

## ON THE *PRECIPICE*

A setting for Necromunda and Shadow War: Armageddon.



*"Further down, beneath Isola's scrambling limbs, was the main route through the Skeins – a jury-rigged transitway, welded together from the superstructures of flayed ships. The road was crowded with debris, mechanical and human, all robed in darkness. The glow-globes and lumen-strips had been smashed long ago, so the only light came from the distant glare of the Dromeplatz, a ceaseless sunset, rippling on the horizon and turning the Skeins into a carmine hell. The air beneath the void screen was tormented by engine fumes and recycling turbines. It stung the eyes, burned the throat and drowned everything in a thick, toxic fug. Precipice was a forest of salvaged spires, smouldering and ephemeral, like a half-remembered fire."*

Precipice as a setting is a moon-sized space station in "orbit" around an unclaimed Blackstone Fortress, in the Segmentum Pacificus. The principal industry is archaeotech/xenotech hunting expeditions into the fortress-planet below, pillaging the remains of previous expeditions into the same. The Precipice station is built out of a combination of wreckage and debris, and those 'small' (miles-long) space ships that were abandoned by unsuccessful [killed] expeditions who never returned.

A large section of Precipice is called the Skeins -- a "hive" of gantries, small encampments, functional-but-abandoned spaceships -- over which various 'gangs' fight for territorial control. Effectively, an "underhive."

*"He gripped a handrail and slid down it onto a lower gantry, dropping into a crouch and staring through the pipework, drawing the rapier that hung at his belt.*

*There were men swaggering down the transitway, kicking rubbish and bellowing with laughter. Even through the rolling smog, Draik could see how dishevelled and filthy they were. They were shouting and belching as they approached, waving machetes and pistols.*

*He grabbed a dangling cable and slid down to street level for a better view. A long, rangy shape was scrabbling ahead of them, limping and low to the ground. Some kind of injured animal. They were hurling junk at it, jeering and snorting as it tried to drag itself away.*

*'Captain,' warned Isola from up on the gantry, but she was too late. Draik had already walked out to face them.*

*The gang halted. Their laughter faded and they backed away, weapons raised, as Draik strode towards them through the crimson gloom.*

*'What's this?' growled a man with a mohawk, frowning and swinging his head from side to side, like a dog on a scent.*

*Despite the gruffness of the man's voice, it was clear Draik had unnerved him. Draik marched through the rubble, imperious and grim, examining the men down the length of his long, regal nose. He grimaced at their filthy rags, as though studying a grub that had crawled from his breakfast. The lights of the Dromeplatz flashed along his rapier and glinted in his augmetic eye. Draik was clearly not from the Skeins. He was dressed in a luxurious military dress coat trimmed with gold piping. His starched breeches were immaculate, and his cuffs were embroidered with fine silver thread. But Draik would have*

*cut an aristocratic figure even in rags. He had the face of an Imperial statue: leonine, flinty and proud, with a hard, sword-slash mouth and a thick waxed moustache.*

*'Captain Draik,' he said with a stiff bow.*

*The gang stared at him for a moment, surprised by his clipped, formal manner of speech. Then they burst into laughter.*

*'It's Guilliman 'is bloody self,' snorted the man with the mohawk, marching across the road and squaring up to Draik. He was massive; a round-shouldered ape, a foot taller than Draik and clutching a ratchet as long as his arm that he had sharpened into a mace.'*

There is a ruling cabal of powerful individuals called the 'Proctors,' who rule the station overall, with Enforcers to control docking and departure, and to keep the peace in select areas of the station. They seem to equate to the "Nobles" of Necromunda, or the "rail barons" of a Western.

There is one massive principal marketplace, the Dromeplatz, which serves as both "market" and "black market," though there are hints of secondary black markets also existing elsewhere. There are any number of drinking establishments, whether in the Dromeplatz district or elsewhere, even down in the Skeins. There does not appear to be much violence in the Dromeplatz even between differing species [see the Enforcers and the Proctors note], though the potential is implied. Again, frontier mining town, high noon.

