a citizen for any reason (or even no reason). The government has shut down the planets starports, and even helping an offworlder leave the planet is illegal. The characters need to escape the planet before they are arrested and thrown into a “re-education centre” (ie: slave camp).

Insect Swarms

A plague of small insects suddenly appears, flying around all over the place and crawling into places they aren't supposed to be (food, water, etc). They are mostly harmless, just extremely annoying. Unfortunately they seem to have a nasty



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SOS – Space Opera Support

The Space Opera Support line from Polgarus Games is an aid for busy gamemasters running a game in a space opera setting. No setting is assumed – the products are intended to be as generic as possible so they can be used in most settings. If you need quick adventure ideas, a planet or space station for the PCs to visit, or even passengers to travel on the PCs ship and cause trouble, Space Opera Support is the answer!

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habit of getting inside electronic devices and causing them to malfunction. To make matters worse, the insects seem to be immune to current insecticides. In addition to dealing with the problems the insects cause, the characters will need to discover if the insects are a natural occurrence, or the test phase of a more sinister plot.

Disappearances

The characters begin to find that items around them start to go missing for no obvious reason. The items can disappear within moments – a character only has to look away for an instant to have the item vanish, although they never disappear in plain sight. However the use of video cameras will capture the process – the object seems to dematerialise. Scientists with sensitive equipment might start to notice that they are getting strange readings from a certain area (either a character, an object a character possesses, or even the entire ship!) It's as if the laws of physics are starting to break down near the object with the strange readings. The disappearances will continue to get worse unless something is done.

Cache of Goodies

The characters learn that a group/organization has a large warehouse full of salvaged high-tech items. These items have all been stolen from genius inventors or advanced alien cultures, or discovered in ancient ruins or on abandoned alien space ships. For the most part the group is keeping them locked away and out of the general public's eye, although they do have some people working to reverse engineer some of the objects. The characters need to retrieve an object from this warehouse as part of their current adventure. Needless to say, security is tight and finding the object in such a large place may not be easy (especially since the filing system seems to be haphazard at best). To make matters worse, not all the objects in the warehouse are exactly safe to be around...

Friendly Murder

The characters are travelling with a friend (an established NPC) when the authorities stop them. Their friend is wanted for murder – several witnesses saw the NPC do the murder, and it was also caught on video. The only problem is that the NPC was with the characters at the time of the murder on a totally different planet!

Communications Blackout

The characters are talking to someone via phone when suddenly communications go dead. Nothing connected to the public communication systems works while radios, etc are also jammed. Panic starts to set in where the characters are currently staying as people begin to suggest all sorts of crazy explanations for the blackout, from a terrorist attack to an alien invasion. Others try to calm everyone down, saying it is simply a fault. But perhaps one of the crazy suggestions isn't so crazy...

Forgotten Journal

One of the characters comes across an old journal hidden in a secret location (inside some furniture, beneath a floorboard, behind a brick in a wall, etc). The journal was written by Dr Tyrone Hackathorn, a famous professor of archaeology who went missing two decades ago. It details his discovery on a planet of ancient ruins that he believed were not built by any currently known (past or present) alien race.

The journal doesn't provide exact directions to the planet (although it gives hints), but the location of the ruins on the planet is very precise. The final pages talk about members of the expedition beginning to mysteriously die, yet at the same time Dr Hackathorn is getting more and more excited about the finds on the site (technology beyond anything currently available, as well as some sort of huge library). The last entry is cut off mid-sentence, and there appears to be traces of blood on the page. How the journal came to be wherever the character found it is only one of many mysteries!

Techno-shock

The characters are visiting a planet that until recently was fairly low-tech. Thanks to some rather lucrative deals struck between the government and a major corporation, the tech level of the planet has increased rapidly. Unfortunately not everyone on the planet is happy with the sudden changes – the sudden technological advances have made a large number of people feel displaced from society. These feelings of insecurity have led to increasing resentment, and have finally boiled over into anger. Throughout the planet groups of people are starting to attack the new technology in streets and in shops. Anyone wearing obvious signs of advanced technology is also targeted, although so far no one has been killed (yet). The characters may try to help diffuse the situation, or simply find a way to escape (which may be difficult, as the starport is currently surrounded by armed and angry mobs).

