

a gauntlet by pionoplayer

There exist legends of another world, a separate plane not so distant from this one, where brave adventurers who know the way to jump the divide may gather up incredible treasures guarded by dangerous monsters. Jewels the size of a man's head guarded by ferocious wolves and eagles, life extending elixirs held by gelatinous predators, great hunks of pure metal guarded by trolls and goblins.

But the legends say the monsters are not the greatest obstacle... This strange plane's greatest defense is that space is warped there, such that straight lines cannot run parallel to each other, that one can get lost in an open field and never find their way home... The greatest challenge, one that even the most experienced adventurers will struggle with, is mastering this world's mind-bending alien geometry. But for those who do, riches beyond compare await...

As a jumper, gems the size of your head and extension of your lifespan are likely of no great difficulty to acquire for you, but your benefactor thinks it would be a good laugh to watch you get lost inside somebody's conference table so you're going there anyway.

To make sure you don't perk your way around, you've been reduced to your bodymod and do not have access to your warehouse. The spell that takes you to the Hyperbolic Plane comes with a built in feature to pull you back before you can be killed, so you are at no risk of failing your chain here. You start with **0 CP**, and I don't care enough about kayfabe enough to make up an in-universe reason; it's a gauntlet so you have to take drawbacks if you want to buy any perks.

An Introduction To Hyperbolic Space

First thing's first: your objective in this gauntlet is to travel the various lands of the Hyperbolic Plane in order to gather their various treasures and bring them home victorious. The more treasures you gather, the more monsters will appear to stop you. The more monsters you kill, the more frequently (normal) treasures will appear for you to collect. Certain lands are only accessible once you've ~~looted~~ proven your mastery of earlier ones, and there's four specific Quests that provide you with special rewards if completed.

Don't worry too much about dying, if you get caught in a no win situation or hit with something that would disable or kill you you'll be whisked away to a waiting room to go over how the run went, and be allowed to try again until you have a run that goes well enough for you to be satisfied with the outcome. Just be aware, you can only claim rewards based on your most recent run's results, so if you achieve one or two objectives but decide to try again for more you won't be able to claim those quest rewards until you finish another run that beats the objectives in question!

Gauntlet mechanics out of the way: what *is* the Hyperbolic Plane?

Basically, it's a massive patchwork of different lands, separated from each other by barriers called "Great Walls", each containing their own inhabiting monsters, unique features, and a treasure unique to them. This isn't too bizarre on its own, but the entire thing is a massive hyperbolic plane-a form of non-euclidean geometry that human brains aren't generally built for navigating.

Think of a sphere, and how the outer surface of the sphere is curved in such a way that if you draw two lines parallel to each other at their starting point they will eventually overlap (unlike normal geometry where being parallel means they will stay the same distance forever). Space curves *inwards* on itself. Hyperbolic geometry is the opposite, two lines going straight in the same direction will get further and further from each other the further they go, space curves *outwards*. This has fun quirks like letting you nest infinitely large circles inside each other, volume and area growing explosively as dimensions of an object increase, being able to make a repeating pattern floor out of hexagons and heptagons tiled together, and generally being Weird.

This won't drive you Cthulhu Mythos mad, but it might drive you crazy the more ordinary way if it takes you too long to adapt. Some of the primary ways this will affect your stay include:
If a group of enemies is trying to pursue you they will eventually end up in single file-trying to stay to the sides of whoever is in front results in them falling behind. This is your best bet for fending off large monster swarms.
Because of the way the curvature of space interacts with optical crowding you will stop being able to see things in the distance very quickly. Your field of vision (and other perceptive spheres) will be much shorter-but so is everything else's.
You *will* get lost. A 20 meter wide circle in normal space is a little more than 300 square meters. Here a 20 meter wide circle contains over ten times that much area, the difference only grows the larger the circle's radius. Combine that nonsense with how much harder it is to use landmarks, and you will need to leave paths for yourself if you want to come back to any location you've been to previously. Fortunately this will not be necessary very often.
On the flipside, this means that any monsters you manage to ditch won't ever find *you* again.