*"The air inside the drinking hole was thick with lho smoke, sweat and alcohol fumes. More than that, it was thick with the stench of heresy. Wherever Taddeus looked he saw miscreants, xenos scum and blasphemers against the God-Emperor. Revelry not in celebration of the God-Emperor's victories was an affront to the sacrifices of the Thronelord and there was much revelry amid the stink of 'Looter's Den'.*

*His arrival did not go unmarked. Chairs scraped across the bare boards of the floor and conversations faltered into silence. From behind a bar of stacked ammunition crates, the vendor scowled. The skinny, scar-faced man reached behind the improvised counter, no doubt for a weapon. Elsewhere blades slid from sheaths, powercells whined on activation and several autoweapons clicked and crunched as hammers were drawn back and safeties released.*

*The reassuring buzz of Taddeus' servo-stubber sounded close to his right ear as the self-determining anti-grav skull ascended into view. As it steadily panned back and forth the barrel of its gun tracked slowly across the denizens of the establishment, red targeting beams pulsing from its eye sockets.*

*'This ain't your pulpit, Ecclesiarchy man,' growled a treasure hunter leaning on the bar, her face half-hidden beneath the broad brim of her hat. One hand held a small glass of yellow liquid; the other was hooked into her belt close to a holstered laspistol.*

*Hostile eyes regarded the preacher from all directions: many human, some insectoid, one pair just points of ochre light.*

*'And I'm not here to preach,' Taddeus replied, his gaze scanning the room. He smoothed his hands down the front of his vestments, wiping away the settling dust and ash of the drinking hole.*

*'Everyone can relax,' said a rakish man from the far corner, his chair leaning back against the wall, booted feet on the tabletop before him. His garb was of an Imperial noble, frock coat and mock-military stylings. The hide of a xenos beast trailed across his shoulders. A neatly trimmed moustache and oiled hair completed an image of privilege at odds with the unwashed and unkempt denizens that made up the remaining patrons. Almost unseen, he held a long-barrelled duelling pistol in his lap, its muzzle pointing towards the barman.*

*'No trouble, not in my cantina,' the man said, placing both his hands back on the counter, empty.*

Outside the Dromeplatz, specifically given an example down in the Skeins, violence is rampant, and those who engage in it don't seem concerned with the Proctors or their Enforcers there. Gangs are explicitly called "gangs," and one example gang in the Skeins seems to be very much a parallel to the Goliaths on Necromunda [bulky, male, mohawk haircuts, massive construction tools repurposed as weapons]. Mutants and abhumans are explicitly mentioned. Eldar and Dark eldar, kroot, orks, are also explicitly mentioned.

Most ORB *Necromunda* scenarios would appear to be appropriate to this setting. Most ORB gangs would also appear to be appropriate, with a re-naming or a re-fluff [for example, House Orlock perhaps rebranded as Merchant Naval crew]. Most SW:A 'gangs' would also be appropriate, with minor caveats and exceptions [a whole crew of Harlequins might seem... a bit obscure to be fighting over Precipice, though they might not seem out of place within the Blackstone itself; some Chapters of Space Marines - Dark Angels or Blood Ravens, say - would be more likely to send a small team of scouts quietly to Precipice outside a military engagement; orks would generally be Freebooterz; etc]. *Necromunda* terrain as stands would suit a lot of Precipice. The rare trade tables could also be entirely suitable, with merely the aesthetics of various items differing, though expanding them to include various xenos weapons and wargear from the various SW:A gangs could be warranted.

Additionally, some scenarios could be built or adapted to take place, rather than within the hive-like setting of Precipice, instead in the maze of the Blackstone Fortress itself [using BSF board tiles for a purely horizontal game] or within the various docked spaceships [using either Kill Team deck plans, or Space Hulk

board sections, also for a purely horizontal game].

## RULES

The rules for games on *Precipice* are those found in the original edition of *Necromunda*, and in the non-campaign rules for *Shadow War: Armageddon* (these being the same), with the addition of the "gang lists" from *Shadow War: Armageddon*, with the following modifications. Campaign Rules to follow *Necromunda*, instead of *Shadow War: Armageddon*.

