

CW4: Farsite Expedition Gauntlet
by ltmauve
v1.1

Welcome traveler, to this journey. This journey is fraught with peril. But remember to keep a proper communion with what is around you. Your colleagues will ask you to journey the rift lab to the center of the demonstration grid shortly.

Traveler, I see you are missing much of what you had come across, before, in the elsewhere. But there is a benefit to that, as if you die and fail here, you will move back to the elsewhere. And you still have your experience, your knowledge, and your skills to guide you on this journey.

Go in peace traveler!

Hip, did I ask for that?

This is Creeper World 4, a 3D tower defense/real time strategy/fluid simulation game about facing off against endless waves of a blue goo. You are Doctor Danu Seloi, the protagonist of the game, and you are about to set out on a journey. You begin at the start of the first Farsite mission, moments before the first creep attack, and must continue through all 20 missions.

This is a gauntlet. You are barred from your warehouse and your items, and your powers and perks from other worlds are as if you didn't have them. But if you die and fail here, then you will continue on your chain.

You start with +0 CP.

Drawbacks

Universe danger level unknown. Dependent on interference of incalculable threat "Benefactor" entity. Analysis of potential modifications to threat level required. Potential payoff versus added threat varies per Drawback and in combination with other Drawbacks. Limit to threat and payoff: none. Sole choice depends on you, Dr. Seloi.

Mission Priority: Choose
All Other Priorities Suspended.
Thanks, Sarge, I'll take it from here.

What's All This Blue Stuff? (+400 CP)

You, and all your Companions, are getting some targeted amnesia. You will completely forget about the plot, setting, and mechanics of all the Creeper World games. (Particle Fleet does count as a Creeper World game for the purposes of this document.)

And if Bend The Cycle is taken, any notes you try to slip to yourself are neutralized, as are any other bypass attempts. This will also affect your Companions.

Talking Head (+250 CP)

Instead of being Dr. Danu Seloi, you're instead an AI running on the Rift Lab's computer systems. You don't have any direct control, but you can talk to Dr. Seloi and try to advise him. Likewise your Companions will be affected.

Mission Priority: Explain. All Other Priorities Suspended (+100 CP)

You have to talk in a certain way, finishing anything you say with a given catchphrase. Your speech also has some very strong character to it.

At Least We Made It To *A* Red Planet (+150 CP)

The battlefields you will be fighting on happen to have a lot of contaminated terrain. This contamination blocks building and interferes with a Soylent field, so no power can be harvested from it. While it can be cleared off, that costs time and power.

Ancient Landscapes (+150 CP)

There are some kinds of rocks that respond poorly to Creeper flowing over it. What kind of rocks? Well, you'll be getting familiar with them, as it turns out there are areas of those rocks on almost every battlefield you travel to. Get used to walls crumbling around you.

On the Brink of Powerstall and Insanity (+250 CP)

You are always powerstalling, at least just a bit. Even if you should have more than enough power, you'll be slowly building up a deficit of packets to be sent. The only way to avoid this is to shut down some of your structures to let your economy recover.

And if you shouldn't have enough power, well, you'll suffer as normal.

All In (+200 CP)

Some of the missions had optional objectives, where you could do extra for another "Objective Complete" sound. Now, all those extra objectives are mandatory. You can't make the rift jump out until you've gotten all of those objectives checked off.

Deepest Of The Creepest (+200 CP)

It seems that the Creep has about twice as much stuff in each mission - usually an extra of every structure that it had, though sometimes it won't have duplicated one structure in exchange for another of a different kind. Have fun nullifying twice as many targets.

Tissue Paper (+300 CP)

It seems all your structures no longer have the armor to resist any creep. The slightest touch will cause them to explode. The only exception is the rift lab itself, which is unaffected by this.

Chronom (+50 CP)

There were many worlds visited by the Creeper, and now you will visit some more of them. You will be visiting worlds that you've never seen before, and fighting the Creeper on them. You will only visit one a day, and will be provided with a rift jump drive configuration to visit each world.

