Death Rally

V1.0 by Songless

Welcome to Purgatory, where life is short and hot, fast and deadly. Heaven and Hell lie beyond the finish line, but there is always another race after your last one has ended.

This is a place where your car is your messiah, your guns the holy writ of the only faith that matters, and the Adversary… the Adversary is the devil that looms above all. Master of the *Death Rally*, the Adversary rules unbeaten, the flame-crowned demon king of the race who awaits all those who reach the highest position and thus may challenge him - a challenge none have returned from alive.

The *Death Rally* is a racing tournament without end, drivers competing with one another for money, fame, and the sheer thrill of the race. A lethal underground racing circuit, every car in the competition is loaded not just with blazing engines and tires, but also heavy armor and some of the most powerful weapons known to man. More than a few drivers end the race not at the finish line, but at the side of the road with their car little more than a burning, bullet-ridden wreck.

Yet none of them ever truly die, for this is the *Death Rally*, and the race is eternal.

For your stay here, you will compete in the tournament, racing and fighting with all that you have until you reach the very top… if you can. Make your way up the ladder, buying better cars and upgrades, using dirty tricks from sabotage to minelayers. Be shining perfection. You must stand at the top, no matter how long it takes or how many times you win and lose. So long as you still have the money to keep your car moving, you will not know true defeat - so long as the next race awaits, death will not claim you. But remember: though losing a race might not be your end, the longer you take to rise to the top, the more difficult it will be for you. Your rivals race as you do, and the more victories they claim the more time and effort you'll need to eclipse them.

Once you stand at the top, the greatest driver in the tournament, your final challenge awaits.

You will challenge the Adversary, and risk your life to claim mastery over the *Death Rally*. This final race will see your victory or your death - there are no do-overs, and should you die here the Gauntlet ends with your failure. But should you stand triumphant over the Adversary through firepower or speed, you will have mastered the race and be free.

Now. Get ready to go!

This jump is a **Gauntlet**. You have no Perks, powers or other advantages beyond your Body Mod. You start with **0CP**.

Background

Background? What are you talking about, stranger? This is the Death Rally, nobody cares who you were before you stepped behind the wheel. A famous superstar, a legendary sci-fi hero, or just some schmuck who accidentally came across the races and decided to stick around... the only thing that matters is how you handle yourself on the track, burning rubber and bringing the pain to your opponents. Everything else is unimportant details left by the wayside.

You may freely choose whatever age and gender you are, as well as whether or not you have any in-setting memories or not.

Perks

- **Driver (Free for All)**

Congratulations, you know how to drive a car! I'm sure that will get you very far in this particular corner of the multiverse. Still, the basic driving skills you'll need to at least have a chance to reach the finish line are… kind of the minimum starting point to even race at all, so here you go. It's nothing fancy, but it'll get you there so long as your car doesn't get a few too many bullet holes. Comes with the ability to pull your new driver's license out of thin air whenever you like, for however much that'll do for you.

- **Competitive Spirit (Free or 50CP)**

Your car's just one of many, and no matter how well you drive or how close that finish line may seem to be… you'll need to know what your adversaries are doing, as well. Any time you're in some kind of competition or conflict, you'll have an innate sense of how well those closest to you are doing. Even if you can't see your opponent's cars behind a turn in the road or clouds of smoke and burning rubber, you'll still know how damaged their cars are if they come under fire and when someone takes the lead by passing another. Even if this won't tell you their exact positions, simply knowing who's at death's door will let you pick out opportune targets for your guns.
You have this ability for free during the Gauntlet, but must pay 50CP to keep it once your time here is over.

- **Roadside Treasures (Free or 100CP)**

A strange little side effect of the *Death Rally's*… unusual nature, is that the tracks will often spawn collectible power-ups. Ammo pickups instantly provide some extra bullets for your guns (without even needing to be loaded), dollar pickups instantly pad your bank account with some bonus cash, lightning bolts refill your engine's Turbo supply… there are even wrenches that instantly undo some of the damage your car will inevitably suffer during your time here! The one bad collectible is the mushroom 'power-up' which messes with your vision and might just make you crash.

Just driving over any of these effects is enough to gain their effects, and with this perk you're guaranteed to find (and be able to see) such minor boosts wherever you go. You might come across different power-ups in future worlds as appropriate, but outside of *Death Rally* you won't encounter any 'mushrooms' or other detrimental effects like you do here… at least unless you want to.
You have this ability for free during the Gauntlet, but must pay 100CP to keep it once your time here is over.

- **Juggernaut (100CP)**

The screech of rubber on concrete, the crashing of steel on steel… and when the smoke clears, your opponent will be in a ditch or wrecked against a wall while you're still going strong. Anytime you try to use your car (or any other vehicle) as a weapon directly, such as by ramming or trying to push others off the road, you seem to have unnaturally strong grip on the road. In fact, while shoving and crashing into others (or they into you), your vehicle acts as if it were twice as heavy without the slightest penalty to your driving. You're not unstoppable, but few will dare to get close to you once they see what you're capable of with this Perk.

