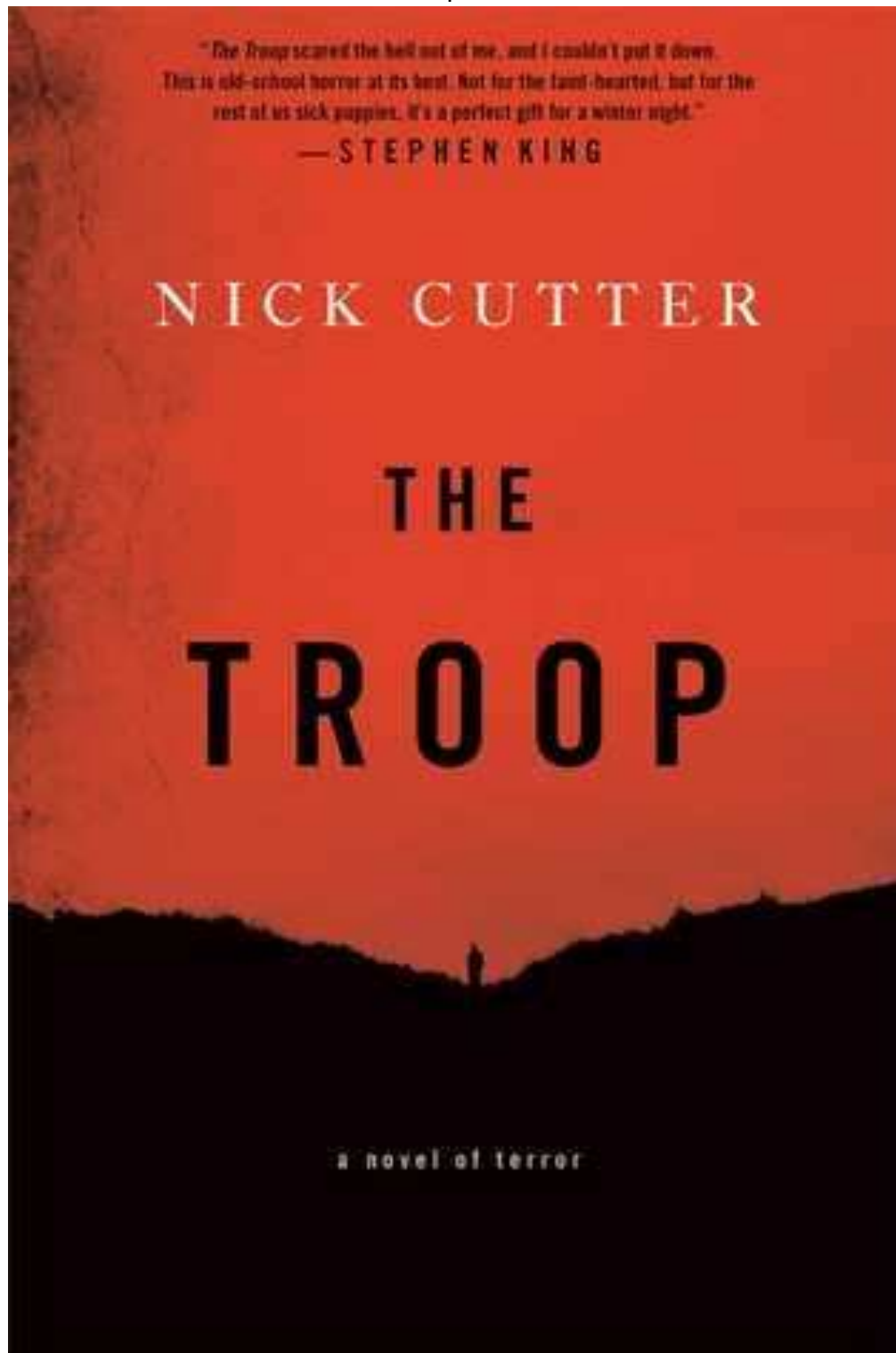


The Troop Gauntlet



by eyouchen/madamada

Nobody loves me

*Everybody hates me
I'm going to the garden to eat worms, eat worms,
Big fat juicy ones, long thin slimy ones,
Itsy-bitsy crawly-wawly wooooorms...*

Welcome to Falstaff Island. 3 miles (4.8 kilometres) off the northern coast of Prince Edward Island, this is a tiny island in the heart of the Canadian wilderness. 10.4 km in circumference. Absent of full-time human occupation, save for a small troop of boy scouts who come on a yearly camping trip. Troop 52. Led by their scoutmaster, Tim Riggs, they live in a winterized cabin, tell scary stories by the fire, sit around bonfires, go on hikes, and have fun.