### Skill Trees

Use all NM Skill Trees, and any gang-specific Skill Trees.

[The reason for the modification is that income and scenarios are taken from the NM ruleset, rather than from the SW:A campaign rules. As such, a spare 100 credits in income would be a huge swing, and there are no sub-plots rolls to modify, etc.]

*"Beyond Precipice's jumble of crooked walkways and brume-shrouded ships, the revolutions of the heavens had ceased, consumed by a wall of nothing. There were few who could hold its gaze. The Unfathomable. The Abyss. The Deep. The Blackstone Fortress.*

*Draik stared into the monolithic dark, trying to discern something solid – something real. His eyes slipped across angles and shadows, unable to find purchase, glimpsing hints and suggestions but nothing he could recall for more than an instant. The Blackstone glared back, malign and unknowable. Mocking him. The star fort was the size of a small planet, with Precipice as its ramshackle moon, but even those brave souls clinging to Precipice would never claim to understand the Blackstone."*

## TERRITORIES

Rename some of the Territories to better match this setting. Thematically, some territories are on *Precipice* itself, in various districts, while others are on the Blackstone Fortress. Incomes marked with an asterisk have additional rules. See the *Necromunda* rulebook.

### **"Non-Outlaw Territories"**

11 -- Chem Pit [in the Skeins] *income 2d6\**  
 12-16 -- Abandoned vessel [as Old Ruins; abandoned ship] *income 10*.  
 21-25 -- Derelict ship [as Slag; in the Skeins] *income 15*  
 26 -- Minerals [in the Skeins OR on the Fortress] *income d6x10*  
 31-35 -- Settlement [on a ship or in the Skeins] *income 30*  
 36 -- Stable corridor [as Mine Workings; on the Fortress] *d6x10\**  
 41-42 -- Tunnels *income 10\**  
 43-44 -- Vents *income 10\**  
 45-46 -- Algaeworks [as Holestead; on a ship] *income d6x10*  
 51-52 -- Still [in the Skeins] *income d6x10*  
 53-54 -- Drinking Hole [at Dromeplatz OR in the Skeins] *income d6x10*  
 55-56 -- Trader Contract [as Guilder Contract; at Dromeplatz] *income d6x10\**  
 61 -- Friendly Doc [at Dromeplatz] *income d6x10\**  
 62 -- Workshop [in the Skeins OR at Dromeplatz OR on a ship] *income d6x10\**  
 63 -- Gambling Den [in the Skeins OR at Dromeplatz] *income 2d6x10\**  
 64 -- Moldworks [as Spore Cave; abandoned ship] *income 2d6x10\**  
 65 -- Archaeotech Hoard [on the Fortress] *income 2d6x10\**  
 66 -- New Arrivals [as Green Hivers; on a ship] *income special\**

### **"Outlaw Territories"**

11-15 -- Skeins Hole [as Wastelands; in the Skeins] *income 0*.  
 16 -- Collapsing Vessel [as Collapsed Dome; abandoned ship] *income 2d6\**  
 21-25 -- Skeins Hole [as Wastes; in the

Skeins] *income 0*.  
 26 -- Fungus Grotto [in the Skeins] *income 0\**  
 31-36 -- Rad Zone [abandoned ship] *income 2d6\**  
 41-46 -- Fortress Entrance [as Sludge Sea; on the Fortress] *income 0\**  
 51-55 -- Biodome [as Sump Spillage; on a ship] *income 5*.  
 56 -- Power Cable Tap [in the Skeins OR at Dromeplatz] *income 5/10\**  
 61-63 -- Abandoned Vessel [as Ruins; abandoned ship] *income 10*.  
 64-65 -- Clean Water [as Clean Water Hole; on a ship] *income 10*.  
 66 -- Runabout [as Slag; on a ship] *income 15*.

