

NPC Dossier — Canonical Character Bible

Naming style (Nathan 2026-07-20): the article is part of the title, capital T — The Woodsman, The Mason, The Builder, The Thresher, The Librarian, The Warrior, The Archer — even mid-sentence. Title + personal name are canon dossier fields; all player-facing copy uses this form.

This is the canonical source of truth for every recurring character’s look, story, and voice. It exists so no character gets reinvented per surface — a resident portrait, a cutscene render, an encounter card, and a future voice-direction brief should all trace back to ONE description here, not to whatever a previous prompt happened to imagine.

RULE: a new character gets a dossier entry BEFORE any art is generated. Every character render (painterly portrait, encounter plate, resident-building portrait) seeds from the canonical portrait pointer + the Description below. If the two ever disagree, this doc is source of truth and the art gets fixed, not the other way around.

Canonical vs. resident-building portrait: for every character below, the two are currently the SAME single image — one painted portrait serves both the “canonical reference” role and the in-game resident-building portrait. Split them later only if a real design need appears.

Status: this is a first pass compiled from the roadmap’s `RESIDENT ROSTER` capture (Nathan, 2026-07-13/17), `scripts/data/story_beats_config.gd`, and `scripts/data/game_strings.gd`. Where the roadmap gave no backstory, the Bio is marked `[draft – confirm]` — see the summary at the bottom.

Player Document. Published to #about.

Protagonist — The Deathless One

- **Canonical portrait:** `assets/art/npc-reference/protagonist.png` (*PLACEHOLDER — pending Nathan’s portrait pick; leave this path, don’t invent an image*)
- **Resident building portrait:** same as canonical (one image, both uses). N/A in practice — the protagonist has no resident building; kept here for schema consistency.
- **Seen in:** `wake_cold_open` (the cold-open wake beat), every story beat with `fmt: "player_name"` (`STORY_WAKE_L1`), the fallen-soldier encounter (`dying_man` / `TUT_DYING_MAN_BODY`), the fortress-naming beat (`fortress_repaired` / `fortress_named`), and effectively every Explore/Defend/combat surface in the game.
- **Description: NEVER shown with a face — always rendered as a SILHOUETTE.** This is a hard rule, not a placeholder gap: the player is meant to project themselves onto the character. Any portrait, cutscene render, or in-world sprite depicts a featureless dark silhouette shape (build/stance may vary by gear equipped) — never a rendered face, never named features.
- **Bio:** Woken broken on a road amid fresh carnage, with no memory of the fall that put them there. A dying soldier presses a club into their hands and warns them of what’s ahead before dying. They repair a ruined watchtower into the seed of a new fortress, name it, and begin recruiting the scattered survivors of the old kingdom back into its walls. The “deathless” premise (confirmed by the game’s respawn/ `tut_lost` framing — death is never final, the player “always rises”) is core to who they are, though it is not yet narratively explained on-page. `[draft – confirm: the deathless mechanic's IN-STORY explanation is still open]`

- **Voice:** The protagonist has no spoken lines of their own in the story beats read so far — they are the silent player-insert; other characters address them (“My lord. You live.”) but the protagonist’s own dialogue is functionally the player’s actions, not text. [draft – confirm if a spoken protagonist voice is ever wanted]
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Aldous Kegg — The Builder

- **Canonical portrait:** `assets/art/npc-reference/aldous-kegg.png`
 - **Resident building portrait:** same as canonical (one image, both uses).
 - **Seen in:** `builder` encounter (convince frame, `RESCUE_FLAVORS.builder` / `RESCUE_LOCKED_FLAVORS.builder`), `builder_sets_out` story beat, `builder_librarian_intro` story beat (his Librarian-rescue charge), `enc_builder.png` art plate (shared by the `builder`, `builder_sets_out`, and `tutorial_equip` -adjacent slots).
 - **Description:** **BEARDED**, matching `enc_builder.png`. A big, weathered man with broad, calloused hands built for lifting stone and timber — the hands of someone who “raised garrisons across the old kingdom.” Gruff, practical dress: a heavy work tunic, leather apron over it, tools (hammer, measuring cord) hanging at his belt. Warm brown/earth palette. Distinguishing feature: he “measures twice” — read this as a deliberate, unhurried physical presence, not a nervous one.
 - **Bio:** Before the fall, Aldous raised garrisons across the old kingdom — real fortifications, real walls. After the fall, he found himself rebuilding a woodshed: small work for hands that once held up walls. When the player tells him about the ruined tower down the road, he sets down his tools and truly looks at them for the first time — “... Show me.” His cottage is STONE-built (canon 07-20: the two huts read differently — his stone, The Woodsman’s log-work). He becomes the first recruit, gives the fortress its rebuild, and later sends the player after The Librarian, offering a library as the reward: “A fortress needs more than walls — it needs what’s remembered.”
 - **Voice:** Gruff, warm underneath, dry pride; short practical sentences. Quoted: “*You tell him what you found down the road. Not a shed. Not a fence. The old tower. He sets down his tools — and for the first time, he truly looks at you. ‘...Show me.’*” And later: “*There’s a man I know — Perrin, a keeper of books. The bandits took him, dragged him to their camp across the river. Bring him back and I’ll raise you a library. A fortress needs more than walls — it needs what’s remembered.*”
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Master Perrin Quill — The Librarian

