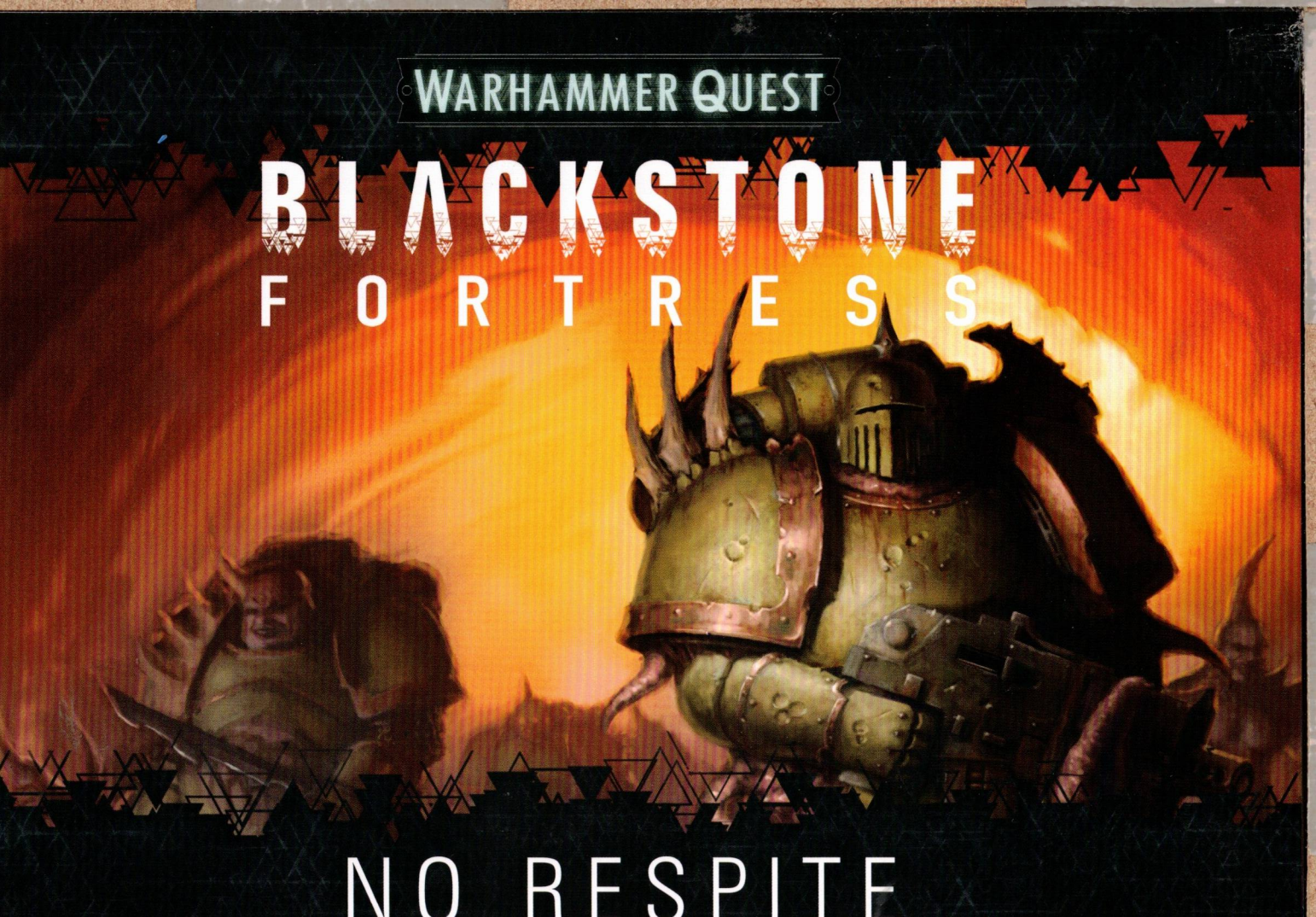


WARHAMMER QUEST

# BLACKSTONE FORTRESSES

NO RESPIRE



A daemonic rot grows inside the Blackstone Fortress. The Infested Brethren – foul servants of the Plague God Nurgle – have made their way to the uncharted reaches of the Western Reaches, and now worm their way through the ancient station like maggots through a bloated corpse. As they search for ways to harness the fortress' apocalyptic power, so too is their putrid taint spread throughout the tessellating chambers, and in grotesque shrines they call upon their patron to bless the Blackstone Fortress with his dread fecundity.

The contagions carried by the Infested Brethren have now begun to seep out from the fortress, infecting Precipice and all aboard it. Strains of warp-borne pathogens continue to mutate as they seek out new hosts, growing more deadly and ravenous by the moment. Yet it is not only flesh that they corrupt, but the minds and souls of their victims also.

If there is to be any hope of survival, the Infested Brethren must be excised from existence. It falls to the bravest denizens of Precipice to fight through the festering horror, to journey into the heart of corruption and to eradicate every last trace of Nurgle's foulness, or else be consumed by the nightmarish plagues brought forth by his servants.

# INTRODUCTION

The Plague Marines, terrifying devotees of the Chaos God Nurgle, have infested one of the few relatively stable nodes in the Blackstone Fortress. Secure in their stronghold, they are concocting and nurturing plagues that will make exploration of the Blackstone Fortress impossible, and could end the lives of all those on Precipice. In this expansion, the explorers will venture into this noisome dungeon, braving disease and death to find and eliminate these horrifying warriors and their thralls.