This year, all is not well. An unexpected intruder will stumble upon their campsite. A mysterious, deadly stranger. Shockingly thin, as pale as a vampire, and simply *ravenous* for food. Troop 52 has come into contact with the stuff of nightmares - the first human carrier of a monstrous, bioengineered, parasitic breed of worms. A harrowing struggle for survival soon ensues as the scouts are picked off one by one.

Your goal is one of two things. You must either survive until all the parasites on the island die or leave Falstaff Island.

You get +0cp. Looks like somebody must've eaten it.

This is a gauntlet, so you lose all external powers, perks, items, etc. Even the cosmic warehouse and your companions are gone. All you're left with is your body mod, the skills you've accumulated over your life and chain, and your purchases here. Death does not end the chain, but you move on without what you gained here. Also if you have wings from the body mod, those go too.

LOCATION

Falstaff Island. Read the introductory text if you want more information. You arrive on the night of October 19th. A stolen boat has landed on the shore. Roll 1d6 to find out where exactly on the island you begin or pay 100cp to choose for yourself.

1. The Cabin

You are right in front of the log cabin where Troop 52 stays. They're agreeable, hospitable and will take care of you until the trip's scheduled end. However, an interloper is going to come to the cabin soon...

2. The Cellar

The basement of the cabin, it's probably the safest place to take shelter in. It's pretty empty and bare-bones, with nothing much besides spiders and insects inside.

3. The Cave

A cave in the hillside. It's pitch black inside, damp, and rocky. If there were any crazy, dangerous people on the island, they'd probably end up residing here.

4. The Peak

It's a bit sad that we're breaking the location alliteration combo. Anyways, you are at a flat stone promontory looming over the sea. This is the highest point on the island, 452 metres above sea level. To fall off from here would mean a painful trip into the sea, sliding down the steep shale. The path down is a narrow one, steeped with danger and unreliable terrain.

5. The Shore

You're on the shore. Patient Zero, Thomas Henry Padgett, is going to crawl his way up from the sea.

6. The Blueberry Patch

You got lucky. A grove of blueberry bushes, nestled in the shadow of a cliff. A few bushes have a bunch of berries, overripe but ready for picking. A little bit of food to start the gauntlet off with.

DRAWBACKS

Easy Mode: +1000cp

This is no longer a gauntlet - this is a normal jump. You get everything back - perks, powers, warehouse. However, you have to stay in this world for ten years, as per usual, and if you somehow bite it you go home, like normal. You also miss out on the rewards of surviving the gauntlet.

Tubby: +100cp

You're a chubby person now, jumper. In addition to the decrease in physical fitness, others' perceptions of you will be negatively impacted by your unshapely body.

This Is Only Fear Entering The Body: +100cp

Until you complete the gauntlet, every time you sleep, you will have nightmares. Horrible nightmares that always involve a person close to you and some worms.

Anger Keep Clear: +100cp

You're significantly more easy to anger now. Your metaphorical buttons are less like buttons and more like hair-trigger plungers.

Paranoia: +100cp

You're instinctively cautious of everything. In a situation such as this, it may seem like a good thing to have, but you take it too far. You're just paranoid, and this may lead you to do some very stupid and gullible things out of your fear. This isn't the healthy kind of paranoia that keeps you alive, this is the "let somebody gaslight you into suicide" paranoia.