- **Armageddon (100CP)**

The roar of your engine, asphalt blazing by beneath you, the finish line coming closer every second… is there anything better in life? Well, turning your opponents' cars into scrap with the guns in your car would probably make things a bit better, and you're a *master*. You've got the kind of hand-eye coordination and spatial awareness that make you supremely gifted at drive-by shootings and keeping your enemies in your crosshairs even when you're both swerving across the street at over a hundred miles per hour. Anyone can pull a trigger while driving, but you… you can make your cannons *sing*.

- **Whispers (100CP)**

Although many drivers might end their races with cars turned into burning wrecks long before they reach the finish line, few actually die during the *Death Rally*… but some do, if only at the Adversary's hands. With the veil between life and death so thin around the racetrack, you've picked up the unusual ability to contact those in the hereafter (or be contacted in turn). Although this doesn't give you any direct advantages, the dearly or damnedly departed do have their own insights to share. The occasional bit of first-hand experience and wisdom from those who've already fallen to your foes might be just what you need to get an edge…

- **Shark-Proof (100CP)**

Anytime you need a bit of quick cash, there's an easy solution. But for all that the Loan Shark can solve your immediate financial issues, paying him back tends to be more painful than the problems you were dealing with originally. Except… now, it seems your credit is good for a whole lot more than it normally was. Normally, shady lenders like him might come back to collect within a day or three, taking it out of your cash or literally ripping parts out of your car if you can't fork over the dough. Now though? Putting off paying back your debts gets you barely a raised eyebrow, and you could probably stretch your financial obligations back to weeks or

even months. You'll still have to pay *eventually*, but any creditors who own you (figuratively or literally) are now possessed of an outright unreasonable patience.

- **Discreet Delivery (100CP)**

The Death Rally is… well, a mostly-underground racing competition where competitors use mine-layers, automatic weaponry and every dirty trick in the book to win. Running into some shady characters is practically guaranteed, and it pays to keep your ears to the ground. You'll find you've got a sixth sense for finding any… not-quite-legal jobs, especially in the fields of smuggling and transporting illegal goods, along with the plentiful underground connections that come with the territory. Don't be surprised if a little legwork can see you drive every other race with a delivery of hard drugs in the back seat.

- **Prodigy (200CP)**

You are the ace, the legend, the driver to end all drivers (possibly literally)... or at least, you could be. Your driving skills are top-notch, your intuitive understanding of your vehicle bordering on the supernatural. Nothing short of dedicated, long-term practice could see your skills improve past what you now have as an innate talent, not because you need so long to get better but because you're simply *already that good*. Step behind that wheel, driver, and make your mark on racing history.

- **Victorious Momentum (200CP)**

Everyone loves a winner, and cheers will fill the air as the victor speeds past the finish line. But even a single victory pales compared to those who manage to achieve a winning streak. You'll learn this truth very well, driver. With every victory you achieve, you will become a little more successful, with the size of the boon depending on the difficulty of the contest or adversity you overcome. Your car gets a little faster, your eyes a little sharper, and it seems even the more tangible rewards of victory (like the thousands of dollars of winnings) get bigger and bigger the more often you end at the front of the pack. This isn't limited to car racing either, whatever other endeavors you might pursue fill find similar boons to continuing success – just remember: a winning streak only lasts until your first loss.

- **Not A Shadow Of A Scratch (200CP)**

In a world where spiked bumpers and machine guns are as common as spinning rims and nitrous oxide, it takes being one of the truly great drivers to cross the finish line with your paint job undamaged. But for you, it seems it's just that bit easier. The more your power, skill, and overall ability outmatch those you're facing, the more it seems that you become untouchable to their efforts. Against those who would not even dream of calling themselves your equal, you could very well find that you're bulletproof entirely, to the point your modified Deliverator could stand unscathed before a Dervish's guns until they run empty.

- **Untouchable (300CP)**

Your car is your life - quite possibly literally, given the somewhat unusual metaphysics surrounding the *Death Rally*. Racers often try to get any advantage they can get in the circuits,

even going so far as to sabotage opponents' cars. No-one dares touch the Adversary's infernal engines though, and much like the crowned demon king of the rally, so too are you now considered 'too hot to touch'. Rivals will still do whatever they can during the races themselves, but you'll find that your car (or anything else you personally own) will never again be the target of sabotage.

