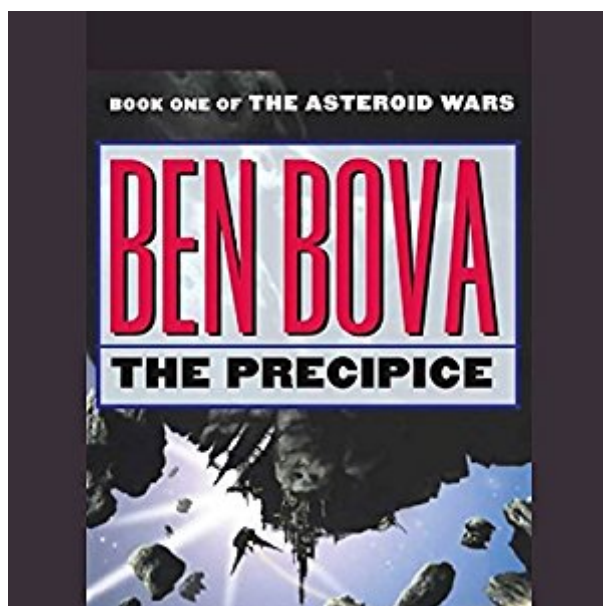


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The Precipice: Book One Of The Asteroid Wars



Synopsis

Six-time Hugo Award winner Ben Bova chronicles the saga of humankind's expansion beyond the solar system in *The Precipice*. Once, Dan Randolph was one of the richest men on Earth. Now the planet is spiraling into environmental disaster, with floods and earthquakes destroying the lives of millions. Randolph knows the energy and natural resources of space can save Earth's economy, but the price may be the loss of the only thing he has left--the company he founded, Astro Manufacturing. Martin Humphries, fabulously wealthy heir of the Humphries Trust, also knows that space-based industry is the way of the future. But unlike Randolph, he doesn't care if Earth perishes in the process. And he knows that the perfect bait to ensnare Dan Randolph--and take control of Astro--is his revolutionary new fusion propulsion system. As Randolph--accompanied by two fascinating women who are also brilliant astronauts--flies out to the Asteroid Belt on a grand tour aboard a fusion-propelled spacecraft, Humphries makes his move. The future of mankind lies in Randolph's hands. The Asteroid Wars have begun. --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Precipice (2001) is the first SF novel of the Asteroid Wars series. In this volume, Earth has reached the greenhouse cliff, the threshold where the world's climate changes drastically in a very short time. Although the greenhouse effect had been hotly debated, the current evidence could not be rebutted. The icecaps were melting and storms tore savagely at human infrastructure. Dan

Randolph is one of the victims of the new weather patterns. Jane Scanwell died trying to rescue people stranded by the flooding of the Tennessee River. Dan had not known how much he loved her until she was no longer there. Randolph is determined to alleviate the greenhouse effects as much as possible by moving industry into space and providing raw materials from the Belt. Only one asteroid has ever been brought to Earth in the past; of course, the operation bankrupted Sam Gunn, but it was successful. Now Dan needs a less expensive way to mine the Belt and Martin Humphries shows him such a method. Lyall Duncan has developed a small fusion power source. Unlike most such sources, the Duncan fusion device is small enough to fit into an old cruise missile used as a test vehicle. The results of this test suggest that a large version would be capable of powering a manned vehicle to the Belt in record time. Although Humphries has offered to underwrite the initial voyage, Dan just doesn't trust him. Humphries has made his billions by merging smaller companies into his Humphries Space Systems and Randolph's company, Astro Manufacturing, seems to be the old Humber's next target.

As a disclaimer for my review, I'll mention that I'm trying to read all of the Grand Tour (17ish) books by Ben Bova in their chronological order - which is not the order they were written in. The Precipice is the eighth book in the chronological order and the first book of the Asteroid Wars, a four book series that takes place in the Grand Tour universe. Like many of the Grand Tour books, The Precipice takes place a few years after the events of its predecessor, Moonwar. While I won't try to read the mind of Ben Bova, it appears to be the first book to really try to fuse the books that revolved around Dan Randolph (PowerSat, Privateers, Empire Builders) with those that revolved around Doug Stravenger (Moonbase, Moonwar). The Grand Tour universe is not a seamless environment, and this might affect the enjoyment of people who like their fiction worlds to be well controlled and precise. If you don't mind a little suspension of disbelief in terms of timelines and the questionable age of some of the people involved, read on. In The Precipice, the Earth stands on the brink of collapse. Massive climate change has killed millions, the world is over populated and resources are stretched to the breaking point. Religious fundamentalist of The New Morality continue to strengthen their hold over national and international government bodies, creating a massive, often backwards bureaucracy. Dan Randolph, CEO of Astro Corporation is near the end of the rope financially, as Astro's corporate profits continue to fall. However, when he is approached by a man with a solution (Humphries), he can't say no, even though he suspects Humphries is trying to gain control of Astro Corp and oust him from the board of directors.

Another fantastic story about Dan Randolph the owner of Astro Manufacturing.- Dan Randolph is the main character of other Ben Bova novels, Powersat (2005), Privateers (1985), Empire Builders (1993), & Precipice (2001).- This novel is the 4th Dan Randolph novel in the Grand Tour Series.- This novel is the 8th novel in the Grand Tour Series.Summary-"Precipice" continues the Grand Tour series with everything you would expect from a Dan Randolph book. "Precipice" focuses very strongly on Dan Randolph, the aging CEO of Astro Manufacturing's, goal to save the planet earth from a man-made "Greenhouse Cliff" by trying to move manufacturing from earth-based factories to outer-space asteroid mining. Dan is a capitalist, wealthy industrialist entrepreneur, former astronaut turned environmentalist who will do anything and give anything to try and convince the world, or just his investors, that it is possible to launch a long range vessel to the asteroid belt, drag a rock back to a near earth orbit to extract the minerals and it is possible to do this at a profit. Dan cannot do this alone. Together with a billionaire who offers the designs to a fusion based propulsion system at a price, an old friend who offers the financial backing of a city desperate for clean water, a ballsy pilot who will do anything for a buck, a Nobel Scientist turned lunar exile by the use of Nanotechnology and a former lunar fugitive turned personal security guard Dan Randolph will build a ship, take it to the belt and bring back an asteroid to mine for minerals or die trying. Personal thoughts-I loved this book.

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