No Respite is an expansion for Warhammer Quest Blackstone Fortress and Warhammer Quest Escalation. It adds a new quest to be undertaken by groups of explorers, who recognise that the Plague Marines represent a dire threat to their mission. As the devotees of the Plague God refine their biological weapons, the explorers will contract maladies and afflictions, but they must fight on if they are to survive.

To complete their quest, the explorers must eliminate the three Nodes of Corruption established by the Plague Marines in the bowels of the Blackstone Fortress. Reaching these nodes will not be easy, and even as they succeed in eliminating one of the threats, those that remain will become more dangerous. The explorers will have to make

tough decisions about what their priorities are and what risks they can afford to take. If they can successfully eliminate the nodes, they will then have to make a final expedition to end the threat once and for all.

The No Respite expansion includes a new series of expeditions for your explorers to undertake as they search for the Nodes of Corruption, followed by an expedition into a final shrine. You will find complete rules for using the Plague Marines and the Poxwalkers that accompany them in this expansion, as well as for including these new miniatures in your other games of Blackstone Fortress.

The quest to end the plagues is a new quest which you can choose to play instead of starting a different quest. We recommend

completing the quest for the hidden vault and the quest for the Black Shrines before starting the quest to end the plagues, as they will give you a good knowledge of the game, and the narrative running through it, before starting this new quest.

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*"Cursed are those who by  
their grotesqueness defile the  
glory of Humanity. By the  
Emperor, I will not suffer  
these heretics to live."*

- Gotfret de Montbard

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# SCIONS OF NURGLE



Plague Marines



Poxwalkers

# THE DEATH GUARD

Among the dread ranks of the Heretic Astartes, none are more vile than the disease-ridden warriors of the Death Guard. These grotesquely corrupted warriors worship Nurgle, the God of Plagues, and in his name spread rot and ruin throughout the galaxy. They march to war armed not only with bolt and blade, but with sentient viruses and daemonic poxes that they unleash upon their ill-fated enemies.

## PLAGUE MARINES

The bloated and boil-ridden abominations known as Plague Marines form the mainstay of the Death Guard. Each of these warriors is a testament to Nurgle's feculence. Their genetically augmented bodies are covered with open sores that weep putrid effluvia and clusters of protuberant growths that burst through their corroded power armour. The stench that radiates from a Plague Marine is enough to send a hardened soldier into nauseated convulsions, whilst the clouds of flies that surround them create a ceaseless buzzing that drowns out all thought. However, it is the utter corruption of a Plague Marine's soul that is most horrific. They desire nothing more than to see the galaxy consumed by entropy, and to infect their enemies with Nurgle's myriad afflictions.

For all of their corruptions, Plague Marines are still highly drilled and efficient warriors. They have honed their tactics over ten millennia, marching aggressively to crush their foes whilst relying on their inhuman resilience to weather any punishment levelled at them. Their hideous disfigurements make them almost immune to conventional weaponry – shots fired into them are absorbed by sagging sheets of adipose tissue, and blades thrust into their bodies become lodged inside gaping abscesses. The Plague Marines repay such futile attempts to harm them with sardonic chortles and precise sprays of boltgun fire.

## POXWALKERS

Poxwalkers are the shambling remains of those afflicted with the Walking Pox, one of the more horrendous of Nurgle's manifold

plagues. This gruesome disease withers the bodies of those it infects. Flesh decays and internal organs burst as the host is overtaken by rot, leading inexorably towards an agonising demise. Yet even death offers no escape for the sufferer, for they remain cruelly conscious of their ultimate fate. Imbued with morbid vigour, the corpse reanimates and staggers off in search of the living. Pulsating tentacles and horn-like growths sprout from its body, while the viscous sludge from its necrotising innards spills from its grinning mouth. Where a single Poxwalker is a considerable threat, they are at their most deadly when gathered in large numbers. The Death Guard often herd teeming throngs of Poxwalkers towards their foes, using the shuffling corpses to soak up incoming fire, or simply to drown the enemy in a flood of putrid flesh.

# THE QUEST

In this expansion, the explorers embark on a quest to shut down the Nodes of Corruption before the followers of Nurgle can create an epidemic that will end any further exploration of the Blackstone Fortress.

## STARTING THE QUEST TO END THE PLAGUES

The quest to end the plagues is a standalone quest that can be attempted if the explorers are not currently on another quest, such as the quest for the hidden vault or the quest for the Black Shrines. Before starting an expedition, the explorers can choose to undertake the quest to end the plagues. If they do so, follow the rules presented here to set up an expedition for this quest. Once the explorers have started this quest, they may not start another until it has been completed. The quest to end the plagues uses some new rules and some existing rules from those presented for the quest for the hidden vault on pages 12-13 of the *Blackstone Fortress: Rules* booklet. Use the existing rules for Discovery Markers and Discovery Cards, and New Expeditions, along with the following new rules.

## Affliction Cards

This expansion introduces affliction cards. Affliction cards describe various maladies that the explorers can contract in their quest to end the plagues. The affliction deck is used during expeditions. When an explorer is told to draw an affliction card, they take the top card from the affliction deck. The card will describe how the affliction hampers them. If the affliction deck is empty, apply a grievous wound to that explorer instead. The only way to remove an affliction card is at Sawbone Station on Precipice (pg 10).

