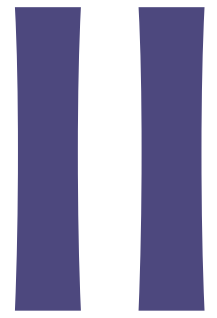


# Deep Space Encounters



**S**pace is big. Mind-bogglingly big. If you think of the biggest thing you can and double it, you can't imagine how small that is compared to space. And, although most of that is just an inky black void, just the galaxy you're in alone contains billions or trillions of stars, planets, nebulae and beyond. And even in what seems to be a vast void, all sorts of curiosities exist.

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## Grey Market

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Although it's in orbit around a major population center, this large ship is running almost dark. It isn't hiding, so much as it is making itself difficult to stumble over by accident. Still, that's exactly what you've now done. They broadcast a simple, targeted message, "Come aboard or get lost. No window shopping."

Below are some possibilities that this borderline illegal market could be selling.

1. The ship is run by a family of Saurian traders, led by Srak Irontooth. Srak sells a variety of normally restricted munitions at impossibly low prices. Irontooth conveniently "forgets" to ask for identification or file registration unless prompted, and responds to accusations of having a selective memory with a pointed reminder that he runs an armory.
2. It turns out that the entire ship is manned by a single, slightly mad Pajak. The Pajak, who insists on being called Host, has an abnormally large number of cybernetic enhancements, including a direct mental link to the ship's onboard AI. Host assumes that anyone visiting them is there for a "wipe", and will calmly guide boarding characters into a blank white chamber, then activate the wipe program, which will erase their last week's memories.
3. Borians fill the ship, which is as warm and cozy inside as it is cold and dark outside. Their friendliness is only a front, as Mother Gau trains them to be subtle and silent in their espionage. Anyone who arrives at her ship can buy information from almost anywhere in the galaxy.
4. Perpetually strung-out, the human junkie Poe sells a selection of psychedelic drugs out of the hangar of his ship. Most of them are banned in a number of nations or worlds,

but none of them are illegal enough to have authorities pursue him out into space. More interestingly, he also sells "emotion packs", small tabs that dissolve on the tongue and which he claims make you feel a single intense bout of a particular emotion.

5. A pair of Ogrons run the ship—exotic in both their race and their profession: biocrafters. Both Kner and Renk have all sorts of experimental or unusual biologically-sourced implants. Despite the legends about their race's low intelligence, the pair of Ogrons are both clever and excitable, and more than eager to design or install custom wetware for any interested clients—no matter how questionable the sourcing materials for such a project can be.
6. Masked androids move about a deathly silent ship, with dozens of items for sale in sterile glass boxes. Every one of these products is a relic of a lost time, place or people. The machine men who run the ship refuse to speak of the source of their acquisitions, except to guarantee they are authentic. The only exception is when they are confronted with a supposed owner or law enforcement authority, in which case they can quickly produce sufficient documentation to say their products are just convincing replicas.

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## Exotic Planetoid

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There are an uncountable number of chunks of space rock in orbit around planets, just beyond shooting range of large space stations, or even in the depths of space. Most of these asteroids are smaller than an average ship and made mostly of rock, iron, and ice. But many are made out of stranger materials—and not all of those things are healthy. When the party encounters a new planetoid, there's a chance it might have an exotic composition, such as one listed below.

1. The asteroid ahead is obviously unnatural—a perfectly smooth sphere of ice that is clear almost all the way through. Surface level scans suggest the ice isn't water, but instead pure isopropyl alcohol. Surface craters left by small debris show that the frozen alcohol is harder than most metals, suggesting that one of the tiny fragments of debris on the surface is actually creating the asteroid in the first place, and maintaining its super-hard surface.
2. The asteroid ahead practically glows with a pale green luminescence. It is clearly a titanic fragment of radioactive material. How dense it is, and why it hasn't decayed to fragments already are unclear.
3. On initial scans, the asteroid ahead appears to be a common mix of heavy metals. Closer examination also detects small amounts of valuable minerals, like gold and even adamantine. The closest examinations reveal a much more chilling story: dozens, if not hundreds of spaceships have been crushed into a rough oblong with their crews inside.
4. Although only a mile across, this asteroid appears to have an entire functioning ecosystem. Plants, animals, and a village of humanoid-sized buildings of brick and mortar. Whatever atmosphere might exist has to be artificial, but no obvious signs of advanced technology exist.
5. This asteroid was clearly a fragment of a much larger, organic object. It is now frozen solid, but what sort of thing could lose a mile-wide chunk of flesh? Whatever its source, it must be impossibly large—and possibly the source of all sorts of new biological information not seen elsewhere in the galaxy.
6. Despite its relatively small size, this asteroid is generating enough heat to make direct approach dangerous. Its surface is a barely cooled shell of hardened rock, run through with veins of molten metal.

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## Unique Ship Design

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Huge assembly lines create ships of dozens of varieties, to meet the needs of the galaxies. Yet, small groups of adventurers, wealthy travelers, and specialized organizations all need custom ships—if not entirely unique chassis built just for them. While most of these ships stay with their original owners—be they super wealthy elite or simply inventive adventurers—it's not unheard of for rare or unusual ships to find their way into the hands of salvagers, pirates or people who had to abandon them. These ships might be encountered anywhere in the galaxy, and they might hold any manner of crew in any manner of mission.

1. A sleek white and gold ship floats silently in space. Its smooth exterior is unblemished by windows, weapons, or even access hatches.
2. Likely a result of the lack of air resistance in space, bits of this crudely assembled ship stick out haphazardly. It looks like it could never survive in an atmosphere, but bulky landing gear juts out the bottom anyway.
3. Appearing almost like a tiny space station, a large transparent dome encloses an open living space in the middle of this ship, bulging out on the top and bottom of the ship like it grew organically.
4. The hull of this ship is an elaborate work of art, carved from wood or possibly clay. The entire ship is lovingly crafted, with even small scars from impact from space debris filled in carefully.
5. The original model of this ship is impossible to tell simply by looking at it. Entire sections have been adapted and cannibalized from other ships, possibly for their use, possibly out of necessity.
6. The exterior of this ship whirls in a riot of color. Every exterior-facing component has been mounted with a high-end video system that allows the ship to change its markings in the blink of an eye.





## Nebulae & Anomalies

The universe exists in its most basic state as an infinite field of space-time. But, once psionics and the interaction of other dimensions are taken into account, the rather mundane laws of physics begin to bend rather dramatically. Such is especially the case in many nebulae: staggeringly large swaths of space where the rules of other dimensions hold more sway than those of this one. Below are several sample nebulae that a party might encounter in the vast reaches of space.

1. Space, as a rule, expands. But in this icy blue nebula, appears to be shrinking, if anything. All ships have their SPEED increased by 2.
2. This deep-red nebula feels like the blood of some sort of massive entity. In fact, just being here makes your blood quicken and your thoughts turn uncomfortably quick to bloodshed.
3. Sparkling yellow and orange, this nebula appears to be equal parts gold and ice crystals. Large salvage ships move slowly through it, gathering up as much of the nebula as the can.
4. This dark blue nebula is impenetrable to electromagnetic waves. Even sensor scans stop short after only a few feet.
5. This electric green nebula holds together in a perfect cube. Yet, its insubstantial interior is no less of a barrier than open space. The nebula appears to be comprised mostly of microscopic fragments of green quartz.
6. Although this vibrant purple nebula appears to scans as entirely uninteresting, looking at it suggests otherwise. The entire nebula seems to vibrate, and occasionally disappears entirely from sight for the span of no longer than a heartbeat.