- **Canonical portrait:** `assets/art/npc-reference/perrin-quill.png`
- **Resident building portrait:** same as canonical (one image, both uses).
- **Seen in:** `librarian` encounter (rescue frame, `RESCUE_FLAVORS.librarian` / `RESCUE_LOCKED_FLAVORS.librarian`), `bandit_chief_seen`, `bandit_chief_won`, `librarian_freed_thanks`, `librarian_joined_fort` story beats; `library_built` / `library_discovery` milestone plates (adjacent, not his portrait).
- **Description:** Thin, stooped from a life bent over books, clutching a satchel of ruined pages even in captivity. Fine but travel-ruined clothing — the last remnant of a royal archivist’s dress, dust-worn by the time he reaches

the fort. Ink-stained fingers, spectacles or a squint from close reading, a faintly fussy bearing even in a cage. Muted, bookish palette (grays, faded blues) against the earthier tones around him.

- **Bio:** Kept the royal archive before the fall; fled with only the books he could carry, refusing to risk them under a leaking roof — “not yet cultured enough” for his taste, in his own estimation. Captured by the bandit chief’s men and held north across the river. The Builder sends the player to free him; once rescued he makes his own way to the fort (“dust-worn and smiling”) and delivers the rolled plan that lets The Builder raise the Library.
 - **Voice:** Prim, exacting, faintly superior; precise diction, corrects your grammar, warms slowly. Quoted on being freed: *“You came. I’d given up on being worth the trouble.”* ... *“Knowledge travels slower than a sword. It also lasts longer.”* And on arrival: *“A dry room and four walls — that’s all a library ever needed.”*
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Sgt. Garrick Vane — “The Old Fighter”

- **Canonical portrait:** `assets/art/npc-reference/garrick-vane.png`
 - **Resident building portrait:** same as canonical (one image, both uses).
 - **Seen in:** roadmap roster only so far — no dedicated story beat or encounter string has landed yet (`[draft – confirm: no beat/art plate wired for him as of this doc]`). **Note:** the playable “Fighter” hero class (`fighter` in `scripts/data/hero_config.gd`) and its arena-duel recruit encounter (`RESCUE_FLAVORS.fighter` , `DUEL_WON_BODY` / `DUEL_LOST_BODY` , `challenge` art plate `enc_fighter.png`) belong to a **different character** — the arena duelist. Garrick is explicitly **NOT** that hero; he is the mentor who trains Fighter-class recruits once unlocked.
 - **Description:** Older, all scars, built like a man who spent decades absorbing blows rather than dodging them. No longer carries or swings a blade himself — expect a folded arms / seated / instructor’s stance rather than a combat pose. Practical, worn soldier’s dress rather than parade armor; grey or greying hair. `[draft – confirm physical specifics beyond "all scars"]`
 - **Bio:** Broke more recruits than enemies over a long career training soldiers. The arena duelist (the playable Fighter hero unlocked via the Barracks-gated duel) was once his student — and he’s still not sure he trained him right. Recruit location/quest is TBD per the roadmap. Once recruited, he enables recruiting Fighter-class units and grants cheaper/stronger musters. `[draft – confirm: recruit location and specific quest content are still TBD in the roadmap itself]`
 - **Voice:** Gruff, patient, all scars; teaches by story and old wound; knows every way a blade’s swung even though he no longer swings one. No quoted line exists yet in `game_strings.gd` — voice notes above are drawn directly from the roadmap’s voice-direction brief. `[draft – confirm: no in-game quote available yet]`
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Wren Cassel — “Dead-Eye”

- **Canonical portrait:** `assets/art/npc-reference/wren-cassel.png`
- **Resident building portrait:** same as canonical (one image, both uses).
- **Seen in:** roadmap roster only so far — no dedicated story beat or encounter string has landed yet (`[draft – confirm]`). **Note (art being redesigned):** as with The Fighter, the playable “Archer” hero class (`archer` in

`scripts/data/hero_config.gd`) has its own snare-cage rescue encounter (`RESCUE_FLAVORS.archer` / `RESCUE_LOCKED_FLAVORS.archer` , art plate `enc_archer.png`) and is a **different character** from Wren.