## Afflicted

Explorers risk being struck down by an affliction every time they enter the Blackstone Fortress. At the end of each Exploration step, if the exploration card was a Combat, each explorer (other than a retinue character) rolls the Blackstone dice. Whichever explorer rolls

the lowest score draws an affliction card. If any explorers are tied for the lowest score, those explorers roll again as many times as is necessary to determine an explorer with the lowest score.

## Plague Cards

This expansion includes plague cards for the three plagues that are being concocted by the followers of Nurgle. There are three double-sided cards for each plague. These cards are used to track the severity of each plague, from Stage 1 to Stage 6, and have an effect on all expeditions undertaken as part of the quest to end the plagues. If a plague would advance beyond Stage 6 (see page 10), the quest ends in failure.

## The Thrice-cursed Shrine

After picking explorers at the start of an expedition, if there are three Node

of Corruption cards in the databank, the explorers can attack the Thrice-cursed Shrine, in the same manner as attacking a stronghold in the quest for the hidden vault. Instead of setting up an expedition as normal, the players take the Thrice-cursed Shrine sheet and set up the expedition using the rules for the Access Route, Reaching the Stronghold, Stronghold Event Table & Stronghold Rules and Conquering the Stronghold from page 12 of the Precipice book, but replace all references to 'stronghold' with 'Thrice-cursed Shrine'.

## Failure

The quest to end the plagues ends in failure if fewer than four explorers are available at the start of an expedition. In addition, if one or more plagues would advance beyond Stage 6 (see page 10), the quest ends in failure. If either of these things happen, the players will have to restart this quest, or choose another quest.

## One-off Expeditions

If you wish to play a one-off expedition using the contents of this expansion, add the encounter cards for the Poxwalkers and Plague Marines to the Blackstone Fortress encounter card deck used for one-off games. You can also add the exploration cards from this expansion, but do not use any which are marked with a  symbol. You can find more instructions for how to use the cards from this expansion in future games on page 11 of this booklet.



## SETTING UP AN EXPEDITION FOR THE QUEST TO END THE PLAGUES

Set up the expedition as described in the *Blackstone Fortress: Rules* booklet, but with the following changes:

- During step 3, shuffle the affliction cards face down and place them in a pile next to the Discovery deck. If an explorer is told to draw an affliction card, they take the top card from the affliction deck. If the affliction deck is empty, apply a grievous wound to that explorer instead. Remember that one explorer will contract an affliction at the end of each combat (see page 6).
- Shuffle the combat cards from Blackstone Fortress and draw 6 of them. Add the combat cards from this expansion to those cards to form a deck, then shuffle them. Then shuffle the challenge cards from Blackstone Fortress and draw 6 of them. Add the challenge cards from this expansion to those cards to form a deck, then shuffle them. Finally, take the top four combat cards and the top four challenge cards from the decks you have created and shuffle them to form the exploration deck. Place it face down on the Precipice board.
- During step 4, take the encounter cards from Blackstone Fortress and find the cards for the Traitor Guardsmen, Chaos Beastmen and Rogue Psykers. Add to these cards the Cultists encounter cards from Escalation. You can then add any eligible encounter cards from other expansions you own, as described in that expansion. Then, add the encounter cards from this expansion. Shuffle these cards to make a new encounter deck, and then place the deck to the left of the combat track.
- Take the Poxwalker and Plague Marine hostile reference cards and add them to the other hostile reference cards to the right of the combat track.
- During step 5, when placing spacecraft, take the Sawbone Station card and place it on the top left side of the Precipice board as shown on page 3 of this booklet.
- During step 11, if this is your first game of No Respite, find the three Stage 1 plague cards, then place one Bleeding Maw counter, one Mouldering counter and one Chronopox counter in the databank.
- In each subsequent expedition of No Respite, in step 11, remove any plague counters that are in the databank and count them. For each type of plague counter, find the plague card that corresponds to the number of those counters (for example, if there were two Bleeding Maw counters, three Mouldering counters and three Chronopox counters, you would find the Stage 2 Bleeding Maw card, the Stage 3 Mouldering and the Stage 3 Chronopox cards). Then place the plague counters you removed from the databank back in the databank.
- The cards for the current stage of each plague are passed around with the leader token. The rules on each card apply until the beginning of the next expedition.
- During step 12, the leader reads aloud the following text instead: *'The explorers have entered a maglev transport chamber which drops into the depths of the fortress, taking them to a static chamber deep below the surface. Their objective is to strike at the heart of the corruption that is spreading through the fortress from three pestilent nodes.'*

## EXPLORATION ROUNDS

Each expedition in the quest to end the plagues is launched either with the intention of eliminating a Node of Corruption or, if all three Nodes of Corruption have been eliminated, with the intention of eliminating the Thrice-cursed Shrine.

At the start of each expedition, the players must decide which of the Nodes of Corruption they intend to eliminate. They cannot choose a node they have already eliminated. Each Node of Corruption has an access route in the same way as a stronghold (as described on page 12 of the *Precipice* book).

To halt the spread of the Bleeding Maw plague, you must eliminate the Node of Consumption; shuffle all of the cards in the exploration deck and deal out four to create the access route exploration deck. The explorers reach the node after the fourth exploration card has been resolved – turn to page 12.

To halt the spread of the Mouldering plague, you must eliminate the Node of Fecundity;

shuffle all of the cards in the exploration deck and deal out five to create the access route exploration deck. The explorers reach the node after the fifth exploration card has been resolved – turn to page 14.