This may be purchased multiple times. The first purchase requires you to visit thirty worlds over thirty days after completing the Farsite Expedition missions, and additional purchases require double the previous numbers.

Remember, roll the dice enough and you will get the worst possible result possible.

Chronom Turbo Edition (special)

Requires Chronom. Cannot be taken with Chronom Ever After Edition

You might not be wicked, but you don't get to rest. Instead of doing it once a day, you must instead visit a new world immediately on being able to rift jump from your old one. You'll have to clear those worlds as fast as possible, too - no lollygagging or stalling so you can catch a quick nap!

This provides 50 CP for every two Chronom taken.

Chronom Ever After Edition (special)

Requires Chronom. Cannot be taken with Chronom Turbo Edition

After each cycle, there are countless worlds wiped clean of life by the Creeper. Someone has to restore them to a livable condition, and that someone is you.

Instead of taking one day per world, you must instead completely reclaim a world of Creeper and then reseed it with life - your towers are capable of doing that, if you can spare the energy. No matter how long it takes, you must still visit and cleanse the number of worlds required by your Chronom.

This provides 50 CP for every two Chronom taken.

Bend the Cycle (+0 CP)

So I see you are not so comfortable with this arrangement? Then this arrangement will be changed. Following the first rift jump, you will no longer be in gauntlet mode.

However, you will only be able to "load" one jump at first, your choice as to which one. Anything from other jumps does not work. Hybridized powers and items will be stripped to only what could have been done with what was in the loaded jump. Your Companions will likewise be limited to what is available from the loaded jump.

After each additional jump, you may load an additional jump, increasing what is allowed.

However, you don't have to load an additional jump after a rift jump, as each loaded jump gives the Creeper another trick up its sleeves. Under its surface. Whatever the saying is. As the number of tricks it gains increases, the odds of it having something you can't handle approaches one.

Break the Cycle (+1000 CP)

Requires Bend the Cycle. Cannot take with Chronom

Do you know how many the Creeper has killed? Well, you better make it as low as possible. You will only be able to leave the jump once that number cannot go any lower. So that means that the Creeper cannot come back in the future. Whatever you do, you must defeat it for all time.

Perks

I see you are a skylled individual, Dr. Seloi. These perks represent the results of your devotion to learning, and your skills and practices. Of course, synce I would expect someone wyth a doctorate to be an expert in at least one field, you may purchase either Weapons Expert, Infrastructure Manager, or Aerospace Engineer for free.

Prayse be the founders!

You three, Preach?

Weapons Expert (150 CP)

You know your way around weapons and weapon systems, and were brought onto the Farsite Project to design the weapons systems that could be used in case a rift lab encountered something dangerous. You were also working on a terraforming device to be added to the expedition blueprints.

Mortars, cannons, missiles, and all sorts of weapons are well within your area of expertise. You can quickly make changes to weapon designs as you see fit, making something that will work for whatever niche you need filled.

Infrastructure Manager (150 CP)

You were the director of the infrastructure blueprints team. You understand all the myriad systems involved in a rift-lab-created base. You know how the mining and construction systems work, you know how the processing works, you know how the soylent works.

This expertise will allow you to make adjustments to the blueprints as needed, quickly changing blueprints as you find problems in order to get better solutions.

Aerospace Engineer (150 CP)

Project Farsite hired you to develop blueprints for scout planes and rocket launchers to put survey satellites in orbit. After all, you know your way around drone planes and rockets like the back of your hand.

And you did do that. But you also know a few things about arming those platforms. Bombers are a snap for you to modify. You understand a little about the polymorphic liftic-based satellite used by project Odin, enough that it would take a day's work to come up with and test new configurations to use with them.

Spore Trails (200 CP)

You have automatic knowledge of your enemy's major attacks and incursions into your territory. You know the target, the timing, and the type of attack, up to about fifteen minutes before it happens. This knowledge adjusts itself as the enemy adjusts its plan.

