

Days gone

Jumpchain

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Two years ago, the world ended.

A plague tore through the world's population, appearing in major cities across the world with no clear origin. With an infection rate of almost 100%, the death toll within mere weeks of the first confirmed case was in the millions. But not all the infected died. Some changed, mentally at first, developing extreme aggression towards the uninfected. Then the physical changes began to show as the virus mutated its hosts. Million-strong hordes of the infected formed, pouring out of the cities and following highways out of instinct or convenience, swallowing up smaller towns and refugee camps in their passage.

Most of humanity is dead now. The few survivors were either lucky enough to flee the cities or already lived in isolated regions. Governments have collapsed, civilization has crumbled, but what life remains goes on. People try to rebuild, in the face of bandits, madmen, and the infected, the 'freakers' that now infest the world. The mutations have continued to change them in many ways, and the virus itself has jumped species to infect a range of creatures and mutate them into more lethal forms as well.

In America, at least, NERO, the National Emergency Response Organization, is still active and studying the infection. They've shown the ability to maintain their equipment and expand their operations, giving some people hope that a solution will be found. Look closer, and you'll see that NERO's efforts are focused on studying the virus, but not fighting it. Perhaps you'll find out why, if you can live long enough.

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You may begin here with the age and sex of your choice. Pick whatever you think will best help you survive in this dangerous world for the next ten years.

And take some camp credits, **1000cp** worth, to get you started.

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Location

While the game itself focuses on Deacon's personal journey through the state of Oregon, you're free to start anywhere in the world. The freakers are everywhere, and doubtlessly there's a wide assortment of unique mutations in every biome on Earth. No matter where you go you'll have to fight to survive, one way or another.

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Backgrounds

Any of these may be taken as a drop-in.

Drifter

When you lost your home, you took to the road. Maybe you're looking for a place to settle down, or maybe something drives you to keep moving. Either way you make a living off the land and whatever work you can find. Bounty hunting, salvage runs, deliveries or other odd jobs, you take whatever you can get when living out in the shit.

Settler

It's reassuring in a way that no matter how bad things get people are still capable of coming together to make something better. As daunting a prospect as it is, you've chosen a place to start rebuilding civilization. There's so many ways a settlement could fall and many don't last long, but if there's any hope for a future for humanity you know you've got to persevere no matter what.

Marauder

When the world went, it took all the little niceties with it that most people needed to get by. But not you. You may not like the way things are now, but you're going to keep going, no matter what it takes to survive. That means taking what you need to get by from day to day, or maybe you have bigger ambitions. With the old order gone any man could be a king, and the lost and the desperate make easy converts..

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Perks

Perks are 50% off for your background, and your 100cp perk is free.

General

Free - One percenter

The freaker virus killed more than 99% of those infected, meaning that you are either one of the very few with a natural immunity to the virus, or that some combination of factors allowed you to survive and develop antibodies. Either way bites and blood spatter from the infected hold no special fear for you, which is important considering how much of both you'll be dealing with.

Free/100cp - Radio free jumper

A single radio station has survived the collapse of civilization and will feed you a steady stream of information about the world around you. The announcer may change but you'll always be able to receive these broadcasts no matter where you go. Some broadcasts are simple commentary on or recountings of events you were a part of, but more often you'll receive warnings and advice about trouble or opportunities in the area. The movements of hordes or marauders and how to avoid them, or where you can find trustworthy services or places of safety. This perk is free for your time here, but paying 100cp will let you keep it for future jumps.

100cp - Who you were before

It's only been two years since civilization collapsed, a short enough time despite everything that most people still define themselves by what they had and what they did back then. You were some kind of professional, and with the way things are now some skills are in very high demand. You have ten years of experience in your chosen field and your knowledge base is broad enough that you can mostly get by on your own without support from specialists and assistants.

100cp - Dodge roll

You have mastered the very important skill of getting the hell out of harm's way. You're not invincible or unstoppable while doing this by any means, but you can duck, lean, sidestep, tuck and roll or just dive for cover in a split second like a professional boxer. If you can see something coming at you you've got a very good chance of dodging it.