To halt the spread of the Chronopox plague, you must eliminate the Node of Endings; shuffle all of the cards in the exploration deck and deal out six to create the access route exploration deck. The explorers reach the node after the sixth exploration card has been resolved – turn to page 18.

If all three nodes have been eliminated (meaning that those nodes' Node of Corruption cards are in the databank), instead shuffle all of the cards in the exploration deck and deal out seven to create the access route exploration deck. The explorers reach the Thrice-cursed Shrine after the seventh exploration card has been resolved – refer to the Thrice-cursed Shrine sheet.

## THE NODES OF CORRUPTION

The Nodes of Corruption take the form of three combat encounters, each with their

own unique rules and theme. If the explorers reach one of the Nodes of Corruption during an expedition, it will require additional rules to set up. The maps and rules for each of these nodes can be found on pages 12-19. Each of the Nodes of Corruption has an event table, which is used instead of the one found in the *Blackstone Fortress: Combat* book, as well as a set of rules that will affect how the combat is fought. Make sure to read all of the rules for a Node of Corruption carefully before you start the combat, as they will often change how hostiles or explorers are set up for that combat.

The instructions for each Node of Corruption will tell you what the explorers need to do to conquer that node, and the rewards they receive for doing so. If all of the explorers are taken out of action before this happens, the expedition ends in failure (see overleaf) and no rewards are received.

## ENDING AN EXPEDITION

Instead of the rules for ending an expedition found on page 11 of the Rules booklet, an expedition comes to an end if any of the following occur:

1. At the end of a combat, all of the explorers are out of action.
2. An explorer dies in the recovery step.
3. In the exploration step, all of the players agree to end the expedition instead of drawing an exploration card.
4. The explorers conquer one of the Nodes of Corruption, as described above.

When an expedition ends, the explorers return to Precipice.

## PRECIPICE

When the explorers return to Precipice during the quest to end the plagues, additional rules apply:

In the legacy step, instead of drawing a legacy card, the leader does the following:

- If the Node of Consumption has not been eliminated, the Bleeding Maw advances: add 1 Bleeding Maw counter to the databank.
- If the Node of Fecundity has not been eliminated, the Mouldering advances: add 1 Mouldering counter to the databank.
- If the Node of Endings has not been eliminated, the Chronopox advances: add 1 Chronopox counter to the databank.
- If the explorers ended an expedition to eliminate the Thrice-cursed Shrine and did not succeed, each plague advances: add 1 Bleeding Maw counter, 1 Mouldering counter and 1 Chronopox counter to the databank.
- If the leader cannot add a counter to the databank when a plague advances, because all 6 of the relevant counters are in the databank, the explorers have failed to halt that plague and the quest ends in failure. The explorers must start the quest from the beginning, or can pick another quest to embark on.

## Visiting Sawbone Station

In the trading step, explorers can visit Sawbone Station instead of visiting a ship. If they do so, they heal any grievous wounds they have. In addition, they can trade clues to discard any affliction cards they have. They can discard one affliction card for each clue they trade in this way, and they gain 1 inspiration point for each affliction card they discard in this way (to a maximum of 4 points). Discarded affliction cards are added back to the affliction deck and traded clues are added back to the discovery deck. An explorer keeps any inspiration points gained this way for their next expedition. If they are placed into a stasis chamber, place their inspiration point counters into the stasis chamber with them with the relevant side face-up.

## Stasis Chambers

If an explorer with more than ten cards is placed in a stasis chamber, when reducing their total to ten cards, you cannot remove affliction cards from that explorer unless those are the only cards remaining.

# AFTER THE QUEST

Even though the Nodes of Corruption have been eliminated, the followers of Nurgle are nothing if not resilient, and it is unlikely that the explorers have seen the last of them...

All of the cards from this expansion are marked with a symbol allowing them to be added to and removed from your existing Blackstone Fortress card decks with ease, enabling full customisation of your Blackstone Fortress adventures.

## THE MINIATURES AND ENCOUNTER CARDS

You can add the miniatures from this expansion to the Blackstone Fortress game for other quests you may embark upon in the future. To do so, when setting up an expedition for that quest, or during one-off games, simply add the No Respite encounter cards to your encounter deck. This means that there is a chance that Plague Marines and Poxwalkers will appear while playing through other quests – this also allows you to replay ones you have already completed with a new element, as well as ensuring a new challenge for one-off expeditions.

## THE EXPLORATION CARDS

The exploration cards for this expansion are marked with a ☿ symbol and can be added to your existing exploration deck for one-off games or other quests (such as the quest for the hidden vault). Three of the cards are marked with a ☿ symbol, and should not be included if you wish to mix the decks together.



## QUEST TO END THE PLAGUES

# NODE OF CONSUMPTION

*You step through a choking green gas into the heart of a noisome fane. Through the haze, you can just make out a monstrous maw growing out of the fortress itself, gnashing, screaming and vomiting forth roiling fumes.*

### HOSTILE GROUPS

- 1** 6 Poxwalkers (P)  
3 Plague Marines (PM)
- 2** 4 Chaos Beastmen (CB)
- 3** 2 Rogue Psykers (RP)  
6 Traitor Guardsmen (T)
- 4** 8 Traitor Guardsmen (TG)



## NODE RULES

**No Escape:** The explorers may not use the Summon (4+) action whilst in the Node of Consumption.

**Destroy the Cauldron:** Explorers can target the Plague Cauldron (see the map) as if it was a hostile. Once the Plague Cauldron has suffered a total of 13 or more wounds, it is destroyed. Note that the Mouldering plague has no effect on the Plague Cauldron.