Ripper's Back

Men are starting to turn up dead throughout the city where the characters are currently staying, their bodies cut open and with their internal organs and reproductive system surgically removed (some of the removed parts are left next to the victim, while others are taken). The victims are all male prostitutes, and autopsies have shown that they were alive, conscious and unrestrained while they were operated on! The police are being tight-lipped, but at the moment seem unable (or unwilling) to solve the murders.

A New Home

The characters are approached by a group of people who need their help. They are a persecuted minority on the current planet, and wish to move to a new place where they can start again free of the current prejudice. They need the characters help, either for transporting themselves and/or goods, or simply to provide security. Unfortunately the act of the group leaving the planet has stirred up even more resentment among some of their more extreme haters (“What, we’re not good enough for them now!?”), and they plan to make an example of the leaving minority. As the characters have been seen associating with them, they are also considered targets (even if they have decided not to help them).

Hargon's Pirates

Rumours are flying. A new group of pirates, headed by a man simply known as Hargon, has been raiding the space lanes. Passengers and crew are spared (as long as they don’t resist), but cargo has been stolen and ships disabled. So far the authorities have had no luck in tracking the pirates down, although the huge reward they are offering has attracted several famous pirate hunters (who have either found nothing or gone missing). Assuming the characters don’t decide to go pirate hunting themselves, they unexpectedly get involved when information linking Hargon’s Pirates to the galactic government falls into their hands. The characters will need to find allies while avoiding the government and the “pirates” if they want to get out of the situation alive.

Language Barrier

The characters wake up one morning to discover that while they can still talk to each other and understand what each other are saying, they can no longer understand what other people around them are saying. Nor can other people understand what they are saying if they try to speak to them. Even written communication no longer works – the characters can read existing writing okay, and pass notes to each other, but any notes they give to other people (and other people give to them) seem to be gibberish.

Special Delivery

One of the characters receives a strange glass ball via mail, sender unknown. The inside of the ball appears to be some sort of cloudy swirling liquid. If a character stares intently for a long time at the liquid, there will be brief moments where it will seem like they can see a strange object of some kind in the liquid. This strange shape will immediately disappear as soon as it is noticed, and even if several characters are all staring at the same time only one will see it. Despite appearing to be glass, the object seems almost indestructible.

But the mysterious properties of the glass ball aren’t the only strange thing. Soon after receiving the ball, previously unknown groups will start attacking the character, trying to retrieve the ball from them.

These groups don't know why they are supposed to retrieve the ball (or what the ball is), and none of the groups knows anything about the other groups.

Short on Gravity

While the characters are in an orbital starport, the gravity to the station is suddenly cut. Chaos reigns throughout the station as people and objects start floating around. Not only is there the danger that people not used to zero-g may injure themselves, but objects (and liquids) are now floating around and may prove hazardous to everyone. Some opportunistic people decide to use the chaos to engage in some thievery. There is also the question of whether the gravity being cut was an accident, or deliberate. And what will happen in the station when gravity is restored and all the objects (and perhaps even people) fall from where they are currently floating?

Prophecy of Doom

While passing through a city, starport or space station, the characters run across an old man dressed in very shabby (but once very fine and colourful) clothes who obviously hasn't had a bath for a while. Without warning the man points at one of the characters and makes a prediction about an unlikely (and bad) event that will occur. Surprisingly, within 24 hours the event happens. If the characters try to track him down again, the man will point to a different character and make another prediction. The man will ignore all questions put to him, only make one prediction for the group at a time, and the prediction will always be about something bad happening. It will also always come true.

Like Looking in a Mirror

People have been turning up dead in the city that the characters next arrive in, all brutally murdered in the most horrible ways. But the strange fact that has caught everyone's attention about the murders is that all the victims have been exactly the same, right down to the same DNA (in other words, the murder victims were all clones). And strangely enough, one of the characters happens to look exactly like the victims.