200cp - Focus

Possibly as a result of the freaker virus, when you concentrate the world seems to slow while your own abilities get a small boost. In the beginning it's enough to easily draw a gun on a freaker, take aim, and put a bullet or three into their skull in the space of a second. With practice the amount of time you can maintain this state will improve, but only by a few relative seconds. Focus can't be used constantly, your brain needs time to recover between uses.

200cp - Better living through chemistry

Proper medical care is hard to come by these days, but even small efforts will show returns where you're concerned. Anything 'medicine' works better than it should in your hands, and unless it has decayed into dust and sludge it'll perform as if it was fresh out of the lab. And should you find any strange chemicals here or in future worlds, feel free to inject yourself without hesitation. Even if they should only work under specific conditions, or even for a different species, they'll always do for you what they were designed to do and the laws of biology be damned.

200cp - Survival vision

Living out in the shit has taught you to pay attention if you want to survive for very long. Keeping alert for Freaks has given you a sense for the presence of hostile creatures, knowing if they're nearby and in which direction. Scavenging to survive and avoiding danger means you'll never overlook something right in front of you. Whether it's a trap, a trail, or a valuable piece of salvage, when you catch the smallest glimpse of something it becomes clearly outlined in your vision. And lastly though it may not seem like much, simply living without constant exposure to artificial light has both improved your eyesight and given you excellent night vision.

600cp - Freaked out

You were infected but survived, and now enjoy the benefits while having none of the downsides or showing outward changes. At first you're just very strong, fast, and agile, but still within the upper limits of human capability. In a matter of weeks you'll go past that, and your body will change in other ways such as being able to digest cellulose or having far better olfactory senses. It's impossible to say how your body will change exactly, though environmental and personal factors seem to play a role. Once you reach the level shown by the more powerful Freaker strains in this world you'll hit a soft limit, but where the process will truly stop is unknown given the many strains never seen. Whatever changes do result will always be to your benefit.

Drifter

100cp - Tonight we ride

You're a drifter, and you can ride with the best. Before all of this you could have made a living as a stuntman, and even if you don't aim to do anything crazy you'll have no problem getting around no matter how rough or ruined the terrain. As an aside, you can always walk away from a crash. You might have other consequences to deal with, but you can't die or even suffer anything more than scrapes and bruises from simply just crashing into something.

200cp - Find your way

There's no point in drifting if there's no road to follow, and you know how to find and navigate them. Whether this is as simple as counting the kilometers and navigating by compass or keeping track of all the twists and turns in your head, you've got a knack for heading in the right direction. You're also incredibly lucky when it comes to finding a way to get where you want to go. This won't create a route where none exists, but if one does, you'll eventually find it.

400cp - Woodsman

Get in touch with your inner caveman and live off the land. You can recognize edible plants, skin and butcher animals, start fires, make basic snares, follow trails, and find or build shelters. With just a knife or even less, you'll survive where most people would die once deprived of modern conveniences. With the world the way it is, sometimes a man can only count on himself.

600cp - Survivor

Billions are dead, the world is in ruins, and you can't take ten steps without another pack of man-eating monsters crossing your path. You survived it all and you're going to keep on surviving no matter what the shit throws at you. Call it luck, call it grit, call it a sheer refusal to back down in the face of it all. All of that and more makes you a very hard man to kill. As long as there's life in your body you can keep moving and it'll take more than a ruined world or a little torture to make you surrender to despair. You'll keep moving forwards, for as long as you can.

Settler

100cp - The simple things in life

Modern life was an endless parade of little conveniences. With those gone, most people would probably go bonkers. Not you. Call it rehab for a life of instant gratification, because simple pleasures and the pride of a job well done means you don't need to sit in front of a screen to feel fulfilled. You can still acknowledge the utility of modern technology and enjoy using it, but it doesn't have any more control over your life or importance than it deserves.

200cp - A nice place to call home

When freaks overran the cities people fled for smaller, less populated locations. Sometimes these were small towns, resorts, or built from scratch, but not all sites are equal. There's a ton of possible factors to consider before putting in the effort of rebuilding. If a potential location is lacking something important that would seriously impact long-term prospects, like access to fresh water, you'll instinctively know there's a problem with your pick. This sense extends up to a year into the future but doesn't account for your own actions, so abundant game animals can still be overhunted while exposed locations can be fortified or other concerns addressed.