There are a lot more irregularities besides these that you'll run into while you're here though. Have fun!

Drawbacks

Take as many as you think you can handle.

Missing Memories (+100 CP): Do you have any idea how much storage space a map of hyperbolic geometry takes up? It's a lot. Sometimes as you're traveling you'll find chunks of land inexplicably replaced with massive chasms cutting a chunk out of the landscape. They aren't necessarily dangerous, but it can make getting around more annoying when you run into them, not to mention you can't flee across them which is unhelpful if you're running from a crowd of enemies and find one in your current escape path.

Traffic Jam (+100 CP): One of the most notable lands to be found here are the Crossroads variants, which normally have no available treasures of their own but act as easy access points between the many other kinds of lands. Barring one specific set of conditions, they also usually have no monster spawns of their own-instead only enemies that come in from the adjacent lands will be present. If you take this, this is no longer true, the crossroads begin crawling with monsters from every land at all times making them one of the most hazardous lands in the Plane. Fortunately you don't *need* to use them to get to other lands, it just takes longer to find the kind you're looking for, but should you still want to make use of them you will be in for a heavy fight every time.

Riled Wildlife (+100 CP): It seems that invaders have been becoming more frequent lately, and the Hyperbolic Plane is already roused to anger. Normally monster spawn rates start quite low in each land, only increasing as you collect more treasures. Now though, all lands start as if you've already collected quite a few treasures, with a slower rate of increasing anger until it once again matches the normal level for how many you've actually collected (50 to be specific, for each land)-which means it won't make higher treasure collection levels harder, but you won't get the easier more peaceful entry rates at all.

The Precious (+200 CP): Part of why the Hyperbolic Plane is so appealing to adventurers is how common the treasures are as you delve further in. Not anymore-at least, not as much. Normally it would have been reasonable-common even-to have multiple of a land's treasure in view at a time as you run through the area. Now they'll be rare, and stay rare, such that it may be several minutes of journeying to find the next treasure instead of usually only a few seconds. Other treasures that aren't "find while wandering" will be made harder to find in other appropriate ways (Holy Grail tables will be a bit larger, tortoise parents will be harder to find instead, and so on.)

Huge Tracts Of Land (+200 CP): The only thing that really makes exploring the Hyperbolic Plane weirder than regular adventuring is the fact that space is curved. This drawback drastically increases the curvature of space, making everything even weirder than before-and making navigation screwier. Lands will be rearranged to make their gimmicks continue to work, and lands whose gimmicks can't work with the greater curvature will be swapped out for similar ones that will handle the altered geometry better.

Up And Down (+200 CP): Normally the Hyperbolic Plane is pretty flat, even the lands that involve dealing with gravity do so with a magic trick that causes gravity to pull horizontally. If you take this though that will change, with all lands altered in ways that require taking verticality and the third dimension of hyperbolic space into account. This won't really be an increase in danger but it means you'll need to keep track of even more non euclidean space with hostile monsters in it.

Haunted (+300 CP): There are ghosts in these lands. Normally they're limited to a particular set of lands, but sometimes they will mass manifest to target adventurers who stay in one place for too long. You seem to draw their ire just by being here though, and there will be small numbers of ghosts periodically spawning in just about every land to make your life more difficult with their ability to ignore almost all physical obstacles just to get at you.

Greater Form (+300 CP): For all its mysterious splendor, the Hyperbolic Plane that most adventurers visit is but a shadow of its true wonders. No invader can ever climb high enough to meet the wizards that built the ivory tower, or hunt well enough to meet the huntsmen who train the dogs of the hunting grounds. You have somehow ended up connected to the full realm, and all the more advanced and powerful dangers that normally don't menace intruders such as yourself will gradually appear to stop your raid. Wizards, hunters, mighty monsters, new terrain features, and all manner of other complications await you.

