



A Jumpchain Gauntlet
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No longer human, you hatch from the petals of a flower to find yourself in a damp and dim underworld, a surreal kaleidoscope of wildlife and crumbling ruins with nary a signpost to guide your way. You could spend an entire life creating your own purpose here, but one vision already fills your mind:

Find the four flames. Reach the bottom of the well.

As this is a Gauntlet, you'll be braving the well with no outside powers or items beyond your Body Mod and anything else can scrounge up for yourself, and you begin with **+0 CP**. On the other hand, if you die here, it won't be the end of your chain.

Spoilers abound!

Drawbacks

CRT Goggles (+100 CP)

You like retro games, right? Because you're basically going to be looking at one for however long it takes before you can clock out of here, complete with frames, blurry pixels, and tight color palettes, as if you were seeing the world through an electronic filter. Similar effects also apply to your sense of hearing, though mercifully not to your smell, taste, and touch.

Double Trouble (+100 CP)

Any time you need to gather a set of objects in order to reach a goal within the Well, you need to gather twice as much of them - solving new puzzles to find the extra material, if necessary. This doesn't apply to 'upgrade items' like the toys which can be used to further your exploration, but all the other collectables are fair game, from the four flames on downwards.

Ring Modus (+100 CP)

You can't hotswap to save your life. No matter how you hold them or how you organize your possessions and tools, you frequently get them mixed up with each other or misplace them on your person, requiring exceptional concentration to keep them straight or retrieve them on the fly. You may wish to consider taking the scenic route.

Let The Flowers Guide You (+200 CP)

The age of environmental puzzles and ARGs is upon you. When retrieving collectibles or making passage into new regions of the Well, the set of puzzles you have to solve in the process obtains added abstraction, skill-based difficulty, elusion, and ambiguity as if elevated one full layer 'deeper' into the machinations of the Well.

Lead Shoes (+200 CP)

You'll already have great difficulty swimming on account of your new bodily proportions, but with this, water will be even more inhospitable to you: getting wet or damp will slow you down until you dry off again, making it categorically impossible to stay afloat *and* making you vulnerable for the duration. Water is somewhat easy to find at the bottom of a Well, by the way.

Labyrinth (+200 CP)

Already labyrinthine by default, the topology of the Well is no longer simple enough to approximate as a three-dimensional space: its toroidal fabric curves back and knots on itself multiple times in multiple directions. Moreover, any fast travel methods you find won't work unless you know (or can guess) how to go the long way around.

Little Big Well (+300 CP)

Any sufficiently large closed space locally resembles an open sky. The interior dimensions of the Well are multiplied into vastness, and its dark and dank innards grow into a much larger array of real ecosystems. You'll have to treat it like a real landscape to explore, and not just a dungeon, as well as be mindful of exposure to its different climates.

Snack Sized (+300 CP)

You smell like delicious food - to everyone. Instead of often being left to your own devices, with some dangerous exceptions, every animal you meet will want to take a bite out of you. What's more, any animals who already would have attacked you will see you as a preferential food source, even sometimes going so far as to hunt you down.

Catastrophe (+300 CP)

What happened to everyone? Who built this place, and where did they all go?

A poisonous and opaque spiritual miasma now sweeps completely across the Well, requiring regular travel to stay ahead of its creeping rotation. Even if you found a light to push back against the darkness, it would be impossible to survive within its grue-infested confines for long.

Background

Beanie Body (Free)

Well, it would be a little unfair to let you go off with nothing. Fortunately for you, whatever you became when you hatched from your bud seems to be just about perfect for metroidvania exploration. Not only are you incredibly small and light, perfect for falling long distances unharmed or squeezing through tight gaps, you can also jump several times your height from a standing start or carry sizeable loads without breaking a sweat.

Items

Many of these tools you could find for yourself, but not all of them will be so easy to grab. If you're willing to spend CP, not only will you have them with you from the start of the Gauntlet, but they may unlock more comprehensive powers in the future as well.

Cartographer's Kit (100 CP)

Actually just some waterproof paper, a pencil, a push-pin, and a handful of stamps with erasable ink, but it's everything you'll need to chart the Well from top to bottom. The push-pin can be inserted into the paper, where it will move across the sheets to show your position on any maps you draw in real time.

Post-Gauntlet, you'll get as much of these map-making materials as you'd like, including extra stamps with new designs, and extra push-pins for tracking the locations of your Companions and Followers (though these pins can't be used to follow anyone who would prefer to keep their movements secret).