Both the media and the authorities are going to be very interested in talking to the character to see what they know about the situation (since it is the first time anyone has seen one of the "victims" alive before they have been killed). Is this intended as a message, or is something more sinister going on?

Assassination

As they are wrapping up an adventure, the characters learn that there is a plot to assassinate an important figure (although the details are sketchy). But their attempts to try and warn the figure are rebuffed – they can't get close to the person to warn them personally, and the targets aides all inform the characters that security is so tight that no one could possibly assassinate the figure. Indeed, if the characters try to push the matter too much, the authorities will be called on suspicion that the characters themselves are threatening the important figure!

The characters should get the definite impression that the aides are involved in the assassination plot, and try to get themselves to the event where the assassination is supposed to take place so they can stop it themselves. What they don't realise is that one of the characters has been brainwashed somehow, and is the actual assassin. This seed will work best if the characters have a regular nemesis that they have had several run-ins with previously who is behind the brain-washing.

Terrorist Attack

While in a large building the characters suddenly hear a large explosion and feel the building shake. A bomb has exploded on a lower level. The characters soon learn (via the news, or from announcements over a PA system in the building) that terrorists have wired the building to explode, with the first explosion designed to trap everyone inside and cause panic (it has succeeded at both very well). The terrorists are demanding a huge ransom or they will blow up the entire building, killing everyone inside. The characters need to disable the bombs, but can they trust everyone in the building?

Do I know you?

The characters arrive on a new planet or in a new city and are immediately greeted warmly by people there – workers will ask how they are and if they enjoyed their trip, while random people they pass will nod to them and wish them well, ask how their family is, and bring up details that only a good friend would know. The only problem is the characters have never been to this place before, and don't recognise any of the people who seem to know them!

Fountain of Immortality

The characters learn of a location that is fabled to be a fountain of immortality, providing the secret to eternal life. If they make their way to the location (perhaps at the behest of a patron), they discover that the fountain is actually real (right down to being an actual fountain). A number of people are currently living at the site, who all greet the characters warmly and answer most questions asked about them. They offer the characters proof of the fountain's power by showing that they are immortal (a fact they can easily demonstrate by killing themselves – after a few moments they return to life unharmed). They freely offer the characters the chance to use the fountain.

But there is a secret that they won't reveal. The water of the fountain contains specially programmed nanites that will make the recipient immortal, but they will only work if the person stays within the complex housing the fountain. If the person leaves the complex not only will the nanites stop working, but the person will become extremely sick within an hour or so. They will die several days later unless they are returned to the complex.

Corporate Stalking

The CEO of a large company is in trouble. Someone is stalking him. One by one people who work near or for him (assistants, guards, etc) are being killed. No one ever sees them get killed, and just this morning his personal bodyguard (one of the best money could buy) was found dead. The CEO's apartment has also been broken into several times, but nothing has ever been stolen – items have just been moved around so that he will notice that they are obviously out of place.

The CEO fears that the stalker is getting closer, and unless the stalker is stopped he will soon be killed. The CEO is unwilling to go to the authorities with this problem as some of his business dealings are less than legal, and he fears any investigation by them would uncover the evidence they need to arrest him. He wants the characters help to find and eliminate the stalker by any means necessary.

That Way Madness Lies

The characters are hired to deliver much-needed food supplies to a remote colony. The colonists are grateful, and the characters are invited to stay as honoured guests for several days. Unfortunately someone with a grudge against the colony deliberately contaminated the food the characters delivered with an insanity-causing drug. While normally the drug would take a long time to take effect (due to the low dose used), a few people in the colony are more sensitive to it than the rest. All types of insanity are possible, ranging from talking to invisible people or paranoia through to homicidal tendencies. And as the food continues to be eaten by those so far unaffected, more people begin to suffer from the effects of the drug.

Salvation or Slavery?

A new religion has started on a planet, and is spreading throughout cities like wildfire. To its supporters, it promises hope and salvation from their woes as well as a feeling of belonging. To its detractors, the religion is nothing more than a cult brainwashing their members into giving up their hard-earned money, and in some cases to work in their manufacturing facilities as virtual slaves. The characters are asked to "save" someone who has become a member of the religion (or perhaps an NPC they have relied heavily on in the past has joined and the characters need their help again).