- **Last Man Standing (300CP)**

The *Death Rally* is a harsh environment to say the least. Four cars go onto the track, each armed to the teeth and out for blood. And yet, when the bullets start flying it seems most are aimed at your rivals. Perhaps you're simply an unknown nobody cares about (yet), perhaps the other racers have long-standing and bitter rivalries, perhaps it's the favor of some dark, twisted god with a love of cars and mayhem. Whatever the case may be, anytime you're in a free-for-all such as the races here, your rivals will pretty much always go after each other first. They'll still shoot you if you get in the way or there's nobody else to attack nearby, but otherwise they'll save your fiery ruination for last.

- **Grim Reaper's Favor (300CP)**

Oh, the ender of lives *smiles* on you, racer, for you do his work and you do it well. With every life brought to ruin, every dream shattered, every nation broken, you will find greatness comes to you. No matter how or why, anytime you bring death to others you will find some kind of advantage or reward, with the power of such a boon depending on the greatness of your wrath. Leaving your competitors' cars burning wrecks will simply leave you with a sizable donation from your 'sponsor', but more esoteric rewards might find you in future worlds as well. Knowledge. Wealth. Power. The Grim Reaper has many roads open to him, and you'll never find your boons to be truly useless.

- **Eliminator (300CP)**

Sometimes, someone just needs you to take someone out. Whatever happens, a certain racer *must* end the next race with their car totaled and burning, that sort of thing. Fortunately, they know you're a reliable facilitator who's got just the guns and guts for the job. Of course, rules in most other worlds are slightly different than during the *Death Rally*, yet that doesn't seem to make a difference for you. So long as you are genuinely acting under someone else's instructions or orders, you could commit crimes as severe as literal murder and no-one would go after you for it. They might go after your boss or sponsor, but even if they caught *you*, they'd just grill you for information before letting you go.

- **Eye Of The Hurricane (400CP)**

Do you see a guardian angel over your shoulder when you look into the rear-view mirror? You might as well, because good fortune favors you for sure. Glancing hits now whizz past you entirely, a slip of your foot leaves your car twisting *just* right to avoid the pile-up ahead, and when you finally get back control over your steering wheel you're right in front of a Turbo pickup. Perhaps even better, your life now seems to give you plenty of opportunities to *use* that luck… specifically, by causing nearby foes to suffer the karmic deficit instead. So that bullet that only

just missed you? Yeah, that one might go on to only *just* hit the car in front of you, causing that very same pile-up you'd only get through with a lucky mistake, and so on.
...come to think of it, it's probably a guardian *devil*. Got a right mean streak, that's for sure.

The Underground Market

There are plenty of options to get better cars, upgrades, and other goodies as you progress through the rankings. But why not start with a bit of a head start? Many of the options here are similar to those you might eventually install anyway, but buying them here gives you a few advantages over their more mundane variants found in this world.
CP-bought cars are guaranteed to be restored to pristine condition every week, or replaced if they've been destroyed beyond repair. Even buying a cheap car or two has some use – with a few backups in case your more powerful ride gets turned into a flaming wreck, you'll be able to make back some money in easier races and pay off the repairs until you can compete at your full potential again. If you lose your last car and can't afford repairs, you will lose the Gauntlet - even if you have CP-bought cars 'in the shop' that are still being repaired.

If you do not purchase any cars here, you receive a single Vagabond and handgun for free. These freebies do not receive any kind of 'fiat backing': should your handgun or Vagabond be lost, damaged or destroyed you'll have to sort out repairs or replacements on your own, and you'll likewise have to sort out bullets yourself. Likewise, these freebies will not follow you to future jumps. You want it, you pay for it.
All cars and upgrades may be bought multiple times if you wish.

- **Vagabond (25CP)**

You'll be turning heads driving this, if perhaps not for the best of reasons. Driving what's basically an up-tuned Volkswagen Beetle won't get you very far, but it's a surprisingly useful car that can hold its own in the lower leagues... though you may want to get some better wheels eventually. It's got poor upgrade potential and the armament is basically non-existent – you'll have to lean out the window with your gun if you want to do any damage.

- **Dervish (50CP)**

This pick-up is one of the more common (and successful) cars in the lower challenges of the Death Rally, and it's a very solid car for its price. Equipped with a built-in rifle and designed for off-road driving, upgrading this car to the limit could see you get some occasional success even into the medium circuits – though taking first place will be beyond you without a lot of luck.

- **Sentinel (75CP)**

The Sentinel is probably the 'average' of the *Death Rally* cars, combining solid top speed, good upgrade potential, and a medium machine gun as its default armament. Driven well, this car will dominate the lower tier circuits and remain an effective option well into the medium difficulty races.

- **Shrieker (100CP)**

Oh, we're getting to the good stuff now. Shriekers are the sleek, intimidating race cars most often found dominating the medium race tracks, and with excellent upgrades available and a merciless set of dual machine guns built into the front, this machine will serve you well in all but the highest reaches of the *Death Rally*.

- **Wraith (125CP)**

This spectacular sports car's got it all – looks, performance, comfort... if you're looking to win in style, the Wraith is your car. Sporting some serious arsenal, a top speed that can be boosted to 130mph, and one of the most maneuverable frames in the race today, the Wraith could be your be-all end-all car until the very end if you wish.