So you'd know about spore targets, blob attacks, and the general thrust of any skimmer attacks.

Advanced Rift Dynamics (300 CP)

Rift science is a deep field with many applications. While modern understanding of applications like the packet linking system has finally reached the point of mature technologies, the greatest applications of rift science have yet to be implemented successfully.

You understand the potential of this field, being able to wrap your head around the mathematics involved in applications like the rift jump drive, the microrift, and ERNs. Even something like the tower of darkness couldn't withstand your scrutiny for long.

While ERNs are beyond your ability to create at the moment, you could figure out how to make them after a few years of intensive study.

Breeder Terrain (300 CP)

It seems that there are patches of ground that are advantageous for you. If you can hold these pieces of terrain, then you gain an increasing advantage. If your opponent holds that ground, they gain nothing except the land itself.

In this jump, you'll find yourself running across patches of A.C. breeder terrain more often. A.C. breeder terrain multiples any anticreeper over it, in regular pulses. In future jumps, the exact nature of this boost will vary, but depends on your fighting strategies and your opponent.

Rift Digitization Mirror (400 CP)

Rift dynamics are tricky. And you've taken advantage of that tricky nature to implement a neat trick. If you die, your memories get reflected back in time to the last time you went through a rift jump. Only your memories go back, not anything else. This means that any positive changes you made are undone, but also any limited resources you used are back.

After you leave, the reset point will generally move to sometime in your sleep a day or two back, but will still get set to rift jumps (or hyperspace jumps or strategic teleportation or similar) if you perform those.

Post-Jump, this will only work once before needing to recharge. It will recharge in ten years or at the end of the Jump, or it can be recharged by defeating whatever caused your death in the first place.

Items

Creeper threat level: high. Current status of Dr. Seloi: Unarmed. Additional ordnance recommended before proceeding.

Mission Priority: Equip

All Other Priorities Suspended

I said I would take it from here, Sarge!

Rift Lab (free)

The rift lab is a colossal building built around the rift jump drive system. However, it has many other systems integrated into it.

First, it has the construction and packet linking systems of a pylon (see below) for the purposes of establishing infrastructure around it. It possesses life-support capabilities for nearly indefinite operations, as well as enough crew space a small crew wouldn't go crazy.

It also has a generator and internal supercapacitor to power the rift drive or any attached internal generator. It is capable of VTOL flight, in order to move around on the surface of planets. It also possesses self-repair systems in case it gets damaged.

Its sensors are quite impressive, as is its computer systems. The computers can run multiple AIs without a hitch, and can store yottabytes of data. All systems have also been hardened against extreme radiation.

When executing a rift jump, only the rift lab and what is inside it are transported. Everything else is left behind.

Tower and Pylon Blueprints (free)

The tower and pylon are the backbone of any infrastructure built by a rift lab. Both can use packet linking to send energy and materials from point to point without crossing the intervening space, provided that there is a sufficiently clear line of sight between the two. The packet linking cannot preserve the macroscale features and structures of matter that is sent through it, but can preserve chemical-and-smaller structures. In addition, there is a noticeable delay between packets being sent and them arriving at the target point. Pylons have less of a delay when linking between two of them.

The packet linking system also serves as an ultra-fast, secure data transfer method.

Both also have nanolathes for construction and mining. The nanolathes can work on multiple targets at the same time without loss of speed for any targets, but cannot synchronize and work together for combined speed. The most impressive feat of these nanolathes is that they run off energy - and reasonable amounts of it. A solar panel could provide enough energy for a tower to construct another one in only seconds.

Some construction cannot be done with only energy and requires certain materials, but the packet linking system can provide those.

The towers also have a Soylent field, which collects energy from space. Overlapping the field means that power production is decreased due to overlap in the field.

Cannon Blueprints (free)

A simple mining cannon, these are armored enough to withstand some creep exposure, and capable of flight in order to relocate between uses. They run off a small internal capacitor that can be charged via the packet linking system.