**Dedicated Guardians:** Do not make behaviour rolls for Plague Marines unless one or more Plague Marines have suffered any wounds or grievous wounds, or the Plague Cauldron has suffered any wounds or grievous wounds, or there is an explorer visible to one or more Plague Marines when that hostile group is activated. From that point onwards they will act as normal.

**The Bleeding Maw:** The cost of an action is increased by 1 for explorers who are in a hex adjacent to the space that contains the Bleeding Maw (see the map), to a maximum cost of 6+. For example, the cost of a (4+) action would be increased to (5+).

## NODE OF CONSUMPTION EVENT TABLE

| ROLL  | EVENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | <b>All Is Dust:</b> Each explorer loses 1 inspiration point, to a minimum of 0.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2-3   | <b>Unfulfilled Destiny:</b> Do not make a destiny roll at the start of the next turn.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 4-6   | <b>Not Dead Yet:</b> If possible, the leader must pick one hostile that has been slain during the combat encounter and has not returned to the battlefield, and then deploy them as close to an explorer as possible.                                                                                                           |
| 7-10  | <b>Clouds of Gas:</b> In the next initiative phase, models can only attack enemies that are within 3 hexes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 11-14 | <b>Piercing Screams:</b> Each explorer in a hex adjacent to the space that includes the Bleeding Maw (see the map) suffers a wound.                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 15-17 | <b>Inspiration:</b> The leader can pick one explorer. That explorer receives 1 inspiration point.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 18-19 | <b>Heroic Effort:</b> The leader picks an explorer that is out of action. Deploy the explorer in the same hex as another explorer or as close to another explorer as possible, and then make a vitality roll for them. If no explorers are out of action, the leader picks an explorer. Make a vitality roll for that explorer. |
| 20    | <b>Lucky Find:</b> The leader picks one explorer. That explorer takes one discovery card.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

## CONQUERING THE NODE

The Node of Consumption is conquered if, at the end of any explorer's activation, the Plague Cauldron has been destroyed and there are no Plague Marine hostiles on the battlefield. If all of the explorers are out of action at the start of the event phase, this combat ends and the explorers must return to Precipice.

## REWARDS

If the explorers conquer the Node of Consumption, they add the Node of Consumption card to the databank. In addition, the explorer who caused the last wound to be applied to the Plague Cauldron gains the Omniphage Serum medical marvel card.



## QUEST TO END THE PLAGUES

# NODE OF FECUNDITY

MAP 1

*This area of the fortress seems to be alive, and the slick walls appear to ripple as you pass. You feel a powerful urge to escape as quickly as you can, but first you must find and eliminate the source of the Mouldering plague.*

### HOSTILE GROUPS

- 1** 6 Poxwalkers (P)  
3 Plague Marines (PM)
- 2** 6 Traitor Guardsmen (T)
- 3** 1 Cultist Firebrand (CF)  
7 Cultists (C)
- 4** 8 Traitor Guardsmen (TG)



## MAP 2



## NODE RULES

**Get the Job Done:** The explorers may not use the Summon (4+) action whilst in the Node of Fecundity until all three vents have been blocked (see Stifle the Plague, below).

**Dedicated Guardians:** Do not make behaviour rolls for Plague Marines unless one or more Plague Marines have suffered any wounds or grievous wounds, or there is an explorer visible to one or more Plague Marines when they are activated. From that point onwards they will act as normal.

**Cult of the Mouldering:** Do not make behaviour rolls for hostiles from Group 3 unless one or more hostiles in that group have suffered any wounds or grievous wounds, or there is an explorer visible to one or more hostiles in that group when they are activated, or the third vent has been blocked (see Stifle the Plague, below). From that point onwards they will act as normal.

**Firing Positions:** Traitor Guardsmen with lasguns will only take the Onslaught action, unless they are hidden, in which case they take the Hold action (do not make behaviour rolls for them). Traitor Guardsmen that are returned to the battlefield as reinforcements are not affected by this rule.

**Stifle the Plague:** When you set the battlefield up, place three vent markers on the hexes marked on map 1 with the open side face-up. An explorer standing on a vent marker that has not yet been blocked can take the Stifle (4+) action to block that vent. When they do, flip the vent marker over to show its blocked side.

**Ghastly Peristalsis:** Immediately after an explorer blocks the third vent as described in Stifle the Plague (see above), the corridors squeeze shut – remove all of the corridor tiles as shown in map 2. Any explorers on a corridor tile that is removed are taken out of action, and any hostiles on a corridor tile that is removed are slain (note they are not considered to be slain by the explorer that blocked the third vent).

## NODE OF FECUNDITY EVENT TABLE

| ROLL  | EVENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | <b>All Is Dust:</b> Each explorer loses 1 inspiration point, to a minimum of 0.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2-3   | <b>Unfulfilled Destiny:</b> Do not make a destiny roll at the start of the next turn.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 4-6   | <b>Not Dead Yet:</b> If possible, the leader must pick one hostile that has been slain during the combat encounter and has not returned to the battlefield, and then deploy them as close to an explorer as possible.                                                                                                                           |
| 7-10  | <b>Walking Pox:</b> In the next turn, whenever a hostile whose hostile reference card contains the words 'guardsman' or 'cultist' is slain, roll the Blackstone dice. On a roll of 1-7, place a Poxwalker that is not on the battlefield in the hex that hostile was in. Treat the Poxwalker as part of that hostile's group until it is slain. |
| 11-14 | <b>Infectious Mirth:</b> Remove one wound counter from each hostile that has at least one wound counter (if they only have grievous wound counters, instead replace one grievous wound counter with two wound counters).                                                                                                                        |
| 15-17 | <b>Inspiration:</b> The leader can pick one explorer. That explorer receives 1 inspiration point.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 18-19 | <b>Heroic Effort:</b> The leader picks an explorer that is out of action. Deploy the explorer in the same hex as another explorer or as close to another explorer as possible, and then make a vitality roll for them. If no explorers are out of action, the leader picks an explorer. Make a vitality roll for that explorer.                 |
| 20    | <b>Lucky Find:</b> The leader picks one explorer. That explorer takes one discovery card.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