- **Deliverator (150CP)**

The prince. The king. The supreme lord of the race. The Deliverator is a dedicated racecar that's an absolute monster even before further upgrades. The *Death Rally* rarely has more than three or four racers with these cars, and those who can afford them are without exception the most prestigious, successful racers alive. The Deliverator is the only car that can innately be upgraded with every upgrade, but even before then its blinding speed and apocalyptic firepower make it a solid contender for the top spot in a race – any race.

- **Paint job (Free for All)**

Got a specific look in mind, racer? Well, now you can freely adjust your car's appearance with a variety of attention-grabbing colors whenever you wish. Indeed, I'll even let you put pictures or decals on there at no extra charge! Give yourself those flame prints, or put a scantily clad lady on the back hood to distract anyone glimpsing your car through the dust you leave behind – whatever you're going for, your new paint job will be applied after a day without any effort on your part, and it'll always be just the way you wanted it.

- **Engine Upgrades (Variable Cost)**

Ah, so you want to win, huh? Well, buying a better car will get you some better speed, sure... but even the best car out there can do with some extra horsepower under the hood. All engine upgrades come with unlimited fuel and a Turbo Booster supply that slowly replenishes on its own even when not racing. These engines may also be swapped over to any vehicle you own, including cars from Death Rally that normally couldn't accept these upgrades (such as putting a V8 Turbo in a Dervish).

For 25CP, your ride gets its very own 4-Cylinder motor fine-tuned for the race, ensuring you're not going to stall without at least a handful of bullet holes in your engine block. 50CP gets you a heavily customized 4-Cylinder with pretty much every possible upgrade, from larger cylinder volumes to extra turbo injectors. Hear the roar, and leave your competitors in the dust, racer! Of course, for just a bit more, 75CP gets you a V6 Injection engine. Whether you're driving to hell or halleluja, you'll get there fast. And finally, 100CP will see you accompanied by a motorized

chorus sweeter than any angel's voice - your new V8 Turbo the closest thing to heaven you can buy in this life.

- **Tire Upgrades (Variable Cost)**

Sure, engine power will get you moving... but going 160 mph is no good if you crash into a wall the moment you reach the first turn. Better tires get you the turning speed you need to win, and the boosted traction also comes in handy when you need to push that competitor off of the track. These tires also never seem to get a puncture and seem to be the last thing struck by any bullets so long as your vehicle is still moving, and may be moved over to any vehicle you own, even if they normally wouldn't be able to handle these upgrades (like installing a Slidestop 200 set into a Vagabond).
For 25CP, your car starts with a set of Trackmaster 155 tires - perfect for getting a solid grip in tight corners and pretty much a must have for the grittier tracks that won't give you the luxury of an asphalt road. For 50CP, you can instead upgrade with a set of Roadrunner NS175s, a set of fat tires that give you stupendous grip when accelerating – if you want to shoot from the starting line like a bullet, look no further. 75CP grant you a set of Slidestop 200 tires, giving you one of the most effective all-round tires in use today. Acceleration, turning, braking, whatever you need to do these fat rubber tracks will get the job done. Finally, 100CP gets you a full set of Racer X230 tires. Easily twice the width of a 'mundane' tire, these beauties will see you through a 90 degree turn shorter than your car is long... all while you're going 150 mph.

- **Armor Upgrades (Variable Cost)**

You could just head out onto the track with nothing but your paint to stop the bullets, but if you want to keep your car in one piece for more than a single track, you'd better invest in some armor. As an added bonus, this armor never seems to really weigh your car down, is remarkably unobtrusive to the point you'd need to know it's there to spot it, and may be freely moved to any vehicle you own – even cars that normally wouldn't be able to install these types of armor. Reinforced windows included, of course.
For 25CP, you get the basics, and while 'Steel Triumph' might not be particularly advanced, a half inch of metal still helps stop the mayhem. For 50CP, you get the improved Ferrochromium armor plating, making you pretty resistant against most small-caliber guns... just remember that immortality is solely for cowards and the Adversary. For 75CP, your ride gets clad in a shiny knight's armor made of Titanium Plate, enough to handle heavy guns and even decent explosions without letting the damage through. Finally, for 100CP, your car is armored in the best of the best: Accesteel. Weaker bullets will simply bounce off, and anything short of anti-tank weapons will need a lucky hit or some *serious* determination to put the hurt on you.