Supply Pod (50 CP)

A supply pod designed to be interfaced with by the packet linking system, this contains up to 100 packets of a given material, or 100 energy packets that can be used for ammunition or construction. The pod drop full of whatever is chosen. A new one can be dropped eight minutes after the old one, or immediately after a successful rift jump. Post-gauntlet, if modified, future pods will keep the improvements.

Can be purchased multiple times.

ERN (50 CP)

An entangled rift node is a very useful piece of technology. A massive shimmering cube, it can interface with some types of technology to enhance them, even beyond the limits of thermodynamics. Since the packet linking system is rift-based, an ERN can also provide a milder boost in some way to everything connected to a packet network, with the right equipment.

This is a single ERN that will be right next to your rift lab after each rift jump, and like other ERNs can be commanded from the rift lab. Can be purchased multiple times.

Packet Depot Blueprint (100 CP)

This is the blueprint for a structure designed to buffer packets indefinitely. It can act as an overflow storage for energy or materials, or it can be used to counteract the effect of packet lag across a battlefield. It can buffer 100 of each type of packet. It costs 20 energy packets to make.

Reactor Blueprints (150 CP)

Skarsgard Abraxis may have had some seriously uphill battles against the Creeper to fight, but he at least had reactors to allow for a much denser economy. Now you do too.

These reactors take 25 energy packets and 5 arg packets to construct, but each one produces one energy packet per second. More space efficient than a miner, and buildable anywhere.

Dummy Rift Lab (150/200 CP)

A second copy of the rift lab, identical in all respects except for the dummy control system installed, which allows for remote operation of the systems.

In addition, by rift jumping in sync, the rift drives have become entangled, allowing one rift lab to act as an anchor for the other. This allows one rift lab to immediately vanish into a rift if required, though the rift lab cannot exit the rift until approximately a minute later. Like a normal rift jump, the rift lab has a tolerance within which it can choose its rematerialization point.

Because rift labs have basic flight systems installed, this is mainly useful for rescuing a rift lab about to be swamped by Creeper.

However, it is also useful for securing multiple points on a battlefield simultaneously, to have an additional dispatch point for energy, and to have additional storage for energy.

A second dummy rift lab may be purchased for 50 CP.

ERN Portal Integration (200 CP)

It seems your grandfather knew more than he let on, Dr Seloi. Your rift lab now has the systems needed to act as an ERN portal. It has the same six methods of enhancement as the normal ERN portal. (Energy collection, mining, build speed, move speed, fire range, and fire rate.) Unlike the ERN portal, it does not require time, energy, or space to construct.

However, the ERNs will be unable to be carried with the lab during a rift jump.

Internal Factory Module (200 CP)

Included inside the rift lab is a factory, capable of processing raw ore into useful material. It has three different production lines, which for the duration of this gauntlet I recommend are set to process grenar into liftic, redon into arg, and bluite into anticreeper. This alleviates the time, energy, and space needed to set up a factory. It also has a small buffer of 100 packets for each production line.

Companions

You should not journey alone, traveler. Companions allow great communion. But beware. In this Gauntlet, if they perish they will not return until the end. The Gauntlet is worn by them too.

Go in peace traveler!

I see I'm just redundant, aren't I?

Colleague (50 CP)

A colleague gets a free purchase of one of the three perks that the Jumper can get for free. Colleagues can purchase things if the Jumper transfers them CP

May be purchased multiple times.

Intern (free)

They get nothing, and can buy nothing. Still good to have around.

Conclusion

Prayse be! This journey has ended! For your courage, the founders have prepared rewards.

Prayse be the founders!
sigh

The level of rewards you get depends on how far you got before failing. All reward tiers include previous reward tiers.

Entered the gauntlet

You get a copy of the Creeper World 4 game, with access to the daily chronom missions and the community maps, as well as the ability to publish your own maps and have the community play and rate them. You also get the soundtrack, and desktop models of all the units and structures.