400cp - Homesteader

Stuck in the wilderness with only primitive materials to work with and whatever tools you could salvage from the local gas station, if any? More has been built with less, and you'll do the same even faster. Natural materials you work with are processed and finished quickly and cleanly with even the crudest of tools, and what you build will go on to stand up to wear and tear as well as any modern construction. You're also a passable architect and engineer, understanding both how to design large structures and how to get the materials to where they need to go with little more than logs, pulleys, and earthworks.

600cp - We are managing the apocalypse

One man alone cannot change the world, but if he can wrangle enough people into helping then the entire course of history can be shifted. If there's one thing you can contribute to this miserable world it's the ability to make people listen to you, to get them organized and working together. Even in extreme conditions, even with doom hanging over your heads and no hope in sight you push them to move, to fight, to keep living. When things are more peaceful people are far more willing to open up with their problems or hear you out, and barring a massive betrayal or mistake on your part people will be far more inclined to accept your advice and judgements.

Marauder

100cp - Jump out and whack them

You don't want a stand-up fight. You hide, wait for someone to walk past, and run at them when their back is turned to beat them over the head. It's simple, but it works. You're good at hiding, and good at going from hiding to top speed very quickly and quietly. Bushes, tall grass and the like are like fog for you, parting easily and quietly and hiding you impossibly well. As long as most of your body is hidden you can poke your head out to look around and no one will notice.

200cp - In the land of the mad

How do a bunch of lunatics and backstabbing murderers work together? Surprisingly well, when you're around. You've got a twisted sort of charisma and can recognize the flaws of personality and cracks in the psyche that will let your arguments worm their way into someone's brain. It's a talent that works best on the broken and unstable, and is ideal for arrangements of a purely temporary nature. With time and effort, you could build off this to set yourself up as a warlord, gang leader or cult figure.

400cp - Robber baron

The good thing about robbing people is that it's an easy way to get ahead in life. The downside is that eventually you'll run out of things to steal since doing so will probably kill all the people that made the stuff as a consequence. This is a problem for anyone but you, because whenever you steal something you can choose to steal a copy of the target loot instead. You could always choose to steal the original and the copy at the same time, but then there might not be anything for you to steal in the future. This perk works on physical objects only, not people, and you can toggle it on and off.

600cp - Getting away with murder

Word doesn't really get around these days. There's radio, and people carry messages, but it's all disorganized. Good times to be a bandit, and you've got a real knack for escaping the consequences of your illicit actions. Victims don't get a good look at your face. Trails are muddled. Bounty hunters look for easier targets. Just finding you will be a chore, and pinning anything on you will be an uphill battle. This doesn't help in direct combat, and if you make a big enough mess then consider it might be time to take things elsewhere. Attract too much attention and your luck will eventually run out.

Items

Items are 50% off for your background, and your 100cp item is free.

Drifter

100cp - Sweet ride

If you're going to be a drifter, you need a way to get around. Most use motorcycles given the current state of the roads, but you can choose to own any street-legal vehicle from a jeep to the largest motorhomes. Whatever you choose is customized and tricked out in ways that would mean massive work on an average example to match, from a souped-up combat bike to a motorhome with solar panels and enough other gadgets to maintain a comfy life in the post-apocalypse. Maybe don't tell anyone your ride never needs refueling, given the slow depletion of fuel supplies.

200cp - Bolt and blade

It's a dangerous world, and in your travels you've picked up a very nice knife and crossbow to help see you through it. The exact design of the knife is up to you, but you're sure to find it helpful both in combat and more productive uses. The crossbow is very powerful, completely silent, and utterly reliable. Taking these items gives you some skill in using both in a fight, as well as a fair hand at making new ammunition for the crossbow out of whatever material you can find. Both weapons stay sharp and tuned without any maintenance on your part.

400cp - Leathers

Like Deacon, you have a very nice piece of outerwear that fits you perfectly in both tailoring and imagery. Unlike Deacon's leathers, yours is about as protective as kevlar when it comes to bullets and chainmail for cuts and punctures. Short of the scrap metal armor some marauder heavies wear you're unlikely to find anything that offers more protection and nothing that allows the same level of mobility. Despite its durability the outfit is comfortable to wear no matter the weather and keeps itself clean, no matter how much dirt, oil, or Freaker blood you soak it in.