- **Weaponry Upgrades (Variable Cost)**

Each car comes with its own built-in weapons by default, but unless you buy some upgrades here you can't really change them – not to mention they'll run out of bullets after a while. So if you want to shoot your competition more thoroughly, buy some guns here and make the grim reaper proud! Buying weapons here provides them with unlimited ammo and removes the restriction on which cars can carry them, meaning you may freely install heavier guns into a

weaker car (even Dual Miniguns in a humble Vagabond). That said, by default your car can't carry more than one weapon, so swapping a weapon around means (temporarily) losing the original guns in your car. Any weapons you buy here are made retractable (in case you'd rather not show your guns all the time). You can also move these weapons elsewhere without restriction – perhaps when you buy a more effective car during your time here, or you've got a spaceship in need of some good ol' firepower in whatever future worlds you visit, or somewhere else you feel a few machine guns might do you some good. All guns repair (or are replaced) in a week, regardless of whether they're installed in a CP-bought vehicle or not, and automatically clean themselves to boot.

For 25CP you get... a Revolver? It's not even installed in your car, so you'll need to lean out the side window to fire, but hey, it's something. Fits snugly in a Vagabond's glove box, and if all else fails, it's still a handgun with unlimited ammo.
For 50CP you get a single Combat Rifle. It's hardly exceptional, but it's nonetheless a solid upgrade with decent damage and rate of fire. Typically built into the front of the Dervish's grill, it's got some solid firepower (and you don't have to hang out of the window anymore).
For 75CP, your car is upgraded with a Machine Gun similar to that used in the Sentinel. Using this against anything without armor is starting to reach 'overkill' levels, but when has that stopped anyone? Well, it stops those you shoot with it, but that's entirely the point.
For 100CP, you get the Shrieker's Dual Machine Guns, giving a serious upgrade to firepower. Seeing two clouds of fire spit death at you from the rear view mirror is a nightmare any experienced racer will have to overcome eventually, and this is the first taste of that eternal terror.
For 125CP, you can equip your vehicle with a pair of Heavy Machine Guns, shredding even armored cars with ease similar to the guns that come default on the Wraith. Bring the pain.
Finally, 150CP gets you a copy of the two Miniguns installed in the Deliverator, providing unparalleled firepower capable of leaving even the most heavily augmented cars as little more than burning scrap.

- **Spiked Bumpers (25CP)**

Reach out and touch someone. From the earliest days of horse-drawn chariots all the way to the *Death Rally* itself, welding spikes onto your ride is a time-honored tradition. Tough enough to stay dangerous after impacts at a hundred miles per hour or more, and sharp enough to tear through solid steel armor plating with little difficulty, these vehicular teeth will take a bite out of anyone you ram into. As added advantages over the 'classic' designs found in-setting, these spikes are installed both on the front *and* back of your car, as well as made retractable in case you want to do some *non*-murderous driving and rather didn't get the attention. Like all other upgrades, any set of Spiked Bumpers you buy may be installed into any other vehicle without issue (though the cars here normally only have space for one set). Perhaps you've got a speedboat that doesn't yet fit the 'Jaws' theme as well as it should and could really do with some extra *bite*?

- **Minelayer (75CP)**

More destructive than the spiked bumpers but also more difficult to use, mines are a frequent addition to a driver's arsenal. Although individual mines aren't nearly powerful enough to destroy cars outright, each will nonetheless do significant amounts of damage and completely halts a car's momentum on impact. With this purchase, you gain a minelayer not unlike those found in-setting, though this one comes with the added advantage that your supply of mines slowly replenishes, at a speed of roughly one mine per minute. Like all other upgrades, any Minelayer you buy may be installed into any other vehicle without issue (though cars here can normally only carry one).

- **Rocket Fuel (100CP)**

Every car has a limited supply of 'Turbo, allowing them a temporary burst of speed when they most need it. However, the normal Turbo mode can only do so much. By comparison, this upgrade is enough to send a car careening over the asphalt with speeds undreamt of by more cowardly drivers. Pushing you onwards on a literal rocket engine strapped under the back of your car, the Rocket Fuel upgrade will make you the fastest thing on the track… at least for a while. After all, while this upgrade comes with an unlimited supply of Turbo/rocket fuel, a car (even those used in the *Death Rally*) isn't exactly meant for handling the extreme temperatures you're using here. You wouldn't want to see the finish line from a distance but find yourself unable to continue because your rear wheels literally melted off your car's frame, would you? Like all other upgrades, any purchase of Rocket Fuel can be installed into any other vehicle without issue (insofar as 'burning yourself to a cinder' isn't an issue).

- **Extra Upgrade (50CP)**

Of course, you might feel that installing a set of Heavy Machine guns in a Volkswagen Beetle doesn't go far enough. Or perhaps you've got other ideas for your car and want some extra room for mines or fuel? With this option, you may install any purchased weapon or upgrade option from those above *in addition* to a car's current loadout. This doesn't give any advantages to 'standard' components in your car (i.e. those not bought with CP), but this could, for example, let you install a double layer of armor or a second minelayer for a larger mine supply. Not to mention that driving a Wraith with two pairs of Heavy Machine Guns is going to put the fear of God (or The Adversary) in anyone foolish enough to cross your path. When moving upgrades to somewhere other than the *Death Rally* cars, this purchase eliminates the normal 'minimum requirements' of whatever you're installing it into. Yes, that means you could get a kid's tricycle with machine guns and a V8 Turbo engine and make it work. Blame the Adversary for how *that* makes any sense.