The target has moved to a religious compound to further devote themselves to the teachings of the religion (part of this process is working in the religion's farms and factories). While scoping out the place the characters don't notice anything untoward, and when they finally meet up with the target he or she seems sane, happy, and doesn't want to leave. Is

the religion really about helping people and allowing them to become happy, or is it just a cult using people like slaves?

Crime Spree

A thief is plaguing the planet the characters find themselves on, stealing all manner of small but valuable pieces from museums (jewellery, valuable artefacts, etc). The characters are minding their own business when authorities detain them and demand to search the belongings of one of the characters. When they do, the stolen items are found there! Protests of innocence are ignored as the character is arrested (other characters won't be arrested unless they try to resist, but they will be warned not to leave as the authorities may want to question them later on). The other characters will have to clear the framed character (possibly on the run if they resisted the arrest), and find out who stole the objects and why. As an added twist the planted objects could be fakes – the thief is hoping that by the time the fakes are discovered, he or she will be long gone.

Toxic Sludge

The only water supply for a small colony has become contaminated somehow with a weird sludge that makes anyone who drinks the water sick. Filtering and other decontamination methods that are available don't seem to help. While the colony has some water reserves, and can ship water in (at exurbanite rates) for the short term, to continue to be a viable colony the source of the contamination needs to be discovered and fixed.

After some research, the characters discover that the colonies water supply runs through an underground breeding/hatching area for a rare animal native to the planet. The contamination has come from the animals returning to the site to breed. No one has ever found a breeding site before – the animals are extremely elusive in the wild (the characters are probably seeing the largest number of animals in the one spot ever recorded). The characters could drive off the animals from the site, but will they be dooming all the newborns to death?

Under the Hill

The characters are approached to help out on a mining exploration job, transporting equipment and personnel around a number of locations on a planet. At one of the sites, a large hill covered in trees, the exploration equipment goes berserk. After much adjustment, the head geologist announces that there is a huge slab of metal underneath the ground, and commands everyone to start digging. Two meters under the surface the group hits the metal – and soon discovers that it seems to cover the entire hill. After much work the group realise that the hill is covering some kind of giant space ship, one that has obviously been there for tens of thousands of years and was built by an unknown race. The head geologist, excited by the find (and the thought of being famous), demands that they open the ship and see what is inside...

Hand Made

Not all alien races are treated equally in the galactic community. While visiting a large market centre, the characters see several members of one of the more downtrodden races manning a stall and trying to sell what look to be hand-carved items. The items seem ugly on first glance, but after examining them for a few moments they seem to have a certain unidentifiable charm about them. Unfortunately everyone else, including the surrounding merchants, seem more focused on the race selling the items than on the items themselves. Many people spit or throw food at the stall, while other merchants try to sabotage things (breaking a table leg, accusing them of being thieves, etc). All the while security guards watch, but do nothing (except laugh). No one seems willing to step in, and it seems obvious that unless someone lends the aliens a hand they will be forced to leave.

Sticky Space

While in a remote system, the characters attempt to leave in their ship only to discover that the FTL drive isn't working. All system checks show that the drive is fine – it just seems that the drive no longer allows them to travel faster than light. Other ships in the system begin reporting the same problem. Finally the characters learn that a ship trying to travel to the system had their FTL drive suddenly stop working as they got near to the system – the ship is currently

travelling the rest of the way at normal sub-light speeds, but will take a week to reach the system. It seems that something in the system is disrupting FTL travel. The question is whether it is a natural occurrence, or something artificial.

Slave Trade

The characters come across a crashed vessel on a relatively uninhabited planet. The ship hasn't been totally destroyed, but it has sustained major damage. The pilot was obviously able to bring the ship in for some sort of emergency landing, but it's likely some of the crew were killed in a crash that bad. If the characters land to investigate, they discover the remains of several crewmembers very recently attacked and eaten by native wildlife (the characters may have to deal with several creatures themselves).