## CONQUERING THE NODE

The Node of Fecundity is conquered if, at the end of the combat, the explorers that are not out of action are in the maglev transport escape chamber. If all of the explorers are out of action at the start of the event phase, this combat ends and the explorers must return to Precipice.

## REWARDS

If the explorers conquer the Node of Fecundity, they add the Node of Fecundity card to the databank. In addition, the explorer who blocked the third vent gains the Immuno-Stimms medical marvel card.



## QUEST TO END THE PLAGUES

# NODE OF ENDINGS

*Time moves strangely here, and you feel you have aged in the time it took for the maglev transport's doors to open. Alternately quicksilver and treacle-slow, you must fight through the confusion to bring an end to this plague.*

### HOSTILE GROUPS

- 1** 6 Poxwalkers (P)  
3 Plague Marines (PM)
- 2** 7 Traitor Guardsmen (T)
- 3** 7 Traitor Guardsmen (TG)
- 4** 2 Rogue Psykers (RP)  
6 Cultists (C)



## NODE RULES

**No Escape:** The explorers may not use the Summon (4+) action whilst in the Node of Endings.

**Echoing Pain:** Each explorer must take a set of Echo counters at the start of the combat (there are five sets of four Echo counters, each with a different symbol, and each explorer must take one of these five sets – if there is a retinue character, the leader chooses a set for the retinue character).

After each explorer's activation, that explorer must place one of their Echo counters on a hex that they moved from (if the explorer did not move, they do not place an Echo counter). In the case of Rein & Raus, their player must place one of their Echo counters on a hex that either Rein or Raus moved from in their activation. If an explorer would place an Echo counter on the battlefield, but all four of their Echo counters are already on the battlefield, first remove the Echo counter furthest from the explorer.

When making behaviour rolls and attacks for hostiles, treat Echo counters as explorers, and when an explorer's Echo counter is the target of an attack, resolve the attack as if the explorer was in that hex. When an attack that targets an Echo counter has been resolved, remove that Echo counter from the battlefield.

## NODE OF ENDINGS EVENT TABLE

| ROLL  | EVENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | <b>All Is Dust:</b> Each explorer loses 1 inspiration point, to a minimum of 0.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2-3   | <b>Unfulfilled Destiny:</b> Do not make a destiny roll at the start of the next turn.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 4-6   | <b>Not Dead Yet:</b> If possible, the leader must pick one hostile that has been slain during the combat encounter and has not returned to the battlefield, and then deploy them as close to an explorer as possible.                                                                                                           |
| 7-10  | <b>Twisted Time:</b> In the next initiative step, shuffle the hostile initiative cards and the explorer initiative cards separately; then deal the hostile initiative cards before the explorer initiative cards.                                                                                                               |
| 11-14 | <b>Future Echoes:</b> Each explorer who has at least one Echo counter on the battlefield suffers a wound.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 15-17 | <b>Inspiration:</b> The leader can pick one explorer. That explorer receives 1 inspiration point.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 18-19 | <b>Heroic Effort:</b> The leader picks an explorer that is out of action. Deploy the explorer in the same hex as another explorer or as close to another explorer as possible, and then make a vitality roll for them. If no explorers are out of action, the leader picks an explorer. Make a vitality roll for that explorer. |
| 20    | <b>Lucky Find:</b> The leader picks one explorer. That explorer takes one discovery card.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

## CONQUERING THE NODE

The Node of Endings is conquered if, at the end of a turn, the explorers that are not out of action are in the Plague Chamber and there are no hostiles visible to the explorers. If all of the explorers are out of action at the start of the event phase, this combat ends and the explorers must return to Precipice.

## REWARDS

If the explorers conquer the Node of Endings, they add the Node of Endings card to the databank. In addition, the explorer who was last to move into the Plague Chamber gains the Auto-Medicac medical marvel card.



# FESTERING EVIL

The dangers inside the Blackstone Fortress are myriad. The colossal structure's wakening weapons systems and the roving mobs of heretical warriors can annihilate unprepared explorers with equal efficiency. But a new source of danger has been discovered deep within the ancient chambers, one that threatens to bring Precipice and all aboard it to a truly grotesque end...

As word of the Blackstone Fortress' presence continues to spread throughout the stars, rumours regarding its existence begin to solidify into facts. Following these communications, ever more agents of the Imperium, the Dark Gods and the xenos races set out to locate the ancient structure, each desiring to harness some portion of its apocalyptic power for themselves.

However, tracking the awe-filled tales to their source is no easy task. In a vast galaxy, riven by war and flooded with the roiling energies of the warp, there are more dark and uncharted corners than could be searched in a billion lifetimes. It is hardly surprising, then, that those already versed in spreading their vile contagions to every recess of space are among the few who have found what they were looking for.