Safe Deposit Box (+300 CP): Remember that bit about not needing to find your way back to your starting points? Yeah that's not actually true, in order to take home your treasures you have to bring them back to a magical deposit box that you can't bring with you-so you'll need a way to figure out how to get back to where you were before in order to have your retrievals actually count. In case you lose the deposit box, you can do a little 30 second ritual to summon a new deposit box to your current location-but doing this will make all treasures you already know the location of or have been within ten meters of at any point vanish.

Game Over (+400 CP): Getting used to the Hyperbolic Plane takes some time for most people, but if you really want the CP that badly you can cut it short. If you take this drawback you only get 100 tries to achieve your perfect run. If you haven't gotten a run you were satisfied with by your hundredth, well that's too bad because in that case you're stuck with the results of that last run whether you like them or not.

No Mistakes (+400 CP): You actually have a bit of a natural advantage here over most rogues-to ensure no unwanted fatalities other adventurers have to be pulled back immediately upon being hit, but you have the opportunity to try and weather a few hits from some enemies before being pulled back depending on how many hits you can tank or dodge. Not anymore, as soon as a full attack from a monster swings at you without magical protection in place the safety mechanisms of the invasion spell kick in and you'll be pulled home. In other words you have as many hitpoints as the in game player character now: exactly one.

Malevolent Intelligence (+400 CP): Humans aren't as powerful or fast as the monsters around here, but they have one major advantage that makes adventurers an unrivaled threat: analytical ability and tactical savvy. The monsters will try to rush you by the shortest available path, even the most intelligent foe here is only such by knowing not to rush an enemy that's clearly waiting for them to approach. Unless you take this. Take this and they will be smarter-wolves will use pack tactics, soldiers might try to cut off your retreat, birds of prey will circle to try and catch you in a moment of vulnerability, and krakens may attempt to attack you from multiple angles at once with their tentacles. You're giving up your most certain advantage here, are you sure that's worth the points?

Benefits

And here's what you can spend your points on.

Basic Gear (free): Since you're going in fresh each time, you need to know what you start out with. You have very basic armor that doesn't hinder your movements more than real world light armor but is enchanted to allow you to handle harsh environments like scorching volcanic wastes or frozen caves, and you have a simple but high quality and nearly indestructible sword. You may keep these after the gauntlet for 100 treasures in the Great Riches gauntlet reward.

Different Modes Of Play (Free or 400 CP): A lot of this world's original tricks are built around a "turn based" interaction system, but it *is* possible to experience it with a regular flow of time. Every time you begin a new "run" you may choose whether the Hyperbolic Plane will run on turn based or regular time flow. There will be slight differences between the two modes but it will overall remain about as difficult. If you pay 400 CP though you gain the ability to switch between real time and turn based at will with just "one turn" worth of concentration, and will keep this ability into future jumps. Others will not usually notice the difference, from others' perspectives it appears to only really affect you, but it can be a useful way to give yourself time to think. Or if you're really clever maybe you'll find a way to abuse the differences between the two time flow methods for your own benefit.

Rogue (100 CP): You can't be a proper adventurer if you don't know how to use that sword you've got. This gives you basic combat and swordplay knowledge so that you can actually fight the monsters you encounter here, just in case you didn't have that when you arrived.

Where Am I (100 CP): A good adventurer needs good spatial awareness, and this gives you that. The ability to track things around you, use both sound and sight to observe the location of threats, and generally keep tabs on everything that's happening around you. This does not help with figuring out hyperbolic space any more than regular spatial awareness would.

Treasure Hunter (100 CP): You're here looking for treasure, so you probably don't want to spend too much time wandering around looking for it right? This roughly doubles the "spawn rate" of randomly occurring treasures and valuables throughout the Hyperbolic Plane, and similarly doubles your chances with finding such randomly findable goodies in future jumps.

Shoot 'em Up (200 CP): This is a small knife holster that produces sharp and aerodynamic throwing knives, filling up with a new knife a couple seconds after the last one was pulled out. Knives disappear as soon as they make contact with an enemy or object. Useful as a short ranged weapon option here in the Hyperbolic Plane, where long range doesn't usually really work well and you're unlikely to be able to retrieve thrown projectile weapons.