Wren is the mentor who trains Archer-class recruits once unlocked; her own art is currently being redesigned, so treat any existing draft render of her as non-final.

- **Description:** Lost one eye and half the other in “a bad night” — expect an eye patch or visibly scarred eye as her single most distinguishing feature. Lean, weathered, no longer able to draw a full bow (so a bow-adjacent prop, if any, should read as retired/decorative rather than combat-ready). Practical ranger dress, muted greens/browns.
[draft – confirm physical specifics beyond the eye]
- **Bio:** A legendary shot who lost one eye and half the other to a bad night and still doesn’t miss — “the eyes were never the trick.” Can no longer draw a full bow herself, so she teaches instead. Recruit location/quest TBD per the roadmap. Once recruited, she enables recruiting Archer-class units and grants +range, cheaper musters.
[draft – confirm: recruit location and quest content still TBD]
- **Voice:** Soft-spoken, wry, deadpan. Quoted (roadmap voice brief, not yet in `game_strings.gd`): “*the eyes were never the trick.*” [draft – confirm: no in-game quote available yet beyond this roadmap line]

Bram Thorne — The Woodsman

Hut canon (07-20): his hut is raw WOOD-LOG work — visually distinct from The Builder’s stone cottage; gets its own entry plate (`woodsman_hut` , needs-art).

- **Canonical portrait:** `assets/art/npc-reference/bram-thorne.png` — **LOCKED 2026-07-21 (redhead, candidate #5 take C).**
- **Resident building portrait:** same as canonical (one image, both uses).
- **Seen in:** `woodsman` encounter (`WOODSMAN_TITLE` , `WOODSMAN_NEED_WOOD_BODY` , `WOODSMAN_TRADE_BODY` , `WOODSMAN_COTTAGE_ENTER_BODY` , art plate `enc_woodsman.png` ; existing painted references: `enc_woodsman.png` , `woodsman_first_seen.png` , `woodsman_after_tree.png` (base the regeneration on these).
- **Appearance (Nathan 2026-07-21 — MUST read as a different man from The Builder):** where Aldous is a stocky, stone-dust **mason’s build** in a leather apron, Bram is **lean and wiry — a man who walks the woods, not one who hauls stone**. Rangy and weather-burned; **long wild red-auburn (rust) hair and a fuller, wilder beard** than Aldous’s cropped one. **Forest palette — bark-browns, moss and pine greens, oiled-hide and fur, not stone-grey**. A long-handled felling axe worn across the back. Reads outdoors, hard-handed, no settlement polish. Direction to the renderer: **lean+wild+green Woodsman vs stocky+grey+stone Builder — the two silhouettes must not be confusable**.
- **Bio:** Last of a line of foresters; the north woods are the only company he keeps. The north road out of the fortress is barred by a great fallen branch/log — Bram trades a sharp axe for wood to clear it (the in-game exchange is currently 10 wood for his old felling axe, per `WOODSMAN_TRADE_BODY` ; the roadmap’s original placeholder figures were 50/100 wood for basic/sharp axes — treat the live `game_strings.gd` numbers as current). Once recruited he gives the Lumber Mill blueprint and boosts wood yield.
- **Voice:** Terse, solitary, reads weather and grain; speaks rarely, in short observations; trusts trees over men. Quoted: “A woodsman rests on a stump, eyeing the weapon at your side. ‘Tell you what — bring me ten wood and my old felling axe is yours. It bites deeper than that, I’d wager.’” And on the trade: “Ten wood — that’ll do me. Great, thanks so much. Here, take the axe. It’s served me well.”

