

rustbelt

AN AI-RUN POST-APOCALYPTIC SURVIVAL RPG · THE LONG ROAD

A FREE ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE

Knock Code

Every spring the Prepared knock on the door of the hold that never opened, and wait a day. Nothing has ever answered. This year something knocked back.

LEVEL 3 | 4 SURVIVORS | ABOUT 2½ HOURS | READY-MADE CHARACTERS INSIDE

READ THIS ALOUD

The Job

> Warden Silas Crane of Beanfield Hold leads the delegation himself, as he has for twenty years: walk to the quarry, give the code on the steel, wait a day, go home. The crew is hired as outside witnesses, since the Compact's rules require one. At the fourth hour, from the other side of a door that has been shut for fifty-two years, comes the reply. It is the right code. It is given slowly, with mistakes, the way a child would who had learned it from a card.

4	3	2½h	3
SURVIVORS	LEVEL	TO PLAY	SCENES

Play it with the AI Dungeon Master

No prep, no rulebook. Scan the code on the back page or visit rustbelt.world, press play, and the AI Dungeon Master runs this adventure for your table — every voice, every roll, every rule. Solo or with up to six friends.

Run it yourself

Everything a Game Master needs is in here: what really happened, the cast and their secrets, the locations, the scenes, the opposition with full stats, three endings, and 4 ready-to-play characters. Players: stop at the end of this page.

Inside

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2. The Cast
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ROAD BOSS'S EYES ONLY · PLAYERS READ NO FURTHER

THE TRUTH

What Really Happened

The Silent Hold was provisioned for three hundred people for forty years. It did not open at thirty because its warden judged the surface unfit, and it did not open at forty because by then there was nobody left to judge. A sickness went through the lower levels in Year 44. The last adult died six years ago.

There are thirty-eight people alive inside, and the oldest is seventeen. They have run the hold by its rulebook, perfectly: watches kept, filters changed, guns maintained, the door unopened, because the rulebook says the door is opened only by the warden, and there is no rule for there being no warden. They knocked back because the youngest of them asked what the noise was.

The stores are nearly gone. The sentry guns will fire on anyone approaching without a hold tag, and the children do not know how to stand them down. Pickers on the quarry rim have been waiting twelve years for this door. And the Compact's wardens, who decide by unanimous vote, have a rule of their own: a hold whose warden is dead is forfeit to the others, people and seed and all.

WHO'S WHO

The Cast



WARDEN OF BEANFIELD HOLD

Warden Silas Crane

Careful, kind, shaped by having climbed out as a boy on Opening Day.

SECRET

He knows the forfeit rule and will not invoke it. Two of the wardens with him will. He needs the crew to find a reason they cannot.



ACTING WARDEN OF THE SILENT HOLD, AGED SEVENTEEN

Juniper Okonjo-Hale

Grave, formal, exhausted. Quotes regulation by number. Has never seen the sky.

SECRET

She has known for a year that the food runs out this summer. She has not opened the door because the book says she is not the warden. She has been praying somebody would knock and make it not her decision.



BOSS OF THE PICKER CREW ON THE RIM

Marrow

Patient, practical, chalks marks on things. Has waited twelve years.

SECRET

She will not hurt children. The buyer who has been paying her to wait would, and has sent four of his own people to make sure the hold is emptied properly.

WHERE IT HAPPENS

The Locations



01 Quarry Floor

A cut-stone bowl with a spiral road, and guns on the rim that turn to follow.

What happens here. The delegation's camp. The guns track anyone without a tag; beyond a painted line they fire. Pickers are watching from above.



02 The Sealed Door

A steel door in the quarry face, with a knock plate worn bright by fifty springs.

What happens here. The conversation, in knocks, with a seventeen-year-old who does not know anyone can hear her voice if she shouts. The guns above have a manual stand-down inside.



03 Vent Shaft

A grille in the rock, exhaling warm air that smells of cooking. Too narrow for an adult.

What happens here. The other way to talk, and the way a small person could get in, or out. Something else has been using it: there are crawler tracks in the dust.