Bound: +200cp/400cp

You enter the gauntlet with your arms and legs bound. Trussed up like a Christmas turkey. You're somewhere on the island, far from assistance, and tied up. This is going to be inconvenient. For an extra 200cp, you're gagged now, too, so calling for help isn't going to work at all. Any stuff you get here is a fair distance away, too far to get to in your restrained state. If this drawback is chosen in either form, you may not start in the cabin or cellar.

Shelled Sociopath: +200cp

You are now a closeted creep. You'll constantly be fixated on harming things and are sexually aroused by death. Your urges to satisfy your dark desires will inevitably lead to you doing something *very, very, stupid* and harmful to your health. Maybe you'll try to blow up a cabin and take yourself and everybody else out. Maybe your morbid curiosity will lead to you touching something you really shouldn't.

Quarantine: +200cp

Normally, the military is going to come and cordon off the island in two days, on October 21st. This drawback will cause a shift in their schedule, causing them to block passage around the island almost immediately after you arrive. Nothing comes, nothing goes, that's their plan. Helicopters will survey the island, and patrol boats will surround it. The stationed soldiers will do their utmost to neutralize any lifeforms that try to leave the island.

Long Prey: +200cp

Unknown to most of the members of Troop 52, one of their members is secretly a psycho. He acts creepy on occasion, and may seem like "a real dumb bunny," but he's much more cunning than anyone knows, though occasionally he acts pretty creepy. As the situation worsens and order deteriorates on the island, his mask will slip off and his true nature will show itself. And now he's come to regard you as a particularly interesting person to go to work on.

Milk of Human Kindness: +400cp

Do you know what the best, most effective transmitter of contagion known to man? It's love. And now this applies to you.

You're too kind. Normally, that's a compliment, but in your case, it's actually true. You're so kind that it might actually be life-threatening. You'd insist on taking care of the infected to lengths that risk your own infection. Like, giving them mouth-to-mouth and letting the worms crawl into you orally.

Bootlaces: +400cp

It seems you, patient zero, and the six members of troop 52 aren't the only human inhabitants of the island. The other inhabitants are quite malevolent. It turns out that there is a small group of rogue soldiers living on the island. Returning from a mission overseas, their plane went down over the ocean. And now, they're here. Insane soldiers stalk the island at night. Total batshit madmen. But there's a way to save yourself - they *always* attack at night. They sneak up on you and feel your bootlaces. If they're laced over and under, you're a goner. But they'll let you live if they're laced straight across...

Injured: +400cp

With all your injuries, you look like a murder victim. Your body is littered with hacks and gouges and gashes. You bleed like a faucet. If you're not careful and don't get medical attention, you may very well perish from your injuries. No worms are needed.

Cyclones: +600cp

For the scouts of Troop 52, the island trip was nearly cancelled. The cause of this was a storm - a small cyclone coming in from the northern ocean but predicted to swerve away into the Atlantic. The meteorology report on this was shoddy, and the storm will arrive in a day or two.

This is not that drawback.

This drawback causes not one, but *multiple* storms to ravage the island. These cyclones are strong enough to severely damage the sole building around and topple trees. Until the gauntlet ends for you, skies will be choked with perpetual rain clouds with the occasional lightning strike on the island. It would seem the weather gods frown on the island.

Napalm Strike: +600cp

This drawback, like **Quarantine**, makes the military much more proactive on the topic of wiping the worms off the face of the Earth, and they've adopted the "ends

justify the means" mindset (which may be reasonable, if harsh.). Now, they're dropping napalm strikes on the island. They'll drop a total of four. Their goal is to raze all life from the island, turning it into nothing but a charred mass of land devoid of life. Not only that, but they'll dump millions of gallons of a chemical agent that will kill every living thing in the surrounding waters. Good luck surviving. This doesn't even guarantee the end of all parasites. Life is hardy.

EAT EAT EAT: +600CP

Now you've done it. You've *got the worms*. The good news is that you're in the beginning stages of infection. I'd give you two days tops before you're gone, worm food in more ways than one. Now, it's only fair that you know what you're up against. The overlying antagonists of this story. *The worms*. A genetically engineered "mistake" originally meant to be a diet pill. Some tapeworms form a symbiotic relationship with their host, living inside for years. Some eat only what is needed to survive, others consume only waste matter. Hydratids, a more dangerous variant, rapidly expand their population until the host is overrun and starved by death, essential food scarfed down by the colony.