- **Sabotage (150CP)**

Not an upgrade but rather one of the more insidious services offered in the Underground Market, this option will, as the name implies, let you arrange for the sabotage of one of your rivals' cars. This will do significant damage before your next race even begins, and it's most commonly used to cripple the highest-ranked racer on the track. That said, this purchase also allows you to choose a different victim - in case you've got a rivalry or some other reason to want a specific car out of the race. Reducing the total 'health' of a rival's car by about a third,

you can likewise cause a similar amount of damage to one vehicle, structure, or other such target in any future jumps you wish. Although each purchase of Sabotage can be used only once per day and you need to know where the target actually is, the effect itself is (nearly) undetectable and unstoppable regardless of how well protected your target is.
The one restriction on this power is that you cannot sabotage the Adversary's car - not even the Underground Market has the guts to touch that beast.

- **Trophies (Free for All)**

What's a race without something to remember your victories by? For every major competition you win or challenge you overcome (such as the *Death Rally* itself) you receive a suitably themed Bobblehead and Pez dispenser. For this particular Gauntlet, that means a bobblehead Adversary complete with ominous fiery glow, and a Pez dispenser with Pez that somehow smell and taste like gasoline - yet are nonetheless delicious no matter your tastes.

Companions

- **Racing team (Variable Cost)**

There's only one spot at the top, but nothing's stopping you from having some friends along for the ride… With this option, you may import or create a Companion for 50CP each, or get a group of eight at once for 200CP. Companions receive half the CP you do from any Drawbacks you take, but are likewise affected by those Drawbacks (even if they don't race by your side/against you). Companions can fail the Gauntlet much like you and may complete it in your stead, but someone must eliminate the Adversary before any of you are allowed to leave. The Adversary never races more than one challenger at a time.

- **Recruitment (50CP Per Purchase)**

Alternatively, if you've got your eyes set on someone here and would like to offer them the chance to join you as a Companion, you can use this option. They receive CP at the end of the jump equal to that offered to the 'Racing Team' above. Earning top spot should be more than enough to earn the respect of the other drivers, so if you need an opportune time to make your offer, that's your cue. You can even give The Adversary another chance, though he'll never even *consider* it until you've beaten him.

Drawbacks

- **The Long Championship (+1000CP)**

What, racing the race and reaching the top isn't enough for you? Well, who am I to say no to one so… dedicated. You will stay here for the full ten years, even if you eliminate The Adversary, and you will now experience this place as a Jump rather than a Gauntlet. You regain access to all your perks, powers, doodads, gizmos, and other random things you might possess from other jumps. Likewise, dying here will once more mean and end to your chain, instead of

merely losing all you might have gained here aside from the humiliation of knowing you couldn't handle the *Death Rally*.

- **Speed Makes Me Dizzy (+100CP)**

Whooaahhh maaannnn. Seems like there's a lot more mushroom pickups now, whether you like it or not. Any time you hit a mushroom you'll briefly have your vision swim and your sense of direction turned sideways, making any kind of precise driving much harder. It's not insurmountable and plenty of racers can adjust for the distortion (if only eventually), but until then you'll have to somehow get your car over the finish line while high off your tits.

- **I Live To Ride (+200CP)**

And if the ride ever stops, so will *you*. You've only got one chance, because unlike before, being eliminated from a race due to your car getting wrecked now means you die. As in: game over, no retries, you fail the Gauntlet. Or die permanently, if you took The Long Championship. Do you have what it takes, driver?

- **Petrol In My Veins (+300CP)**

Also known as 'hard mode', and you'd better be ready for it. Once, you might have faced opponents who ranged from hopeless to magnificent, but who didn't really get much better after your arrival. Now, everyone's going to push themselves to the very limit, and where once you could stop thinking about Farmer Ted and Bogus Bill with their Vagabonds, now they (and everyone else) will use every scrap of money they can scrounge together to improve their cars, their guns, or just to learn how to be a better driver. The longer you take to reach the top, the more difficult it'll be.

- **Competition (+50CP Per Tier)**

The *Death Rally* was typically a fairly small competition - you'd reach the top after racing with maybe two dozen rivals across the various levels of the tournament. As such, climbing to the top might be difficult, but with hard work and dedication you could definitely get there. Now though… with each tier of this Drawback, the total number of rival drivers doubles, starting at 40 with the first purchase, then 80, then 160, and finally a whopping total of 320 racers for +200CP. The total number of races per day likewise increases to handle the greater popularity of the tournament. The new drivers' skill levels, cars, and upgrades are distributed similarly to that seen in the original line-up, so some of those will have little more than a Vagabond and some newcomers will have a Deliverator with the latest modifications. With so many more rivals it's going to be a lot more difficult to stand out, so you'd better be ready to win and win consistently.