600cp - Anarchist's schema

You have a scroll case full of blueprints and scribbled notes for devices that break things and hurt people. From tripwires and spike traps to pipe bombs and napalm and how to use spare electronics as different kinds of detonators. You'll learn how to use fertilizer, sawdust, and other common ingredients to make massive explosions, and there's an entire section on poisonous plants. Whenever you get your hands on new materials the plans will update themselves with additional notes that will help you design and tweak your devices for causing greater mayhem.

Settler

100cp - Toolbox

A classic bright red toolbox. Reach inside and pull out any kind of mundane tool, something that doesn't need power, fuel, or have moving parts more complex than a socket wrench. It may not sound like much, but all the tools produced are top quality and exactly what you need for the task at hand. Lost or damaged tools are returned to the toolbox after an hour, cleaned and repaired.

200cp - Farm and fishery

When you find a place to settle down, somewhere nearby will be a place to grow food and a source of clean water, which could be a river, lake, or spring. The plot of dirt is a few acres across and repels insects, mold, invasive weeds or any other natural hazard that could ruin a crop. Likewise the water keeps itself pure and draws in edible wildlife that will slowly restock if depleted. If your settlement is destroyed or you're forced to move, these locations will move with you.

400cp - The gift of civilization

You have a reliable source of electricity, and if you decide to move elsewhere you'll quickly find another one. Maybe it's a hydro plant on a small river, a rusting but still functional wind farm or an abandoned farm with intact solar panels. Whatever form it takes it's able to supply a few dozen homes and a factory or other complex facility if people are frugal with their power use. In future jumps this item can change to provide some other form of power used for infrastructure.

600cp - Ark

Modern technology is the result of thousands of years of building the tools needed to build the tools needed to perform the experiments to discover new tools. With the way the world is now there might be plenty of ruins to sift through, or there might not. This location, heavily fortified against accident or assault, is a repository of theory and practical guides that can walk anyone through the steps between bashing sticks and rocks together to design and build complex machinery. Post-jump the Ark will expand to include all the most common scientific information of your background's civilization.

Marauder

100cp - Anti-vehicle rounds

A handful of bullets that can be loaded into any kind of firearm will be found in your pocket. When fired at a vehicle they seem to always hit at whatever makes it move. Put one of these in a pistol and you're guaranteed to at least pop a tire. Put one in an anti-materiel rifle and you'll put a hole straight through the engine block...or just the tire, in case you wanted salvage. The rounds don't have any extra kick to them when aiming at something that doesn't deal with mobility. Fired bullets reappear in your possession after a minute.

200cp - Traps and totems

Whenever you settle down, you can choose for the area to become littered with traps and decorations. The extent of this depends on how hard you work to establish your new territory. If all you're doing is hiding behind a bush, there would be at most a single tripwire or noisemaker set down, depending on if you were resting or planning a quick ambush. Spending days at a site, scouting the area as if you were going to build a small fort personally, then stone or wood barricades, beartraps and crude alarms would begin to appear, or even a few lookout towers or concealed sniper's nests. If you leave your little hideout for an extended period of time all these things will eventually vanish. Post-jump, the changes that occur better suit the local setting, but are always on the low end of such things.

400cp - Goon squad

Dirty deeds are dangerous business. You don't have a support network to speak of and everyone hates you. Here's a few friends...suckers? Suckers. Stupid, desperate, and willing to do whatever it takes to survive, you'll know them when you see them. Recruiting them is as easy as ordering them to get in line, and as long as don't order them to commit suicide they'll obey you. Suicidal commands require a bit of lying, but they're gullible enough to believe almost anything. You'll never have more than a dozen at a single time, and none of them are much good for anything besides thuggery.

600cp - Victim parade

What's a marauder to do if you've stolen everything already? Find more people to rob. You eventually will. In your travels, you'll learn to spot the people who have something you want and no way to defend it. Like pinatas that scream, it will be all too easy to beat the goodies out of these weaklings. The average victim won't have much, but you're guaranteed to always find at least a little of what you need, like food, fuel, or ammunition. Some kinds of people naturally have far more to steal, but robbing such types will be slightly harder and bring more attention down on you. This 'item' only functions as long as you're in a place that people can conceivably exist to rob.