The category of worms known as "devourers," not only eat what consumed food was meant for the host, but consume the body of the host itself. Muscle, fat, organs, bones, everything will be eaten by the worms. They whittle the host down on an exponential scale - rapid weight loss occurs, turning the host into what looks like a skeleton out of a concentration camp in a matter of hours. As fatty tissue breaks down, a sweet smell much like rotten fruit manifests. Every scrap the devourers consume serves only one purpose - to make **MORE** worms, hence the exponential rate of decay. It's impossible to eat enough to satisfy them because they multiply with every bit of food eaten.

The other category of worm, the "conqueror," controls the host. The conqueror worm emerges from the intestines and climbs up the spine of a host, with the brain as a destination. As they climb, they lay eggs to act as reserve conquerors. These larvae travel through the blood and infest muscle, forming copious amounts of cysts all around the body - these nests are a sign of the end stages of the infestation. The conqueror, upon reaching the brain, produces a neurotransmitter that pushes the hunger of the host up to eleven. The host wants to **EAT**. What it eats doesn't matter, just that it eats. The conqueror also causes hosts to hallucinate, seeing themselves as robust and well and feeling no pain. This serves to make the host productive, gathering food.

At the very last stages of infection, ruptures will appear all along the body, with gigantic, squirming worms bursting out. Like, seven-foot-long worms. There's even a case of them bursting out of the eyes. Real nasty.

As of now, there's no way to flush these nightmare houseguests out of the body. They're in to stay. The only way to succeed in the gauntlet, for you, is to escape the island.

PERKS

Person-Scent: 100cp

Recently, you've come to a realization. Each and every person gives off a unique, but subtle, smell based on their personality and what they spend their time doing. By observing this sense, you can glean a small amount of information on their personalities. A bully might smell acidic and adrenal. A jock might smell of field grass and locker room funk. An energetic person might smell like an exploded power transformer. A nerd might smell like dusty books, asthma inhalers, and library corners. You're not going to sniff out - say, a person who is secretly a psychopath - with this, but you'll get a good sense of their personality and how they spend their time.

Watters Time: 100cp

Maybe you used to coordinate logistics somewhere because the time of day is second nature to you now. You have an internal clock, allowing you to always know what time it is to the minute.

Hal 9000: 100cp

You've got the figurative angel and devil on your shoulder, in the form of a pair of mental voices in your head. You're not crazy; no schizophrenia here. There are two specific voices - a rational, calm voice and a brazen, aggressive voice belonging to a person of action. They both mean the best for you, being part of you, but will always have a different opinion.

Blade: 100cp

No, not the vampire hunter with the sunglasses. This is a quality common to the top surgeons in hospitals, otherwise known informally as "blades." You have a natural state of calm and self-assurance, a stalwart, calm confidence that makes you just about unshakeable.

Eef, I Saw Something: 100cp

The human mind. To some (and now you), it's pliable and moldable, like a hunk of playdoh. To those people with that gift, manipulation is surprisingly easy. A way of subtle provocation and probing, like a sculptor with a chisel. Sensing faults and weaknesses in somebody's psyche is easy, and there are myriad ways this knowledge can be used.

Newtonian Nerd: 200cp

The average boy scout of the troop on the island has a very basic understanding of outdoor survival. You, however, are more knowledgeable than they are (with the exception of Newton.) You've got a solid amount of skill in things scouts are supposed to learn, like fire-making, identifying plants, and orienteering.

Jenks Jock: 200cp

You're bigger and stronger than most people. At your full height, you'd be 6 feet and 7 inches of prime muscle. You can probably wrestle and win against most of the human or animal inhabitants of the island, and you have a lot of strength and stamina in your body.

Top O' The World, Ma!: 200cp

The experience that the people on this island are going to go through will be gruesome and harrowing, to say the least. Not for the faint of heart. You've got an internal reservoir of courage, which will help you push yourself through terrifying situations, like going through a pitch-black cave full of corpses and worms with a dying flare or just doing stupid things like taking a flying leap with your bike off the local seawall.