## THE INFESTED BRETHREN

In the wake of the Great Rift's opening, the Death Guard warband known as the Infested Brethren rose to infamy in the Scourge Stars. As members of the 6th Plague Company, these putrid warriors were tasked with overseeing the fleets of decrepit cruisers and corroded battle barges that allowed the Traitor Legion to seed their diseases throughout realspace. On multiple occasions they assaulted Imperial vessels in the midst of warp-jumps. After breaching the ships' hulls, the warband sent in waves of Plague Marines and Poxwalkers to obliterate the crew. The few who survived these devastating boarding actions faced a fate far worse than death, watching the ship they had once crewed being twisted into a dread vessel of the Death Guard, and themselves becoming incubators for new strains of daemonic pathogens.

It was during one such assault that the Infested Brethren learnt of the Blackstone Fortress. Having infected a captured ship's Astropaths with a grotesque disease – one that caused the victims' flesh to mutate into the esoteric shapes of their psychic visions – the warband were given a glimpse of the ancient space station. One Astropath's body tore itself apart trying to rearrange itself into the fortress' shifting form, and though this doomed psyker had no knowledge of where the colossal structure was, the mere fact that it existed gave the Infested Brethren a newfound and malefic sense of purpose.

Through horrific rituals, a new plague was created, one that sought out those with knowledge of the Blackstone Fortress and projected their thoughts into the warp. The Infested Brethren followed the spread of

this plague across the galaxy, drawn by the festering stench of the victims' rotting minds. Piece by piece they learnt more about the fortress, of its location in an empty void of space, and of the unfathomable power that lay dormant within its chambers. They harvested the putrefied souls of those in whom their plague had taken root and with the gathered septic essence flooded the engines of their cruiser – the *Cyst of Sorrow*. When the vessel's warp drives were activated, a gaping rent was torn in the fabric reality. To the sound of the Plague God's rattling laughter, the *Cyst of Sorrow* was pulled through this warp fistula and embedded in the structure of the Blackstone Fortress.

The warp transposition shattered the *Cyst of Sorrow* into several pieces, and these fragments were scattered throughout the fortress. Where each came to rest, there did new infections take hold. Nurglesque diseases that the Infested Brethren had been cultivating began to seep into the surrounding chambers, polluting the arcane mechanisms that gave the spaces shape and mutating them into foul configurations. As the warband's warriors delved into their

labyrinthine surroundings, so too did they act as vectors of transmission, accelerating the spread of corruption and drawing other heretical inhabitants to their cause. Over time, the chambers of the fortress congealed into static configurations around the most potent centres of infection. It is these locations that now form the loci for the Infested Brethren's fecund rituals, the sites from which their plagues are propagating, and in which their abhorrent efforts to take control of the Blackstone Fortress are enacted.



– Rogue Trader Neyam  
Shai Murad  
Warrant of Trade J405-8H77Q  
Datalog Entry: 38–10–012

**MISSION:** Western Reaches –  
Blackstone Fortress

**STATUS:** Maintaining defence of Precipice.

**NOTES:** Disease rampant aboard  
Precipice. Xenos and technological  
pathogens ruled out. Attrition rate high  
– expected to increase exponentially  
with time. Possible source of threat  
identified as Death Guard warband.  
Attack parameters being formulated.

**PERSONAL:** There are those enemies of the  
Imperium that even the bravest soldier  
hopes never to encounter. I fear that we  
are now faced with such a foe. However,  
this does not change the necessary  
course of action. With the Emperor's  
strength we shall gouge the Heretic  
Astartes out.

## OUTBREAKS ON PRECIPICE

The daemonic diseases carried by the Infested Brethren have spread to Precipice. At first these maladies were brought onto the station by explorers returning from the fortress, but now the plagues are being transmitted to the station by undetectable methods, possibly via the technologies of the fortress itself. Edicts put forward by the council requiring infected individuals to be ejected from air locks have done little to slow the rampant contagions. Along with the fortress' activating weapons systems, these outbreaks threaten to eradicate those in the station's vicinity. A host of deadly ailments have already been catalogued, but three specific plagues have been identified as posing the greatest danger to Precipice's survival.

The first of these has come to be known as the Bleeding Maw. In those who are infected, any injury suffered stubbornly refuses to heal. Over time, flesh wounds continue to grow, yawning open to reveal the raw musculature beneath the skin, while from the gaping slash comes a perpetual daemonic scream. Left unchecked, the smallest cut will expand to rip its agonized bearer completely in half.

Standard stimms and medi-tools serve to delay this gruesome eventuality, but even skin that has been stapled together and flash-cauterised will still wrench itself open once more if the underlying disease persists.

The second plague propagates not amongst the denizens of Precipice, but within the inhabitants of the Blackstone Fortress. Known as the Mouldering, it fills the heretical warriors and snarling monstrosities it touches with Nurgle's most loathsome fecundity. Their bodies become swollen with putrid juices, while mounds of adipose flesh grow into dense clusters around their bodies. As the hosts' appearance become increasingly like a sun-ripened corpse, so too does their ability to shrug off mortal injury increase. Slugs fired directly into them are absorbed harmlessly by rolls of necrotic blubber, and where energy-wreathed blades cleave clean through an exposed limb, a new appendage forms as the outpouring pus quickly solidifies. Most disturbing of all is that those in the grip of this disease are overcome by a strange and hateful mirth, causing their sadistic chortles to echo ceaselessly through the fortress' winding corridors.