P. Phone (100 CP)

Normally you would use the telephone to "save your game", but that's not going to fly any longer. So let's do something completely different instead: with this pink landline, you can call me up to three times in order to get a real and useful hint on any solvable puzzle, or for more comprehensive advice on any problem which would be properly impossible to figure out alone.

Post-Gauntlet, you won't get any extra tips from me, but I'll hook you up with phone service, the really good stuff. You can use it to place calls with any friends and family you left behind in your universe of origin... just don't ask how the timelines work out, alright?

Firework Pack (100 CP)

A safe and fool-proof carrying case with room for six firecrackers in it. They can be cracked like glow-sticks to set them off without a lighter, and they're bright and loud enough to thoroughly repel small animals, or to try and bluff more dangerous monsters into thinking you're a threat.

Post-Gauntlet, you can replenish your supply of firecrackers even without the explosive plants that litter the Well, simply by placing vegetable matter inside of your satchel and allowing it to

ferment for a few hours. Fireworks placed inside for a longer time may eventually even render into proper pyrotechnic rockets, but will never be more dangerous than normal firecrackers.

Slink (100 CP)

A heavy coiled spring of plastic and metal, perfect for tossing down stairs and hitting the sorts of floor panel switches that show up everywhere in puzzle games. If it ever seems lost or destroyed, you'll find it again in just a few moments, whole and intact.

Post-Gauntlet, your slinky gives you an incredible intuitive sense of its own bounces and trajectories, enabling trick drops and throws of the sort that would otherwise be prohibitively difficult outside a puzzle-game environment, and it always retains the correct heft and weight for the likes of holding a mechanism down or jamming a door open.

Yo-Yo (100 CP)

The toy of all time. You can throw it out, spin it around, yank it back, do tricks with it, all that good stuff. Like the slinky, it can be used to hit buttons and switches at a distance, through with a much shorter range. However, it can also be thrown to bludgeon and stun or lure and impress some animals, or to break through many of the sharp stalagmite formations that dot the Well.

Post-Gauntlet, your yo-yo becomes selectively frictionless and notably more massive for purposes of interactions with the rest of the world, allowing you to use it as a highly effective hand-powered flail, machete, or sledgehammer.

Animal Flute (200 CP)

A golden little wind instrument. As you might expect from the name, it can be used to wake sleeping animals up or charm a rare few creatures, but really, its greatest power is to play the secret songs that - when found and decrypted - enable point-to-point travel throughout the Well, including through secret passages or into sealed chambers.

Post-Gauntlet, you learn two new songs that can be played on this flute: one song which warps you to a single property of your choice, changeable once per Jump, and one song which can be played to open or close new secret passages and warp shortcuts between any properties or warehouse attachments that you own.

Bubble Wand (200 CP)

For blowing bubbles with. The nice thing about this wand is that it never needs to be dipped in a container of soapy water or bubble fluid in order to use it, let alone runs out of juice - but while we have you here, you're also small and light enough that you can actually stand on top of the bubbles and use them as footholds in the air.

Post-Gauntlet, you can radically amplify the size, surface tension, balance, and buoyancy of any bubbles you blow with this wand, allowing you to use them as platforms and sources of lift even for very large people and objects in future jumps.

Bouncy Ball (200 CP)

A solid little red rubber ball, the kind that could fit in the palm of your hand or bean someone in the eye. It can be thrown to distract animals, hit switches, or even erase the “breakout blocks” that can be found obstructing passage at various junctions in the Well. If it ever seems lost or destroyed, you’ll find it again in just a few moments, whole and intact.

Post-Gauntlet, you can make your bouncy ball incredibly massive and heavy for purposes of its interactions with man-made structures, as well as perfectly elastic, and turn it back at will, enabling its use as a powerful wrecking ball.

Top (200 CP)

Let it rip! You can send this top flying with a tug on the attached zipcord, and its corkscrew shape can even help you dig through some special patches of soil that can be found in the Well. If it ever seems lost or destroyed, you’ll find it again in just a few moments, whole and intact.

Post-Gauntlet, you can expand your top into a much larger self-propelled tunnel bore, shrink it back again at will, or make it any size in-between. You can direct it to dig smoothly through any earth or stone, and it can both automatically dispose of the earth it displaces and reinforce the spaces it excavates against cave-ins, though it isn’t the fastest.

Disc (200 CP)

This frisbee can do all the usual crap you’d expect from a toy in this setting - flipping puzzle switches and all - but the special thing about it is that because you’re tiny right now, you’re small enough to hitch a ride on it as it flies through the air. If it ever seems lost or destroyed, you’ll find it again in just a few moments, whole and intact.