Preternatural Awareness: 200cp

You're unnaturally perceptive. Your senses are sharper than most, and you possess a rational mind that puts things together miles ahead of everybody else.

GP: 400cp

That stands for General Practitioner. You've got the knowledge of somebody with a master's degree in medicine, and the skill level of a small-town doctor and a paramedic. You even have some rudimentary knowledge of surgery. None of that is going to help somebody who's infested with the worms, but as for the mundanely injured or sick, you're likely to be able to do a competent job of patching them up.

Mengele 2.0: 600cp

This is it. The knowledge perk. You have an intimate understanding of the worms that are soon to plague the island, to the same degree as their creator, Dr. Clive Edgerton. You have his sheer intellect as well, with an intellect that would approach Leonardo da Vinci's hypothetical intelligence quotient. Furthermore, you've got the knowledge of a person who graduated with top honours in molecular biology, genetics and microbiology from one of the top institutes on the planet, possessing world-class knowledge in genetic manipulation and engineering - your true forte. Here, you could make things like the worms, given a lab. But you could go far with your skills.

ITEMS

The Troop: free/200cp

The novel itself. You get it after you complete the gauntlet. Or if you want it now, pay 200cp. Why is this so valuable to warrant 200cp? It contains the canon plot of the novel, a picture of what's going to happen for the next few days if you don't change anything. It also contains valuable information. It's not a survival book. Rather, it talks about the personalities and mindsets of the island campers, the locations of certain vital items, and a rudimentary explanation of how the worms work.

Scotch: 100cp

A flask of Glenlivet whiskey. Enjoy. Post-gauntlet, this will refill whenever you want it to.

Thestomax: 100cp

The worm-based diet pill that never came to be. The ostensible purpose of the worm research. This pill is great for weight loss. It comes in pairs, and you have one box. A diet supplement. Made of compressed dextrose, these are loaded with the freeze-dried eggs of a more benign variant of mutated hydratid. By taking the first pill, a worm colony is born in the body; it acts as a diet aid, allowing for the pill-taker to eat whatever they want and still lose weight. To prevent the worms from leaving the gut, the worms have weakened immunities and highly susceptible to white blood cells - as soon as one leaves the intestines, it's eaten away by the body's white blood cells like acid. The second pill (which won't work on the malevolent strain of worm) flushes the colony out, to be used when the person reaches their target weight.

Nightmare Fuel Videos: 100cp

A pair of videos portraying the early experiments with the worms, featuring a guinea pig and a chimpanzee as test subjects. They wouldn't be out of place in a horror movie. Very graphic and morbid, but the person narrating it keeps a calm tone throughout the video. There's nothing to watch it on, but maybe it'll be a souvenir of your time here.

Walkie-Talkies: 100cp

A pair of walkie-talkies and a plastic baggie of spare batteries. Use this to communicate with others. Post-gauntlet, the supply of batteries will replenish itself every week.

Zippo: 200cp

A lighter. It's used to make fire. Pretty useful in this situation. Has enough fluid to last for a long time. Post-gauntlet, the fluid replenishes itself.

Knife: 200cp

It's a knife. It's sharp and good for cutting things. Or, if you're a bad guy, doing some real damage. Don't do that. It can be whatever brand of knife you want, but it's the kind of knife you'd bring on a camping trip. Maybe it's a Gerber, or a Swiss Army Knife, or a Buck Knife. Comes in either the scout regulation of 3½ inches or 5 inches, 1½ inches beyond regulation. I'm sure nobody will notice or care. There are more pressing matters at hand.

Flashlight: 200cp

A military-grade flashlight. Good for, well, illuminating things. You could annoy people by shining it into their eyes, I guess. Like the walkie-talkies, it comes with a Ziploc bag of batteries that will become a replenishing supply post-gauntlet.

Gasoline: 200cp

A canister of gasoline. It could power a boat, or the island generator for the cabin, or you could use it to light things on fire.