Made the first rift jump

You can keep your freebies. However, a note about the rift lab: the rift jump drive is set to the configuration gained in mission 17, and the prior configuration will not work after the gauntlet.

Rift jump out of a mission

If you gained a blueprint during the mission, you get to keep it. If you gained an AI during the mission, they will join you as a Companion. In addition, each successful rift jump (including the one from the first mission) lets you keep an additional 100 CP worth of purchased perks and items.

(I should note that the last mission only gives you blueprints for the Thor airship and Odin rocket, not the complete cache.)

Completed the Farsite Expedition missions

You gain access to the Reward Purchases section, and get +300 CP to spend in it. In addition, you get documents explaining how to process other materials into arg, liftic, and anticreeper.

If you took Talking Head, then you get Danu Seloi as a Companion. They have all three of the 150 CP perks that could be taken as freebies, as well as Advanced Rift Dynamics.

Successful end

If you reached the end of your time here, you get the CP you got from Drawbacks to spend in the Reward Purchases section. In addition, you gain the original configuration of the rift jump drive. Just be careful with it in other universes. If you have anything else that you purchased with Drawback CP but haven't gotten yet, then all of that goes in the "keep" pile.

Now, will you continue on your journey elsewhere, or return to your home?
Go in peace traveler!

Reward Purchases

You may only spend CP gained in the Conclusion section here.

Sound Effects (Perk) (free)

Delegates make a very distinctive sound when charging up. Now, whenever you are about to do something impressive, something that you've been building up to for a while, you can hear that sound. As can anyone else you want to hear it. Once you do the thing, everyone will hear the cooldown noise of the delegate.

Count Me In (Perk) (free)

Sometimes, there is no other way to save your life.

If you die, and that is the case, you will wake up a couple weeks later, your mind digitized in the rift lab's computer systems. This works once every ten years, and also recharges at the end of Jumps.

Test Facility #14 (Item) (150 CP)

A large, open-space test facility for testing weapons, or experimenting on monsters, or anything else you might want to keep away from normal reality. It exists entirely outside the multiverse, and can only be accessed through a secure portal in your Warehouse.

This area has a variety of security measures, including but not limited to, sensors, decontamination systems, and a stasis lock. In an absolute emergency it can be disconnected and completely destroyed. When that happens, a replacement will not be supplied for a year.

Bomber Facilities (Item) (150 CP)

A series of runways, each with an accompanying 20 bombers. They stay attached to the warehouse, but can be deployed to any location you can see, or have coordinates to, to provide air support. They can be commanded with any sort of computer interface.

The number of runways depends on your power, and has a minimum of two. The pads are capable of deploying both anticreeper and mortar bombers, and can accept new designs.

ERN Forge (Item) (200 CP)

This machine, approximately the size of the rift lab, produces ERNs. When fed with enough Arg, it can produce one ERN every 40 seconds. In addition, this one has been modified to store ERNs, and remotely deploy them.

It can deploy ERNs from the warehouse directly into a waiting, compatible machine or structure on your command, and also can recall any ERNs within your control that are outside it.

Anticreeper Cloud (Perk) (300 CP)

You can now emit a sort of aether, an undetectable, immaterial fluid that follows gravity but is also very directable by you. It can flow through walls and other solid objects at the same scale, but not thicker objects. This is your anticreeper, a protection for yourself and allies. Unlike the anticreeper made from physical materials which piles up to the sky, this can compress and increase in density, and tends to follow you in a low cloud. You may augment the production of this anticreeper aether by spending any sort of internal energy you have.

Whenever you or an ally in the cloud would take damage, the anticreeper cloud will absorb the damage, reducing its density around the target. If the density is insufficient to completely nullify the damage to the target, the cloud is completely destroyed around the target and the remaining damage carries through. The anticreeper also protects against corruption, toxins, and radiation, though this will also wear against the density of the cloud.

The rate of aether emission depends on your own power; an ordinary human could produce enough to block a pistol round every two seconds. The greater your power, the greater the maximum density and size of the cloud.