Breadcrumb Trail (200 CP): This place is difficult to navigate on your own... But old reliable still works-marking a path. With this perk you are able to summon sturdy glass orbs to your hand with a few seconds of focusing (think about 1 "turn" of not doing anything else in turn based mode), which will be ignored by creatures that you don't want to touch or see them and can be used to mark where you've been. In future jumps you'll find that they're oddly receptive to enchanting and channeling magic, but here they're mostly just useful as markers.

Yet Another Stupid Checkmate (200 CP): The biggest threat here generally isn't actually individual enemies, it's that with so many hazards around it's easy to get pinned between multiple threats and left unable to escape. This perk gives you a mental "checkmate" warning, telling you whenever you're about to do something that will quickly lead to you being trapped with no way out. This includes if one or more of the threats is something you haven't noticed, which can be a real life saver.

Strategic Orbs (300 CP): As you collect treasures from the different lands a variety of powerful magical orbs will start to appear in your travels, granting you a significant advantage if used properly. Normally however, as soon as you pick up the orb it will activate, causing its power to gradually drain even if not used meaning that they can't really be saved. This perk changes that, allowing you to hold onto any orbs you acquire until you want to activate them-though you can't deactivate them to conserve charge once you've powered them up. In future jumps this will allow you to prevent other magical artifacts from triggering or activating on your touch when they normally would do so on their own.

Longshot (300 CP): Ranged attacks are much harder to make work in hyperbolic space, but there's ways to compensate. This is a specially enchanted crossbow that damages the area around the bolts' path, causing "near misses" to be just as deadly as direct hits. Additionally, bolts will pierce through enemies, continuing to fly forward until they hit a wall or other obstacle. A very useful option for taking out multiple foes at a distance, but it takes a while to recharge its shots, making it an unreliable primary weapon.

Another Chance (300 CP): Regular armor is good but only helps you so much here as the monsters in this place can hit quite hard. While wearing this armor though, you'll have some extra chances. This armor has twice as much durability as whoever is wearing it, but with an added twist: when the armor cracks at half damage and again when it breaks entirely, the rest of the attack that reduced it to that point will be negated. While wearing this it will take at least three physical attacks to fully kill you, no matter how hard the hit. It's not so helpful against

things like falling into an inferno or being eaten though so watch out for stuff that armor doesn't work against.

Escape Route (400 CP): Sometimes you need a way out of a pinch and you need it fast. This brilliant green magical orb is much like the other Orbs Of Safety in this world, dropping you and any allies immediately around you through a wormhole to a random and distant but safe of immediate threats location, while healing up your exhaustion and injuries over the course of a few seconds. What makes this one special is that it only activates on your command, and is reusable-recharging after 10 minutes here in the Hyperbolic Plane, and after one hour in future worlds. Always good to have an escape route handy.

Tome Of Knowledge (400 CP): Knowledge is power, and you might well be entering without a lot of it. Instead of having to figure out enemy patterns and land mechanics by observation and paying attention, this item will transmit relevant information about terrain, enemies, objects and more just by having it in your pocket and focusing on what you want to know about. Even better, it provides helpful tips, notices, and strategies for dealing with the challenges you'll face! In future jumps it will continue to provide this information for new places and things, but the more esoteric, unknown, or dangerous something is the less information it will have to offer.

Other Projections (400 CP): If spending time adjusting to this new layout of geometry sounds like too much of a hassle, you can take this. This perk very simply gives you immediate intuition and instincts on the differences of non-euclidean spatial dimensions. How it changes geometry and navigation, how it will alter the effects of your powers and skills, and what you can do to take advantage of or at least mitigate the consequences of these nonstandard spaces. You'll still have to figure out how to fight all the monsters and stuff though, but at least the spatial curvature itself isn't going to mess you up repeatedly. This will continue to work for other alien geometries and spatial layouts, not just the one you have to deal with here.

Objectives

There are several different objectives you can pursue while here, but remember that if you want to take home everything you have to achieve it all in the same run.