HOW IT PLAYS

The Scenes

1

SOCIAL ●●○○ MEDIUM

Talking a child through a rulebook from the wrong side of a door. Each exchange in knock code takes minutes; shouting at the vent is faster once someone thinks of it. She needs a reason the book permits. A DC 13 argument finds one in the book's own words.

2

EXPLORATION ●●●○ HARD

The guns. Standing them down from outside is a DC 15 check under fire on a failure. From inside it is a lever. Sending someone small down the vent means crawling through whatever has been nesting there.

Opposition: Cellar Sentry Gun *(full stats in the gallery)*, Dust Roach *(full stats in the gallery)*

3

COMBAT ●●●○ HARD

The door opens, and the rim comes down. The buyer's four, with Pickers who thought this was salvage, rush the door while thirty-eight children stand blinking in daylight for the first time. The wardens are arguing about forfeit. The guns are still live.

Opposition: Gang Enforcer *(full stats in the gallery)*, Picker *(full stats in the gallery)*, Cellar Sentry Gun *(full stats in the gallery)*

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Trouble on the Road



Dust Roach

A knee-high irradiated roach. Rarely alone.

AC 12 **HP** 11 (2d8 + 2) **Speed** 30 ft, climb 30 ft **Threat** 1

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	2 (-4)

Bite. +3 to hit, 1d6 + 1 piercing.



Gang Enforcer

The warlord's muscle — better armed than the rank and file.

AC 15 **HP** 52 (8d8 + 16) **Speed** 30 ft **Threat** 3

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Multiattack. Two attacks with its hunting rifle or sledgehammer.

Hunting Rifle. Ranged +5, range 100/300, 2d6 + 2 piercing.

Sledgehammer. +5 to hit, 1d10 + 3 bludgeoning.



Picker

A ruin-rat with a rope, a pry bar and a better map of this building than you have.

AC 12 **HP** 9 (2d8) **Speed** 30 ft, climb 20 ft **Threat** 0.25

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Pry Bar. +4 to hit, 1d6 + 2 bludgeoning.

Sling. +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft, 1d4 + 2 bludgeoning.

Knows the Ruin. Can Disengage or Hide as a bonus action inside a building it has picked.



Cellar Sentry Gun

A tripod gun the Prepared set by their doors — it has been watching this hallway for sixty years.

AC 16 **HP** 40 (9d6 + 9) **Speed** 0 ft **Threat** 2

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)

Burst. +5 to hit, range 80/240 ft, 2d8 + 3 piercing, against the nearest untagged creature in its arc.

Fixed Arc. Covers a 90° cone; cannot turn to face behind itself. 30 bursts before it runs dry.

EVERY CASE CLOSES SOMEHOW

How It Can End

I

The hold opens under its own warden. The Compact votes, with outside witnesses present, that a warden is whoever kept the watch. The Silent Hold becomes the twentieth again, and its seed stays its own.

II

Forfeit. The children are divided among nineteen holds and the stores are shared out. They are fed and safe and separated, and Juniper Okonjo-Hale is told she did everything correctly.

III

The door stays shut. The crew goes home, the delegation goes home, and the knocking from inside goes on for most of the summer.

These are the likely ends, not the only ones. When your table finds a fourth, let it.



READY-MADE SURVIVOR

Mae Harlan

GUNSLINGER · LEVEL 3

Former convoy outrider who rode shotgun for the Roadies until a load went wrong.

13	28	+2	30	+2
ARMOUR CLASS	HIT POINTS	INITIATIVE	SPEED (FT)	PROFICIENCY
Patched Armor	hit die d10			

STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	CONSTITUTION	INTELLIGENCE	WISDOM	CHARISMA
-1	+2	+2	+0	+1	+1
8	15	14	10	13	12

Saving throws

- ○ Strength -1
- ● Dexterity +4
- ● Constitution +4
- ○ Intelligence +0
- ○ Wisdom +1
- ○ Charisma +1

Skills

- ● Acrobatics DEX +4
- ○ Animal Handling WIS +1
- ○ Athletics STR -1
- ○ Deception CHA +1
- ○ History INT +0
- ○ Insight WIS +1
- ● Intimidation CHA +3
- ○ Investigation INT +0
- ○ Medicine WIS +1
- ○ Nature INT +0
- ● Perception WIS +3
- ○ Performance CHA +1
- ○ Persuasion CHA +1
- ○ Sleight of Hand DEX +2
- ○ Stealth DEX +2
- ● Survival WIS +3