The third plague is perhaps the most dangerous to those who would explore the Blackstone Fortress, yet it is also the least understood. It is referred to by several names – the never fever, the yester-phage, the deathly aperture – but amongst the council of Precipice it has officially been labelled the Chronopox. As far as those data traders brave enough to gather knowledge regarding this disease can glean, it is a daemonic pathogen for which the vector is the victim's own timestream. The Chronopox gathers the most vile maladies its host has or possibly could have suffered in any of their potential pasts or futures. The wasting effects of a narrowly avoided rad-bullet, the flesh-melting aftermath of a virus bomb that was never detonated, the toxic sting of a future assassin's blade – all are brought to fruition by this reality-bending plague.

The horrific virulence of these three plagues alone should have wiped out every last inhabitant of Precipice within a matter of days. It is only due to the presence of a particularly strange and resourceful band of travellers that a mission can be launched to eradicate the source of these diseases.

## TECHNO-SAVANTS

One of the earliest ships to arrive at Precipice was a vessel crewed by the simian-like xenos called the Jokaero. These shaggy, bipedal creatures are known throughout the stars for their innate understanding of machinery and technological apparatuses, boasting the apparent ability to comprehend and replicate any device – provided they are supplied with the raw materials to do so. However, as they are either unable or have no desire to communicate with other species, little else is known about the Jokaero. They are seemingly driven by only two instincts - survival, and a rapacious hunger to study and create new technologies. In pursuit of these two ends the Jokaero avoid the other warlike races that inhabit the galaxy, except to raid worlds for the materials needed for their creations.

Though the Jokaero at Precipice do not venture onto the Blackstone Fortress themselves, they have become essential to the continued survival of those who do. Their vessel contains advanced medical facilities, its decks lined with devices capable of swiftly reattaching limbs, excising damaged organs and synthesising new bones in situ, all of

which they allow the other explorers to use – for a fee. Only by presenting the Jokaero with pieces of technology extracted from the fortress is an injured individual allowed to set foot aboard their ship. It is a system that has been beneficial to all involved, for the artefacts that the Jokaero accept as payment are typically so esoteric as to be of little value to anyone else.

The technologies of the Jokaero are now the only thing holding back the rampant spread of daemonic plagues. Their vessel – known by the denizens of Precipice as Sawbone Station – is the last line of defence against infection, for amongst its unfathomable devices are those that can countermand the fecundity of Nurgle himself.



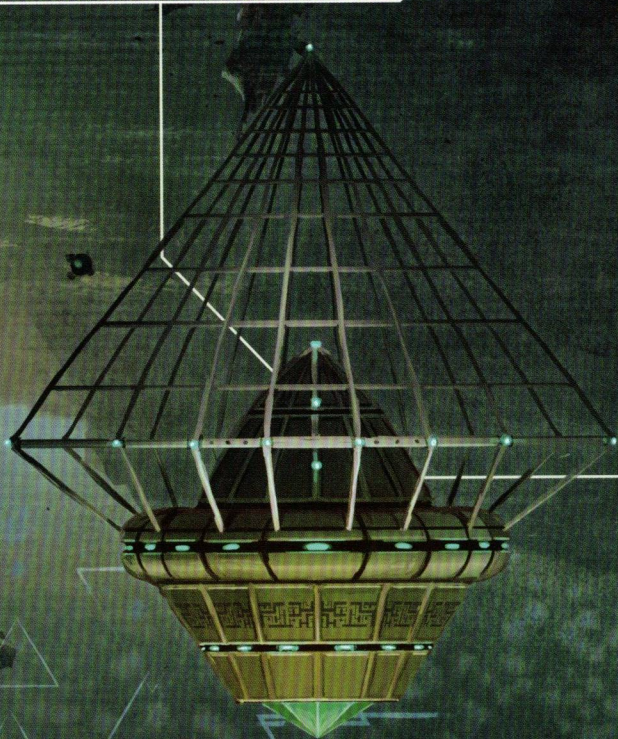
### Technoarchaeologist

#### – Daedalusos

Operational analysis: Assault on the Cyst of Sorrows

- Pathogen origins identified: + three locations.
- Route mapping at 86%.
- Combat parameters exloaded by ranking Imperial military personnel.
- Cogitation of Jokaero involvement in progress – relevant variables include:
  - + non-human species;
  - + predisposition to technological understanding;
  - + recorded use of successful implementation as servants to Humanity [ref: Inquisitorial file 0X8429872-19b1];
  - + species possibly capable of adapting corrupted Blackstone Fortress technologies for later use;
  - + compliance to the Ommissiah unknown.
- Proceeding with extreme caution.

## SAWBONE STATION



The Jokaero vessel known as Sawbone Station consists of a polyhedral lattice that extends into multiple non-Euclidean dimensions. It contains no clear means of producing propulsion, and instead travels by reconfiguring its structure to interact differently with the surrounding fabric of space, bending out of one location to appear in another. Many data-traders aboard Precipice have noted the apparent similarities between this vessel and the structure of the Blackstone Fortress itself, leading some to speculate that the two must have a shared origin. However, the few attempts that have been made to study the workings of the vessel have been met with hostility by the generally docile Jokaero. Due to the vital importance of the medical technologies these creatures possess, the council of Precipice has expressly prohibited any unnecessary interactions with the Jokaero, and has issued standing assassination contracts against anyone who attempts to tamper with Sawbone Station.