Leaderboard:

Most gauntlets require you to beat them fully to keep your purchases, but that's kind of a tall order here. Instead, you can turn in the treasures you acquire on your run to keep 1 CP worth of benefits for every treasure turned in (with treasures that have a higher value like grails and tortoise gifts being worth more just like normal). There are 62 different lands with treasures, so claiming 10 treasures from each would allow you to take 600 CP worth of benefits onwards with you. Getting 50 from every land would give you more than enough to take everything you bought, even if you took every drawback.

If you have treasures left over, you may choose to keep them as a fiat-backed replenishing supply with a max count equal to how many left over you had and a replenishment rate based

on how many you collected in total. Just a single item collected means they will only replenish once a jump, 10 means the entire thing will be refilled once a year, 25 will chop the refresh rate down to a day, and any treasures you collected 50 or more of will replenish as quickly as you can pull them from the stash.

Royalty Rescue Quest:

Deep within the halls of the Palace, a royal heir of your preferred gender sits imprisoned within a jailcell. Once you have proved yourself sympathetic by killing one of the viziers of the Palace, you may find yourself led there by a tiny but loyal mouse-and from there you must navigate your way around the palace walls to find the button which will unlock the prince/princess's cell to release them. Accomplish this, and you'll have completed this objective.

Reward: *Companionshio*

In addition to being able to take the rescued royal with you as a new companion (even if they died and were not revived again before the run ended), you gain a power that allows you to summon your companions directly to you across any distance or obstacle once per week. After they've assisted you, they may choose whether they return to where they were before or stay with you, but even dimensional barriers and esoteric prisons will not keep you apart. Once per month this may even summon to your side companions who you haven't imported into the current jump, though they will be sent back to wherever they normally wait after 24 hours of being summoned.

Quest For The Holy Grail:

Farther into the realms of the Hyperbolic Plane, only accessible after you've proven yourself in a series of earlier lands, is the castles of Camelot. Significantly smaller than other lands, and accessible only from the Crossroads, you will find groups of the order of the knights of the round table who need your help retrieving their precious holy grails. They aren't *lost* per se, the knights know exactly where the grails are. At the center of their enormous round tables. The first is nearly 40 meters wide and it is *quite* easy to get lost inside of (nevermind how hard finding the exact center will be), and with each grail you retrieve the next table grows in diameter by another 4 meters, an exponential increase in table area to get lost in. If you can help at least 5 different groups of knights retrieve their grails, you will have completed this quest.

Reward: *Sense of Direction*

There aren't many tasks harder than finding an exact specific tile in the middle of a huge area of Hyperbolic Space, so for completing that goal you gain an unerring sense of direction. You may at any time choose one specific thing which you wish to find, and a mental compass will lead you on the path to your objective, regardless what insane obstacles, unusual geography (or geometry), or obfuscation is in the way. Be aware, this will only lead you around obstructions, not danger. If the best or only way to get to what you want is through a hall of traps you will not be warned of the traps ahead of time unless some of those traps are actual obstructions instead

of just lethal. You may change what this power is targeting at will, and it will let you know if there's no physical path you could take to get to your chosen objective.

The Orb Of Yendor:

The greatest treasure that this realm has to offer: the Orb of Yendor, a magical artifact from which the powers of all the other orbs may supposedly be derived. In order to find it however you must travel to the lands of Hell itself, fend off enough demons to prove yourself... And once you have found an Orb of Yendor, you must locate the key to activating it (which will fortunately pull you towards it with a gentle tug so you can find it easily), hundreds of meters away, and then bring it back to the Orb (which will *not* pull at you for you to find it again on its own) before it can be picked up and claimed. All while fighting off the endless streams of demons. Can you claim this mighty magical artifact?

Reward: *Yendorian Power*

For claiming the ur-Orb you are granted the magical might of the Hyperbolic Plane. Every day you will be given (in your warehouse if you have one) five Orbs Of Choice, which may be used to select any other orb from the game to use at your own discretion in normal euclidean space. There's a wide variety of possible powers here, and instead of the usual rapid tickdown rate, orbs will now only lose 1 charge a minute, allowing them to last for hours or more. You may even select an Orb of Yendor for your choice, foregoing your ability to choose which power you get in exchange for receiving 4 randomly chosen orbs to use as you see fit instead of just the one.