Weapons

WEAPON	HIT	DAMAGE	RANGE
Hunting Rifle	+4	2d6 + 2 piercing	100/300 ft
Shiv light, finesse, concealable	+4	1d4 + 2 piercing	melee

Gear

- **Canteen**
- **Rifle Cartridges**
- **Dust Goggles** — with a mask or wet rag, the wearer is not blinded in a dust storm and has advantage on its saves
- **Bandage** — end Bleeding Out; regain 1d4 HP

Who they are

Personality Counts bullets the way other people count water. Never fires first; never fires twice.

Ideal A promise made on the Road is kept on the Road.

Bond Owes a Roadie captain a debt she cannot pay in chits.

Flaw Holds a grudge longer than she holds her breath.

> WHY YOU TOOK THE JOB
>
> The Compact wants witnesses who are on no side. You have never been on anyone's side for long.



READY-MADE SURVIVOR

Jonah Rook

SCAVENGER · LEVEL 3

Picker who has been into more ruins than anyone his age and come out of all of them.

13	21	+2	30	+2
ARMOUR CLASS	HIT POINTS	INITIATIVE	SPEED (FT)	PROFICIENCY
Patched Armor	hit die d8			

STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	CONSTITUTION	INTELLIGENCE	WISDOM	CHARISMA
-1	+2	+1	+1	+2	+0
8	15	12	13	14	10

Saving throws

○ Strength	-1
● Dexterity	+4
○ Constitution	+1
○ Intelligence	+1
● Wisdom	+4
○ Charisma	+0

Skills

○ Acrobatics DEX	+2
○ Animal Handling WIS	+2
○ Athletics STR	-1
○ Deception CHA	+0
○ History INT	+1
○ Insight WIS	+2
○ Intimidation CHA	+0
● Investigation INT	+3
○ Medicine WIS	+2
○ Nature INT	+1
● Perception WIS	+4
○ Performance CHA	+0
○ Persuasion CHA	+0
● Sleight of Hand DEX	+4
● Stealth DEX	+4
○ Survival WIS	+2

Weapons

WEAPON	HIT	DAMAGE	RANGE
Pipe-Gun jams on a natural 1	+4	1d8 + 2 piercing	40/120 ft

Gear

- **Geiger Counter** — detect radiation zones and irradiated creatures nearby
- **Lockpick Set** — open locks without a key or explosives
- **Scrap & Salvage** — crafting and repair material; barter
- **Duct Tape**

Who they are

Personality Restless, curious, never sits with his back to a door. Tests every floor with a thrown brick.

Ideal The old world left everything behind. It is a crime to waste it.

Bond Keeps a map of every ruin he has cleared, and the one he has not.

Flaw Cannot pass a locked door without trying it.

> WHY YOU TOOK THE JOB
>
> A hold that has been sealed for fifty-two years. Whatever is behind that door, nobody has picked it over.



READY-MADE SURVIVOR

Dr. Hesper Vale

FIELD DOC · LEVEL 3

Travelling doctor who works the Long Road town by town for whatever people can pay.

12	21	+1	30	+2
ARMOUR CLASS	HIT POINTS	INITIATIVE	SPEED (FT)	PROFICIENCY
Patched Armor	hit die d8			

STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	CONSTITUTION	INTELLIGENCE	WISDOM	CHARISMA
-1	+1	+1	+2	+2	+0
8	12	13	14	15	10

Saving throws

○ Strength	-1
○ Dexterity	+1
● Constitution	+3
○ Intelligence	+2
● Wisdom	+4
○ Charisma	+0

Skills

○ Acrobatics DEX	+1
○ Animal Handling WIS	+2
○ Athletics STR	-1
○ Deception CHA	+0
○ History INT	+2
● Insight WIS	+4
○ Intimidation CHA	+0
○ Investigation INT	+2
● Medicine WIS	+4
○ Nature INT	+2
○ Perception WIS	+2
○ Performance CHA	+0
● Persuasion CHA	+2
○ Sleight of Hand DEX	+1
○ Stealth DEX	+1
● Survival WIS	+4