Even more disturbing is the discovery that the ship was transporting slaves – the cargo hold is like a scene from a horror movie with dead bodies everywhere, obviously killed in the crash and just left there. If they search, they will find one person still alive (barely). As they are getting ready to leave the wreckage, any characters still on their ship will notice a second ship closing in fast. The slavers have gone looking for their missing shipment, and plan to eliminate (or capture and enslave) anyone who has found proof of their slave trade.

The Test

The characters get a valuable (and credible) lead on a cache of “pirate treasure” – plunder from a famous pirate that attacked the space lanes several years ago, but whose hideout was never found after his ship was destroyed. After tracking down where the hideout is, and dealing with all the security systems and other nasty surprises that have been placed around the place (not to mention other groups who all seem to have the same information) the characters learn what the real prize is. It seems the hideout and rumours are all a test, created by an adventures club who have members across known space. They are seeking new members, and by completing the test the characters are all invited to join the club.

Fast Food Recipes

The owner of a very successful fast food company for the current planet the characters are on approaches the characters. It seems she has a problem. The recipe for the secret sauce used on all their food is known by one man in the company, an old gentleman who the owner teamed up with when she started the company several decades ago. He was unwilling to part with the secret recipe for any money (it was a secret family recipe), but agreed to make the sauce for the company. As a safeguard against the company being ruined if he ever died unexpectedly, he did agree to write the recipe down on a piece of paper that was locked away in a safe.

Unfortunately old age has caught up with the man – the latest batch of the sauce was terrible, and he has admitted that he can't remember the recipe. Even worse, when the safe was opened the piece of paper inside didn't have the recipe, but some sort of riddle. The man remembers that he was worried about the recipe being stolen, so he put the real recipe in a safe hiding place and left the riddle to remind him where that place was. Only now he can't understand the riddle.

The owner of the company needs the recipe ASAP, otherwise they will run out of sauce (and the sauce is the only thing that makes the food taste good). To complicate matters their major competitor has learned about the written copy of the recipe, and is trying to get the copy themselves.

Test Flight

A new form of FTL drive is being tested on a ship in the same system the characters are passing through. Unfortunately others (perhaps an enemy government, or another corporation) want the secrets of the new FTL drive for themselves, and they have hijacked the ship during its test flight. The chief engineer on board manages to escape from the ship and hijackers in an escape pod, and the characters are the ones who find her.

Unfortunately the engineer hit her head during the escape, and is suffering from temporary amnesia (she doesn't have any ID, etc with her, although she is wearing coveralls with the logo of the company that built the experimental FTL drive). As the engineer is the only one who understands how the

new FTL drive works exactly – without her it would take months if not years to reverse engineer – the hijackers are very keen to get her back. The hijackers are ruthless, and will eliminate anyone in their way, but at the same time are trying to be careful and not draw attention to themselves.

Fight Night

The characters receive word about a new fight promotion being set up in the city the characters are currently in. Private invitations are being made to people who look like they might be suitable for the competition (this could be done based on reputation, or by staged fights). While the risk of injury is high, the money on offer is extremely good. What no one is being told is that the “fight promotion” is all a front to test some new military weapons. The successful applicants will have to fight super-soldiers, or even advanced robotic systems. Even if the characters win their fights, they may not be allowed to leave alive now that they have seen the secret weapons being developed and how they are being tested.

Discovering the World

A young man seeking to explore and experience the world, claiming to be the son of a minor noble who has lived a sheltered life, approaches the characters. He would like to join their group and travel with them for a time. He has good combat ability, and doesn't seem naive about how things work (although he may give that impression to make people underestimate him). Soon after joining the group, thugs attack with the obvious intention of trying to kidnap the man. The man (genuinely) doesn't know who they are, although he does admit that his father has enemies.

In fact the man's father is a famous outlaw who has kept his son hidden away for most of his life (the son won't reveal this unless it is obviously necessary – he has spent some time beforehand coming up with a plausible background story). The man left while his father was out pulling off a job – when the father returned, he immediately ordered his men to go retrieve his son as he (rightly) feared that his enemies or the law may try to grab the son to use as leverage.