So, mechanically identical, but thematically adjusted. As far as possible terrain influences go, this sets up several thematic areas:

\* in the Skeins, which seem to be identical to much of the gantried-and-leveled Underhive in classic *Necromunda*.

\* aboard functioning vessels, which admittedly being in some cases kilometres long means a mix of Underhive-like gantries, and individual chambers, or perhaps tables filled with cargo.

\* aboard abandoned vessels, akin perhaps to a Space Hulk map or a Kill Team boarding map, as well as *Necromunda* classic gantries.

\* in the Dromeplatz, a busy market filled with 'civilian' NPCs, though there are *Necromunda* scenarios tailored specifically to such an environment.

\* on the Fortress, giving an option for the "2-D" map style which N17 and N18 come with, using the BSF tiles to build the table.

### **SCAVENGING AND STARVATION**

The gang's territory still supplies income if it is worked by a gang member. Non-Outlaw Territories worked by an Outlaw gang have their income halved. This penalty does not apply to Territories gained through the Outlaw Territory chart. The income a gang collects from their territory and from foraging (see below) is not cross-referenced with the size of the gang on the income table as it is for a non-Outlaw gang.

Anyone who wasn't Out of Action in the game can go Foraging. Juves, gangers, heavies, even leaders can all forage, though if they forage they cannot perform other activities such as visit the Outlaw Trading Post or work the gang's Territory. Hired Guns and special characters never forage.

Unfortunately, the gang needs to be fed and supplied one way or another. After each game, after working territory and foraging has been worked out, each member of the gang will need 3 credits' worth of supplies to keep them going. Hired Guns and special characters don't need to be given supplies, as their pay is enough to keep them fed and supplied.

Any gang member that does not have 3 credits spent on them starves, and suffers a -1 penalty to strength and toughness until they do. These penalties are cumulative from game to game, and any fighter that is reduced to either Strength or Toughness of 0 starves to death and should be removed from your gang roster. And yes, you can keep the weapons and equipment of someone who has starved to death...

### OUTLANDERS

All SW:A gangs start as Outlanders, but can, if they earn enough, eventually buy off their Guild Price, becoming "law abiding" gangs, using the standard Territories tables and the standard Trade table, and the standard Income table instead of scavenging and starvation rules. The following are exceptions: Tyranids, Chaos Space Marines, and Necron gangs can never buy off their guild price. A gang's Guild Price is equal to 10% of their Gang Rating. Regardless Outlaw or not, the equipment on a Gang's/Team's Recruitment List is always considered Common for that gang.

### EXPERIENCE

"New recruits" start at 0 xp, effectively Juves, "Troopers" at 20 xp, effectively Gangers, "Specialists" at 60 xp, like Heavies, etc, parallel to House Gangs. Advances as per xp gained as in the NM rulebook, rather than per number of scenarios.

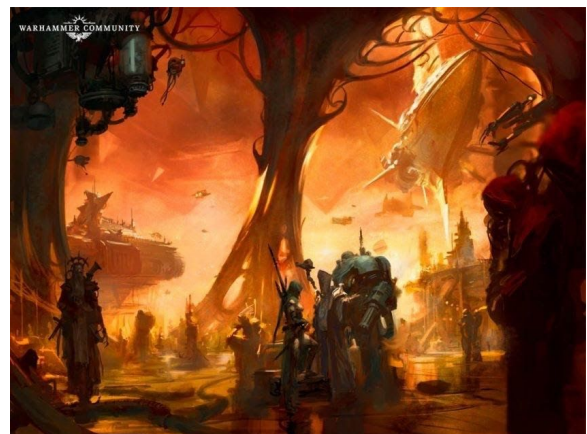
### AMMO ROLLS

I recommend shifting ammo checks to the NM ORB d6 version, rather than trying to shift ammo checks to the SWA 2d6 version, for two reasons. Firstly, the list in SWA is shorter than the list of weapons outside SWA. Secondly, the 2d6 version reduces the possibility of "dice swing," and increases reliability of ranged weapons against ammo checks of rating 7 or easier. The NM ORB d6 version isn't as generous.