Flare Gun: 400cp

Watch where you point this thing. It's a flare gun. It comes with a pack of six signal flares. As one might think, it's mainly used for signalling and illumination, but a creative mind could find other ways to utilize it.

Shortwave Radio: 400cp

A radio. It's fragile, so take care not to drop it. This can be used to call for help from the mainland. That's why it's so useful.

Field Book: 400cp

A book on survival. Curiously, this one has info that seems tailored specifically for survival on Falstaff island, with tremendously accurate knowledge. Also comes with some nylon rope - there's a section in the book detailing how to make hunting snares.

Cooler: 600cp

A cooler full of food. Hot dogs and buns, Hershey's kisses, trail mix, oatmeal, crackers, watermelon slices wrapped in saran, beef jerky, bottles of water and coke, etc. It contains the kind of food you'd expect boy scouts to bring on a camping trip. There's enough to last you for 4 or 5 days. Post-gauntlet, any food placed in the cooler will never expire so long as it's inside, and the food supply, if eaten or taken, will replenish weekly.

Camping Abode: 600cp

More than that. Now, you are the proud owner of the second building on Falstaff island - another wood cabin. This one was built secretly and is extremely well-hidden - only you know its location, which is in a sheltered area, safe from the weather.

Boat: 1200cp

A cigarette boat. It's pretty fast. As somebody would put it, it's the Ferrari of boats. It has all its component parts and is in perfect working over. The reason why this is so expensive is that if you have it, you can just leave the island immediately without dealing with any worms.



ENDING

Whether you made it through the gauntlet or not, the ages-old choice presents itself:

Go Home

Stay Here

Move On

If you completed the gauntlet without **Easy Mode**, you get two rewards:

Falstaff Island:

The island itself will follow you through your chain. If it took any damage during the gauntlet, such as getting bombed or the cabin getting crushed by a storm, it'll repair itself. It's a tiny, remote island full of wilderness and has thriving plant and animal life. In future jumps, you will legally own the island. It can be plopped down into the sea in future worlds (but if it's Earth, you have to put it in its original place

- three miles north of Prince Edward Island) or function as a warehouse attachment.

Mutated Hydratids:

A small plastic cup containing eggs with the worms inside. With the right resources and know-how, you could reproduce these. They're very survivable - this container could float around in space for thousands of years and the eggs would still hatch upon being swallowed.

NOTES

Mada Mada Plus Ultra. With the publishing of this jump, I have made a total of 114 pages of jumpdocs.

Based on the novel by Nick Cutter. In the freak event that the author sees this, if you want this taken down, I'll delete my posts. I may be away at the time of your message, but I'll eventually see it and delete them. That's the hope, at least. I read your book three times.

Not all vampires are pale.

These links were pretty handy.

https://www.reddit.com/r/horrorlit/comments/inccdd/horror_novel_fan_art/

<https://www.tumblr.com/blog/troop52>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Troop_\(book\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Troop_(book))

As a jumpmaker, I've been contemplating a signature. Most jumpmakers have a style - I've seen enough jumps by Aehriman and Valeria to recognize their jumps on sight most of the time. I know somebody likes to tag all their jumps with the phrase "cool cats don't trip." So, my phrase is going to be "Mada Mada Plus Ultra," and my jumps will hopefully always start with an epigraph.

There are no weather gods whatsoever in the book. There is a boat, but it's missing the spark plugs. The expensive boat is essentially an instant-win button unless you take **quarantine**.

Mengele 2.0 makes you about as smart as Edgerton and *very* good at genetic manipulation. Like, you could replicate Captain America's super-soldier serum.

Bootlaces: The scary story in chapter 4 talks about Gurkhas on the island, and that's what this drawback is based on. The deranged soldiers now on the island aren't necessarily Gurkhas, however.

Long Prey: The writer of this document (me) has purposely omitted the name of the creep, but if you spend enough time with the group it'll be obvious. Anybody who's read the book will know who I'm talking about. There's even a clue in the name of the drawback.

There is most definitely not any hidden text within this document. No sir. The last two sentences were absolutely lies.

Changelog:

- 12.30.2021 - Jump document created.

- 1.30.2022 - V.1.0 finished.