Virtual World

A new virtual reality game has become a huge hit, selling almost faster than the company can make the hardware needed to play the game. It is being hailed for its amazing realism, with everything looking, sounding and even feeling just like the real world. Unfortunately there is a bug in the game – one that is starting to kill people. The characters either know someone who dies and decide to investigate, or are approached by someone who has found out too much about the bug in the code. The company will stop at nothing to silence anyone who can prove the bug exists, as the backlash against the company would bankrupt them.

Ship Graveyard

A particular government (planetary or galactic) has a policy of never destroying their starships, even if they have reached the end of their useful life. Instead, the ships are stripped of all useful equipment, and then left in a huge graveyard of ships (the idea being that in time of need the ships could be refitted and pressed into service much faster and cheaper than building new ships, giving industry the time it would need to increase starship construction). The characters need to retrieve an object that was hidden on one of the ships while it was in service. Unfortunately security around the Sargasso of Ships (as locals call it) is fairly tight. Not to mention the chance of nasty surprises hidden throughout (and on) the mass of ships by the Navy not wanting trespassers to damage or steal their property.

Hidden Messages

One of the characters starts to notice something strange in any media broadcasts they happen to see, or newspapers and current magazines that they read. At first it just feels like there is something more to what they are seeing than meets the eye, but after a while they start to notice messages. These messages seem to have something to do with major events that are happening around the world, but when the character tries to show the messages to someone else they either can't see the message, or say it's just some random coincidence. If the character tries to go to the authorities they are dismissed as cranks, but soon after assassins start to target them.

Vampires!?!

People are turning up dead in the city, and after several victims are found the story breaks that all the victims have been found drained of blood with puncture wounds on the neck. A fear of vampires grips the city, with people buying up garlic, “holy water” (con-men have a field day with this) and crosses, while “vampire hunters” are coming forward claiming to have first hand experience with battling these creatures (and offering to protect worried people... for a suitable fee).

But the truth is that there are no vampires – a vampire club made up of people who wish they were vampires have started killing people. As they don’t actually have vampire teeth with which to kill people, they have come up with prosthetic teeth that allow them to bite and drain a person. The members of the club are starting to get a taste for killing, and will begin to increase the number of victims.

Studying Rocks

On a planet where people can’t survive without living in domed cities (due to a tainted atmosphere or no atmosphere), a young geologist approaches the group. He wants them to help him carry out a geological survey of the planet, providing security and/or transport to the different sites he has selected. If pressed about the survey, he will confess that he is worried that the planet is less geologically stable than initially thought, with all the colonies in danger of sustaining serious damage from earthquakes. He has tried to give his theories to the people in charge, but everyone has ignored him.

Unbeknownst to the geologist, those in power are aware of the problem – they’re just trying to cover it up so they can get as much money as possible from the planet before they are forced to leave. They don’t want to risk others finding out about the danger, and so will work to eliminate the geologist (and all those with him) while they are out in the field.

Ghost Ship

The characters come across a ship in deep space, drifting. There is no sign of any damage to the ship and radio messages go unanswered. Boarding the ship the characters make a gruesome discovery. It appears the entire ship’s crew committed suicide, as everyone on board has died from self-inflicted wounds. A number of them obviously went insane beforehand, as there are scribbles on some of the walls, floors and ceilings that keep talking about voices. Some time later (either on the empty ship or back on their own), the characters start to hear voices whispering to them. And the voices are telling them to kill themselves...

The One

The authorities contact one of the characters. It seems that an old man has been found dead in his apartment, and evidence in the apartment links him to several murders that have occurred over the last two decades (all of them the same gender as the character). But even creepier is that the man had an entire room devoted to the character. There were pictures all over the wall from all stages of the character’s life (including recent events), copies of school reports from every year the character was at school, newspaper clippings about anything the character was involved in, even old clothes that the character has thrown out. More worrying were the large notes scribbled on papers and even directly on the wall that all read “This is the one”.

Dead Ringer

The characters come across the dead body of a major political figure for the government, obviously shot several times in the back. The body has been dumped in an out-of-the-way location (or possibly put inside a shipping container the characters are moving if they own a ship and transport cargo). The only problem is the same political figure is currently giving a live speech on national TV urging the people to support his new grand vision.