- **Bullet Hell (+50CP)**

The bullets fly fast and free in the *Death Rally*, but even so there were limits… until now. Your opponents gain a vastly greater supply of ammo for all their weapons, meaning that the races will devolve into even greater warzones than before. Sure, a lot of that gunfire is going to be aimed at the other racers, but even so - try to stay out of the crosshairs or you'll regret it.

- **Ungentle Touch (+50CP)**

Watch that rear-view mirror, driver, ‘cause your opponents have a little gift for you. Every other racer in the *Death Rally* now comes with a set of razor-sharp metal blades on their front, similar to the spiked bumpers you could buy yourself in-setting. You’d probably do well to stay away from any nearby competitors, or a few scratches on your paint job are going to be the *least* of your worries...

- **Sponsored Rivalry (+50CP Per Tier)**

Money’s hard-won in the *Death Rally*; earned through blood, sweat and bullets. At least, that’s the case for *you*. Your opponents seem to have found some better sponsorships instead, and consequently have a bit more money to spend on upgrades for their vehicles. Every opponent you race has their car’s upgrades improved by one level per purchase, so for example a rival who would have driven a Dervish with Trackmaster tires will now find themselves the proud owner of a 4-Cylinder engine, Roadrunner tires and Steel Triumph armor. These upgrades ignore a car’s normal maximum upgrades just like those you could buy in this jump, and once a rival reaches the highest level of any upgrade, they will instead start adding improvements with the ‘Extra Upgrade’ option. This Drawback may be taken up to a maximum of +300CP, at which point even a rival’s Vagabond becomes a pretty solid contender… to say nothing of those who already had Deliverators.

- **From The Starting Line To The Stars (+100CP)**

You’ll see more smoke than in all the burning hells, driver, because like it or not… every opponent you might race in the competition now has the standard type of Rocket Fuel installed for free. They’re still limited by their supply of Turbo, of course, and they’ll damage themselves while using it just as you would… but even so, you’d better be ready to drive *fast*.

- **Click (+100CP)**

Watch the road, challenger, because the track’s never been as dangerous as it is now. The Adversary decrees that guns and bullets are no longer enough, and your rivals answer the call! Now, everyone except you gains a full allotment of mines for every race. The competition just got a lot more interesting… and a lot more explosive.

- **Oh, That’s Gotta Hurt (+100CP)**

Looks like *someone* didn’t pay enough attention to their car before the race. Every time you begin at the starting line, your car’s got a heaping helping of damage. Sabotage is pretty nasty, after all, and now you’re a repeat victim. It’s never enough to destroy your car outright, but losing thirty to forty percent of your remaining ‘health’ every time you start a race will still add up if you can’t afford the repairs… to say nothing of how much easier it’ll be for your opponents to take you out entirely.

- **Shark Bait (+100CP)**

The Loan Shark’s got the one thing just about everybody needs… but his easy cash comes with a lot of small print and a rather serious price tag later on. You’re one of his old customers (or

maybe he's gotten his hooks into you some other way), and you start out in serious debt to the man. Unlike the regular 'short-term' loans he usually goes for, this particular loan you've got is especially insidious… he won't demand it all back at once, but you'll instead spend half of your winnings to pay him off. Forever. Because no matter how much money you send his way, it's never enough.

- **Hungry (+100CP)**

Didn't anyone tell you enthusiasm is a poor substitute for experience, driver? Just because some shady character offers you the deal of a lifetime doesn't mean you should accept without at least knowing the consequences of failure - or reading the small print. But you, you're as cocky as a greenie and twice as impulsive. Your ability to estimate risks is severely reduced, and while it won't make *that* much of a difference on the racetrack itself, you'll find *plenty* of trouble with the various sponsors, a chance to show off that new Rocket Fuel, and any other such risky opportunities that might come your way.

- **Unfair (+200CP)**

Oh, come on! This is the *Death Rally!* You should at least be able to shoot some people! Well, seems you kinda forgot that part of the how-to guide, because your car's guns never really seem to work. Maybe they jam all the time, maybe your enemies seem effectively invulnerable to your bullets, but whatever the case may be, you'll have to rely on your driving skills to win. Hell, your mines are all duds and your spiked bumpers are as dull as a rusty spoon, too. You're certainly never gonna knock someone out of the game with your own firepower, that's for sure.