Ammo roll SWA of 3+=2+, of 5+=3+, of 7+=4+, close becomes close, rounding [so eg a 6+ also becomes a 4+].

This decreases weapon reliability.

"Most of the action takes place in Precipice, a kind of Wild West shantytown in orbit around the Blackstone Fortress, and on the fortress itself. [...] In Precipice, there's a wonderful and unique situation where mutually antagonistic races are forced to live side-by-side and even work together. That was a great opportunity to show a situation that doesn't usually occur elsewhere in the galaxy. [...] I think it would be great if Black Library turned Blackstone Fortress and Precipice into a regular setting for their fiction. It seems to me that it could treated in the same way as something like Necromunda, with a whole host of authors having fun with this quirky part of the 40k lore."  
— Darius Hinks, author of *Blackstone Fortress*.



The various gangs represent ships' crews and bands of reprobates aboard Precipice, seeking their fortune. As such, adjusting the names and

backgrounds of various factions will help to create and maintain the feel of the setting. Rogue Traders' away teams, groups of pirates and ne'erdowells, exploratory teams, salvors, and the lost, all of these have a place aboard *Precipice*. You will never find a more wretched hive of scum and villainy.

### **FACTIONS**

Almost all of the various gangs from Necromunda, GorkaMorka, and Shadow War: Armageddon are appropriate rules-wise. Thematically, some distinctly lend themselves to the setting, while others may warrant re-envisioning.

*House Orlock*. Merchant mariners. NM

*House Escher*. Pirates. NM

*House Goliath*. Gun crews. NM

*House Delaque*. Pirates. NM

*House Van Saar*. Salvors. NM

*House Cawdor*. Pilgrims. NM

*Spyrers*. Rogue Trader hunting team. OL

*Scavvies*. Scavvies, OL

*Space Marine Scouts*. Some chapters are more likely than others to send in small, autonomous teams to seek out archaeotech. SWA

*Genestealer Cult*. Infected ship's crew. SWA

*Imperial Guard*. Renegade guardsmen, or a Rogue Trader's crew. SWA

*Adepta Sororitas*. Small team seeking a holy relic on the quiet. SWA

*Dark Eldar*. Pirates. SWA

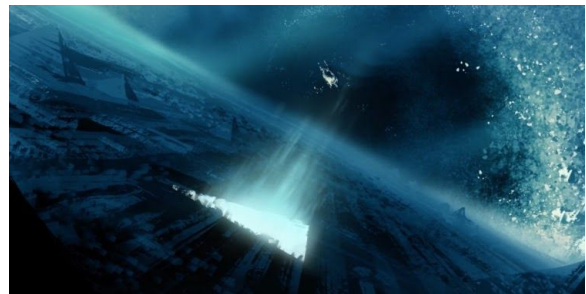
*Inquisition*. An inquisitor, yes, or a Rogue Trader and entourage, or.... SWA

*Chaos Space Marines*. A small boarding party from the fortress occupation, or a warband opposing Malleus. SWA

*Orks*. Orks. Freebooters of various flavours. SWA

And of course all the addon gangs, such as *Wyrd Gatherings*, *Pit Slaves*, *House Prospector*, *Squat Miners*, etc, from their various Citadel Journal, Gang War, and Necromunda Magazine issues.

And so on.



*Draik climbed through an access hatch and up onto a gantry. He could see most of Precipice from here. It looked like just another ugly wreck, drifting through the wandering stars, but this collision of mooring spars and walkways had drawn a feeding frenzy. Ships from every corner of the galaxy were huddled at its anchorage points, scorched and hungry, their captains all busy chasing the same alluring nightmare. Looming over the ships was the Dromeplatz, a mangled, bloody eye glaring down at its congregation of landers and skiffs.*

*Lights flared overhead as the rogue trader's ship clipped a drifting fuselage. It maintained its trajectory for a few more seconds, then dissolved into a thunderhead, embers and smoke raining down on Precipice, howling over the void screen like a ghost.*

Welcome to Precipice.