Hyperstone Quest:

Sixty two different lands have treasures for you to claim. But one of them will not show its riches until you have mastered the others... The crossroads possess the brilliant yellow hyperstones, which may only be found when you have acquired 10 of every other treasure type except the ones which count as more than one for objectives and difficulty scaling. Once the hyperstones appear however, the Crossroads will be flooded with monsters from all the other lands, making retrieving the hyperstones a perilous, combat intensive task. If you can do this however, prove yourself in all the lands of the Hyperbolic Plane and then the Crossroads themselves by claiming 10 hyperstones of your own, you will have completed this quest.

Reward: *Crossroads*

For proving your mastery of the crossroads, you become their master. In future jumps you may access the crossroads at any time you like by forming a doorway or other entrance, and then exit the Crossroads at any other place you have ever visited to use them as a form of powerful fast travel. If you like, you may even choose to leave these entrances in place so that others may use the Crossroads to quickly get between them, and if you do so you may choose the layout of the crossroads to make "limited networks" by nature of how quickly travelers will get lost if they stray from the paths they've been told.

Victory
If you manage to complete all four of the quests, and obtain at least 50 of each type of treasure to be found in the Hyperbolic Plane (except holy grails, which you only need 10 of. And rescued tortoises, for which 17 will be enough), you will receive one final boon for demonstrating unrivaled mastery of hyperbolic space.

Reward: *Hyperbolic Curvature*
This power allows you to apply hyperbolic spatial curvature, specifically the geometry you encountered here, to any space that you can physically outline, such as with a building or wall. It is your choice of whether the interior space is mapped based on the same external perimeter (which will significantly decrease the internal volume) or the internal distances such as the diameter of a circle (which will massively *increase* the internal volume) but either way it will induce immense spatial warping-though it will attempt to keep everything caught within as intact as possible. Once created, only you can undo the spatial curving-even if the original bounds you used to outline it are broken or removed the alteration will remain until you desire otherwise.

This can be used to make inescapable prisons, massively expand the holding space of warehouses, and much, much more. Just be careful-objects above a certain size tend to not do well when spatial curvature is increased. Careless usage would be a good way to break something you want to keep intact.

The End
You finally had a run you like, or maybe you just gave up. Either way, the gauntlet is over and the restrictions on your powers are removed. Your usual choice is presented you:

Move On: the Hyperbolic Plane is big, but the omniverse is even bigger. There's more places to go and things to see.

Go Home: Maybe mind bending geometry was the final straw before your mental break, maybe you spent so long here that you've gotten tired of adventuring and just want to retire. Take all your stuff and head back to your homeworld.

Stay Here: If you're *really* sure, you can be dropped in the Hyperbolic Plane as a permanent resident. Most of the denizens won't actually be hostile to you when you're not trying to steal their treasures though, so maybe it'll actually be a nice place to end your journey.

Notes
If you're having a hard time visualizing hyperbolic space I recommend downloading hyperrogue off of itch.io, it's free and works on mobile. Even if you don't enjoy the game, just playing it for a little while can help you understand the basic details of how weird hyperbolic space is.

A note on Safe Deposit Box: in the Hyperbolic Plane one of the magic orbs you can acquire is the Orb Of Safety, which teleports you to a far distant and currently safe region-you will find a new safe deposit box wherever you land, but will lose all treasures you hadn't yet deposited when you picked up the orb of safety.

In addition to their canon effect of whisking you to safety through a wormhole, for the sake of making this gauntlet possible Orbs of Safety also fully refresh your stamina and heal your injuries. Unlocking them should probably be a top priority every run.

Another Chance's armor will not be repaired from cracking by Orbs of Safety, only damage within the two stages will be repaired. In future jumps it will take a week for the armor to repair itself from being cracked. Another Chance taken with One Hit Wonder *does* mean you can take up to three hits in one run.