Post-Gauntlet, your frisbee not only retains this incredible aerodynamic power when interacting with larger creatures, it also gives you an incredible intuitive sense of its own bounces and trajectories, enabling both incredible gymnastics and trick throws.

UV Lantern (300 CP)

A relatively high-quality UV lamp in the form of a neon tube. It never runs out of battery power or requires low light in order to reveal the presence of UV-sensitive materials, and is of considerable use in a place as full of conspicuous UV-ink writing as the Well.

Post-Gauntlet, by twisting the dial at the base, your UV lamp can be used to unerringly reveal two new kinds of secrets. The first new notch uncovers the presence or absence of secret passages, treasures, chambers, and similar features. The second can uncover any secret messages or arts, including palimpsests, pentimenti, erased graffitis, and other obscured media.

Lamp (300 CP)

A relatively high-quality visible-light lamp in the form of a hurricane lantern. It never runs out of fuel or wick, or really presents any of the sorts of difficulties you would expect from a fire in a jar,

and is of considerable use when exploring the dark and haunted caverns at the bottom of the world. You may shutter it and light it again at will.

Post-Gauntlet, the lamp retains its power to frighten ghosts and ghastrs as down in the Well, allowing it to continue to repel malevolent spirits and spiritual influences, as well as to render even friendly spirits insubstantial beneath its light.

Wheel (300 CP)

Literally, in the singular. Like a hamster wheel off its mount, you can step inside this lightweight and durable metal frame and dash about inside of it at speed, using it as a protective mobile shelter against predators not overwhelmingly larger than yourself, or even placing it as a tire tread between you and difficult or dangerous terrain.

Post-Gauntlet, you may convert this device up into a fully fledged all-terrain monowheel. It remains no less protected and balanced than before, and can be driven as if it were motorized, with powerful acceleration and a spring-and-suspension system suitable for making great leaps.

Remote (300 CP)

A remote control, the sort you'd use on consumer electronics. The receivers scattered across the Well are actually a little more austere than that, but you can use this to effectively send remote commands to many of the switches and machines you find here, though not all of them.

Post-Gauntlet, this device becomes a true universal remote, effectively interfacing both with any public device that accepts wireless inputs and with any manually operated devices you already own. It will always keep its controls clearly labeled, too, so you won't have to deal with the usual cluster bomb of buttons and switches that accompany powerful remotes.

Elixir (300 CP)

A bottle of a priceless golden elixir - not very much, not much more than you could have already found and effectively used, but each small sip directly restores lost health, integrity, and youth to the drinker, as well as permanently fortifying their body against future travails.

Post-Gauntlet, the augmentative effects of this potion upon the body quickly run into diminishing returns, but you still get your own copy of the complicated recipe the rabbits once used to distill this serum out of common ingredients, allowing you to continue using it as a powerful health potion or offer it as a boon to Companions.

Ending

You can tap out at any time after you complete your initial goal. How far you get determines what you take with you at the end of the Gauntlet, inclusive of each previous reward.

The Evil Is Defeated!

If you successfully gather the four flames to open the path and successfully banish the Manticore sealed at the bottom of the Well, you can take all of your new Items with you at the end of the Gauntlet, including any you found while you were exploring.

Even if you didn't spend CP to guarantee their fantastic metroidvania powers, they retain their indelible and essential link to mystery and play - the inner child is never far away while you're playing with them, nor your appreciation for the world's natural beauties.

Outside The Box

If you successfully tame the fury of the Manticore by gathering all sixty-four eggs at the bottom of the Well and hatching for it a partner, you can also take your new body with you as an alt-form at the end of the Gauntlet, as the Manticore's ferry you beyond the Well in body as well as mind.

In enduring the journey, you'll also discover a new power: by curling up inside yourself in this form, you can enter an incredibly resilient tun- or seed-like state, becoming impervious to many physical assaults or dozing peacefully through inhospitable eras at the minor cost of paralyzing yourself within your shell for the duration.

Dance Of The Moon Rabbits

To reach the next layer is much more abstruse, requiring you not only to find all of the hidden rabbits who still take shelter within the Well, but to learn their lore and uncover the secrets they can show you in the spaces beyond the void.

If you succeed, you will transcend the limits of your new alt-form and become capable of taking to the heavens, flying adeptly and at high speeds even in thin upper atmosphere or strange skies. You can still put on your old limits again at will if you want, though, shall we say.

Inside The Box

To reach the fourth layer is a journey.