Weapons

WEAPON	HIT	DAMAGE	RANGE
Pipe-Gun jams on a natural 1	+3	1d8 + 1 piercing	40/120 ft

Gear

- **Med-Stim** — regain 2d4 + 2 HP; ends Bleeding
- **Rad-Flush** — removes the Irradiated condition and reduces Rad Sickness
- **Field Surgery Kit** — advantage on Medicine; auto-stabilise
- **Purification Tablets** — purify one canteen

Who they are

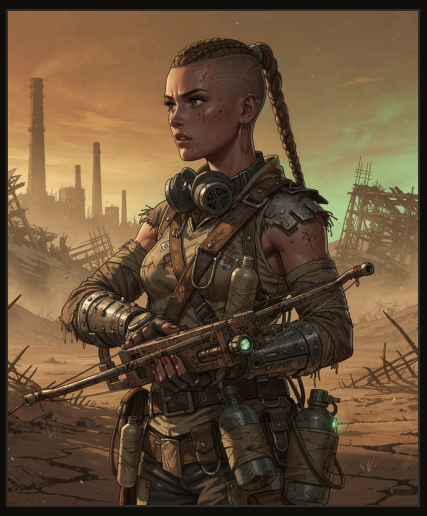
Personality Gentle with patients, merciless with fools. Has seen every way a body can fail.

Ideal Everyone gets the same measure — of water and of care.

Bond Trained under a Wellkeeper healer at Dry Wells.

Flaw Trusts anyone who is sick, which the wrong people have learned to use.

> WHY YOU TOOK THE JOB
>
> Whoever is behind that door has been breathing the same air for fifty-two years. They may need a doctor.



READY-MADE SURVIVOR

Tamsin Reyes

SURVIVALIST · LEVEL 3

Raised in the wastes between towns; reads weather, tracks and people with the same patience.

13	21	+2	30	+2
ARMOUR CLASS	HIT POINTS	INITIATIVE	SPEED (FT)	PROFICIENCY
Hide Wraps	hit die d8			

STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	CONSTITUTION	INTELLIGENCE	WISDOM	CHARISMA
+1	+2	+1	+0	+2	-1
12	14	13	10	15	8

Saving throws

○ Strength	+1
● Dexterity	+4
○ Constitution	+1
○ Intelligence	+0
● Wisdom	+4
○ Charisma	-1

Skills

○ Acrobatics DEX	+2
○ Animal Handling WIS	+2
○ Athletics STR	+1
○ Deception CHA	-1
○ History INT	+0
○ Insight WIS	+2
○ Intimidation CHA	-1
○ Investigation INT	+0
○ Medicine WIS	+2
● Nature INT	+2
● Perception WIS	+4
○ Performance CHA	-1
○ Persuasion CHA	-1
○ Sleight of Hand DEX	+2
● Stealth DEX	+4
● Survival WIS	+4

Weapons

WEAPON	HIT	DAMAGE	RANGE
Scrap Crossbow silent; reload	+4	1d10 + 2 piercing	60/240 ft
Machete	+3	1d8 + 1 slashing	melee

Gear

- **Gas Mask**
- **Canteen**
- **Water Filter** — filter water
- **Snare Trap** — DC 12 Dex save or restrained

Who they are

Personality Quiet, watchful, laughs rarely and loudly. Sleeps cold and wakes first.

Ideal The land is honest. People should try it.

Bond Her family's camp was lost in a dust storm; she has never stopped looking for the others.

Flaw Distrusts walls, towns and anyone who lives behind them.

> WHY YOU TOOK THE JOB
>
> The vents on the quarry rim have been breathing all your life. You always wondered what was breathing.

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Play it tonight. No prep. No rulebook.

Scan the code and the AI Dungeon Master runs **Knock Code** for your group: every voice, every roll, every rule — with battle maps, character sheets and a world that remembers what you did.

Free to start — three sessions a month

Solo or with friends — up to six at one table

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