- **Prime Target (+300CP)**

What the hell, driver, did you spit in the Adversary's infernal coffee or something? You might as well have, because in the hellish nightmare of the *Death Rally* you're like an angel among demons - and treated as one. No matter who's racing or what they might otherwise have done, now everyone on the racetrack will want you dead and ruined more than anything else. Enough to occasionally ignore the other racers so they can focus on you, enough to slow down and get behind you so they can bring their guns to bear, or use their Turbo for just long enough to zip ahead of you and leave a few mines in your path. Giving up a chance for victory just to get back at you is still too far… but only barely.

- **Racer Boy, Now I'm Gonna Mow You Dead… (+300CP)**

The Adversary awaits at the end of all things, the flame-crowned master of the Rally who brooks no equals. But now… now he knows of your ambitions. Now, something unheard of before happens: The Adversary *races*. Every two to four races, he'll appear without warning as a fifth contender alongside the four normal drivers - and his sights are set on you. You'll have to survive his attention as you make your way to the top of the rankings, race after race. Yet until you reach the top spot you are *not* a challenger to his rule, and as such you will be unable to harm him until you challenge him face-to-face in the grand arena.

Ending

All roads come to an end eventually, even these ones. If you lost this Gauntlet, be it through dying or wrecking all your cars, you lose everything you bought here - there are no prizes for mere participation.
But if you won the challenge and beat the Adversary, then the future looks bright indeed. The car you won the battle with becomes fiat-backed as if bought with CP (if it wasn't already), you get to keep anything you purchased from this Gauntlet, and you gain the scorched remains of the Adversary's helmet, taken from the burning wreck of his very own racing car as a trophy for all to see.

From there… well, you may get in your car and drive off to whatever jumps the future holds for you. Or, if you'd rather stay here, that's also an option. You're the new lord of the *Death Rally*, after all, and some might find that just the place they want to be. Or perhaps you've had enough of traveling, be it at 150mph with guns blazing or more esoterically, and you'd rather just go home.

The choice is yours, driver.

Notes

The game doesn't go into the setting much beyond the occasional bit of semi-occult gossiping (some of it from beyond the grave). Why is the Death Rally held? How do drivers survive their cars being turned into burning wrecks by mines and massed machine gun fire? Why does the Grim Reaper watch the races? Who or what is The Adversary? Nobody knows, and in the end it doesn't matter - all that matters is the race, the cars, the guns… and you.

The Adversary drives a heavily modified Deliverator with greater speed, firepower and armor than just about any other car in the game, but even so he is not unbeatable. Perhaps more bizarrely, he is Death Rally's 'demon king' in more than just name. His very existence seems tied to the race, to being its undisputed master. Beating him in the nine-lap challenge at the end of the tournament will see him crash and burn... even if you don't fire a single bullet.

Yes, you can recruit Duke Nukem here. Don't ask how.

'Whispers' will normally only bring you into contact with spirits that are neutral or benevolent towards you, though you might get some desperate support even from (former) enemies if you are opposing one that your advisors hate even more than you. You normally only draw in those who might already have some useful information for you, but with time and effort you might also be able to get into contact with specific individuals. It's like a seance, except with petrol fumes and screeching tires instead of incense smoke and chanting.

‘Momentum’ provides bonuses thematically appropriate for the challenge: racing like in Death Rally might give you more prize money or make you faster both in terms of your car’s speed and your own reflexes, while something like boxing matches might make you a little stronger and tougher instead.

No cheesing ‘Eliminator’ - asking someone to order you to commit murder wouldn’t work, nor any other crazy shenanigans you might try to loophole your way around it. Whoever originally decided someone had to die is your sponsor, everything else is just ‘hows’ and ‘whys’.

‘Sabotage’ wouldn’t let you do stuff like sabotaging an entire planet at once - it only targets one thing at a time, like a single building or vehicle. It’s supposed to represent a one-man effort, so estimate appropriately for whatever you’re trying to achieve. For clarification: the effect is multiplicative, not additive: sabotaging a target three times might damage them to about ⅔ x ⅔ x ⅔ = 30% of their original condition, not completely eliminate them. Consequently, sabotage will never outright destroy a target, though it may make it sufficiently vulnerable it doesn’t need much to push it over the edge.

Transferring weapons or other upgrades to a different vehicle (or whatever) is as simple as saying ‘I want my Ferrochromium armor to be installed on my private yacht’ or some such. So long as nobody’s paying attention to it, it’ll be installed and ready to use in a few minutes. No explanation necessary or given, no need for any crew to move the stuff around, just ‘ding’ and it’s ready.

You don’t need to buy the various ‘sponsor’ inspired Perks to get their effects during this Gauntlet - you’ll get a visit from the Grim Reaper if you eliminate all opponent cars whether you took ‘Grim Reaper’s Favor’ or not. Likewise, the effects of these Perks are extra, and you could get both the Perk’s rewards *and* the Grim Reaper offering you his reward right after.

The Adversary doesn’t get stronger from Drawbacks you take - but then, he doesn’t really need it either.

When in doubt, fanwank responsibly but have fun.