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Companions

100cp/200cp/300cp - Jumper's motorcycle club

For 100cp, you may import an existing companion or create a new one. You may also bring along someone you meet here, if you can convince them to come with you. They receive a background and 600cp to spend. For 200cp, you can take up to four, and for 300cp, you may create, import, or invite up to eight companions.

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Drawbacks

You can take up to +1000cp worth of drawbacks

+100cp - Bleached

From albinism, surviving the freaker virus, or just being that pale and gaunt, you superficially resemble a freak. Nothing's stopping you from just telling people you're still human, but that assumes you get the chance. Anyone who sees how you look will likely shoot first and ask questions later.

+100cp - Reputation

For good or ill, you've got a reputation. It's going to color people's opinions of you and shape any interactions you have with others. Even if you're known as a veritable hero whose presence would be welcome in most settlements, don't be surprised if that welcome wears out if you refuse to help them deal with any problems they have. Whatever benefits you think you might enjoy from your reputation is going to be outweighed by all the baggage that fame brings.

+100cp - Wear and tear

Don't think the warranty will cover what you put your gear through, things being as they are right now. Anything you own seems to wear down faster than normal. Parts can be fixed or just replaced, but expect to spend a lot of time checking over your stuff, or doing a lot of scavenging, if you don't want things falling apart when you need it most.

+200cp - Bad habit

It's not surprising you're a bit of a mess, after everything that's happened. Maybe it's drugs, nicotine, binge eating, or even an overactive libido or temper. It's a distraction at the best of times, and you've got a constant temptation to indulge whenever you get the chance. It's sure to end up causing you problems in any number of situations. You might be able to resist these urges, but it will be an uphill battle you won't always win.

+200cp - Bounty

Someone wants you dead and there's a price on your head. Most people would consider collecting on it murder unless you're a certifiably horrible person, but times being what they are, the desperate and greedy will be tempted even if others might hate them for it. Word of the bounty will get around, and if you travel far away enough someone else will put one out on you. If you kill the person making the offer, you will have a few month's grace before a new bounty is placed on you by someone else.

+200cp - Picked clean

It's been only two years, but that's two years of desperate scavenging, exposure to the elements, and people who don't understand rationing. Everything of immediate use, like bottled water, cans of gasoline, food, weapons? They were all looted, hoarded, or used up long ago. It's not that you can't find any of these things, but it'll be hard. You could siphon gas out of cashed cars, repair discarded weapons, or go digging through gardens for vegetables, but don't expect to find any overlooked stock in the usual places. Anything up for trade in settlements will be expensive and bounties or banditry will result in the spoils of victory being far smaller than you'd expect.

+300cp - Freak magnet

From at least a kilometer away, less or more depending on wind and other conditions, Freaks will be compelled to hunt you down for as long as they have your scent. If you're in the bounty business and feeling bold, this might be a good quality to have since they don't know your exact location and you can still hide or run from them. This drawback affects every strain of Freaker, including hordes, and while distracted by your scent the different strains tolerate each other's presence. Don't expect to be welcome in any settlement that becomes aware of how Freaks are drawn to you, and choose where you go to sleep very carefully.

+300cp - The evil horde

Once a year, a horde will form and hunt you down unerringly, never stopping until they're all dead. You'll know when you get them all. In the first year, it's a horde of fifty. Each additional year the size increases by another fifty, meaning a horde of five hundred in your tenth year here. Hordes also draw in more Freakers to join them over time, so it's best to deal with each group quickly. You can't leave here until all the Freakers chasing you are dead, and if you try to avoid them for too long the rate that the hordes draw in additional members will begin to speed up.

+600cp - The day the world ends

By taking this drawback your starting time and location is shifted to two years ago, when the infection was spreading like wildfire across the globe. You'll begin in a major city of your choice that has just fallen fully into anarchy. Whatever you do, do it quickly, because very soon million-strong hordes of freakers will form and devour everything in their path. Run, fight, or hide, and don't think your fellow humans can be trusted much with the current state of things. Sadly you won't have any out-of-jump powers or items to help you survive this.

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THE END

Do you wish to **stay** here, **go home**, or **move on**?

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NOTES

Items can be imported to gain additional qualities wherever appropriate. I just don't want to play with the document layout to type it in multiple times.