Universal Packet Network (Perk) (300 CP)

You can form a packet network between you and your allies and subordinates. This is a mesh network, where every node can be both a source, relay, and destination. The maximum length of connections and the speed of packet transmission is determined by the power of the allies making the connection, and so probably varies across the network.

This network can not only relay energy but also convert it into useful forms like health, physical ammunition, and any form of energy that the destination can use. Conversion is slightly inefficient. In addition, specialized packets at the source, such as “health” and different types of physical ammunition, cannot be converted.

It pulls off the top of any pools that the source has full up, though if informed about the network any source can push packets into the network even if not full. The network can not only connect to people but also machines, buildings, and even simple boxes. Non-sapient sources can also be configured to automatically send packets even when not full.

You act as the administrator of this network, being able to set who is on the network and what nodes receive what kinds of packets. You can also set priorities and view the “storages” of any node on the network.

The network, like the actual packet linking network, can also act as a secure, ultra-high-speed data network.

Delegate (Perk) (300 CP)

Whenever you conquer and hold territory for long enough, you can declare yourself to have won, ending resistance in the area and establishing your actual control.

However, to use this first you must have conquered the majority of the territory, and have it under your control.

In addition, you need to hold onto it. For what duration depends on the situation - the rapidly shifting battlefields when fighting against the Creeper require under a minute to “charge up”, while claiming a nation would require months of continuous control.

This is not to say that the territory can’t be lost or rebel, but no more than what was your original territory.

Orbital Support (Item) (300 CP)

A series of launch pads continually launch satellites into orbit around whatever planet you’re around. Each pad launches one satellite every 200 seconds. By default the pads will launch the Odin polymorphic liftic satellites, but you can upgrade or replace them. The launch pads can be deactivated as well.

However, these satellites are actually in orbit and so the area they can work on moves across the planet. This means that until you start getting satellites coming from around the planet, the number of satellites available will be fixed.

The number of launch pads depends on your power, and has a minimum of two.

A Yottabyte Of The Peak (Item) (400 CP)

The full copy of the data cache, split into three pieces, intended to give the next cycle a fighting chance against the Creeper. One yottabyte in size, it contains not only one heck of an arsenal, but also lots of industrial and infrastructure information.

Grab Something From the Gift Shop (50+ CP)

Purchase something from the normal Perk or Item sections. Heck, take multiple things.

Notes and Acknowledgements

Wait, did I not get interrupted?

Bend the Cycle:

Once you rematerialize in mission 2, you are no longer in Gauntlet mode, and your first chosen Jump will be loaded, perks, powers, and items all ready for you. While you can enter the warehouse anything from an unloaded jump will be locked down and unable to be interacted with.

If you have an unloaded 1-up and fail and die, your chain will continue but that 1-up will be on cooldown at the start of the next Jump. If it's a "10 years or until next jump" cooldown, then it will be available one Jump later (for standard duration Jumps.)

So about that unstable neutron reactor?

Don't worry. Not a problem. Just don't die and fail the mission.

Wait, does Break the Cycle require me to...?

If you read Dr. Hale's note attached to that cache, then yes, you know it's possible. So what are you waiting for? Get to it!

Am I stuck with the canon set of rift jumps?

Yes. You will be stuck with the canon set of rift jumps, in order.

What good is anticreeper in other worlds?

You can use it to put out fires without smothering anything living nearby, and it acts as a protection against toxins, radiation, and area-based corruption.

What good are the orbital abilities in future jumps?

They still provide some functionality.

Damper stops enemy movement in the area of effect. Including things like sword swings and trigger pulls.

Singularity attracts the enemies to the point chosen.

Rain is still a KKV bombardment.

Conversion can reverse and cancel area and individual corruption or possession.

The title image is from the Steam page.

Changelog:

v1.1

Removed the 50CP tax on Grab Something From the Gift Shop

Talking Head now rewards Danu Seloi as a Companion with completion of the campaign.