Piper Fenn — The Scout

- **Canonical portrait:** `assets/art/npc-reference/piper-fenn.png`
 - **Resident building portrait:** same as canonical (one image, both uses).
 - **Seen in:** The Scout-warning beat that unlocks Defend/March (fires on the 3rd or 4th Explore run, per the roadmap's `THE SCOUT / DEFENSE UNLOCK` section, event id `scout_warned` — this beat is queued/not yet shipped as of this doc, `[draft – confirm: no committed game_strings.gd line found for him yet]`).
 - **Description:** Young, visibly breathless — should read as mid-sprint even at rest, wide-eyed, urgent. Light, practical runner's/messenger's gear rather than a soldier's kit; nothing heavy enough to slow him down. `[draft – confirm finer physical detail]`
 - **Bio:** Ran messages between garrisons before the fall. The sole survivor of the outpost that first saw the horde — he's been running ever since, trying to warn someone who'll listen. He finds the player on an early Explore run and gives the fortress its first warning of an attack, unlocking Defend. As a resident, his house/quest mechanic is explicitly unresolved in the roadmap ("we'll work through that in-game" — Nathan) because he's tied to a system (losing a defense) that doesn't map cleanly to the usual recruit → house → quest pattern. `[draft – confirm: resident loop still open per roadmap]`
 - **Voice:** Talks fast, over-shares, can't sit still, means every word. Roadmap-quoted line for his warning charge (not yet in `game_strings.gd`): *"They're coming — they're coming! [enemy faction] on the march! Get back to the castle — DEFEND it, now!"* — note the enemy faction name is itself a placeholder ("Runder") per the roadmap.
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The Bandit Chief

- **Canonical portrait:** `assets/art/npc-reference/bandit-chief.png`
- **Resident building portrait:** N/A — antagonist, not a resident. Kept here for schema consistency; no resident portrait applies.
- **Seen in:** `bandit_chief_seen` (spotted across the river guarding The Librarian's cage), `bandit_chief_won` (defeated), referenced as "their chief" / "the chief" in both beats and in `STORY_LIBRARIAN_INTRO_L2` ("The bandits took him, dragged him to their camp across the river").
- **Description:** Unnamed. Should read as the visible leader of a rough riverside bandit camp — smoke, rough voices, a held captive at the camp's heart. No specific physical description exists in the source material yet; render him as a hardened raider-camp leader, distinct in silhouette/gear from the rank-and-file bandits around him so he reads as "the chief" at a glance. `[draft – confirm: no physical description in source material]`
- **Bio:** Leads the bandit camp across the river from the fortress, holding Perrin Quill (The Librarian) captive in a cage at the camp's heart. Spotted by the player as they approach; turns and sees them before the fight. Falls in the fight that follows, scattering the camp and opening the way to the cage.
- **Voice:** No spoken lines for him specifically — the two beats he appears in are narrated (`STORY_BANDIT_CHIEF_SEEN_L1-3` , `STORY_BANDIT_CHIEF_WON_L1-2`), not quoted dialogue. Quoted narration: *"Across the water, smoke and rough voices... A cage at the camp's heart — and in it, a thin man clutching a satchel of ruined pages. Their chief turns. He has seen you."* And on defeat: *"The chief falls. The*

camp scatters. The way to the cage stands open.” [draft – confirm: no direct spoken line for him exists yet]

The Dying Soldier

- **Canonical portrait:** `assets/art/npc-reference/dying-soldier.png`
 - **Resident building portrait:** N/A — dies in the opening beat, not a resident. Kept here for schema consistency.
 - **Seen in:** the opening `dying_man` encounter (`TUT_DYING_MAN_TITLE` “A Fallen Soldier”, `TUT_DYING_MAN_BODY`), art plate `enc_dying_man.png` (auto-promoted 07-17, per `story_beats_config.gd`’s `POPUP_ART` registry).
 - **Description:** A soldier lying broken in the grass near the game’s opening, breathing shallow — visibly dying, not merely wounded. Straightens with recognition the instant he sees the player (“My lord. You live.”), suggesting he knew/served the protagonist before the fall. Battle-worn armor/gear appropriate to a common soldier of the old kingdom, consistent with the game’s fallen-kingdom aftermath setting.
 - **Bio:** One of the soldiers of the old kingdom, found dying in the carnage the player wakes into. Recognizes the protagonist as his lord and, with his last strength, presses his club into their hands and warns them of what waits ahead before dying. His weapon is the player’s very first piece of gear — the game’s opening tutorial beat. [draft – confirm: no name or further backstory exists for him in the source material – he may be intentionally anonymous]
 - **Voice:** Reverent, urgent, spending his last breath in service. Quoted in full: “*A soldier lies broken in the grass, his breath going shallow. He sees you — and something in him straightens. ‘My lord. You live.’ He presses a worn club into your hands. ‘Take it. Save yourself. Beware what waits ahead.’*”
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Doran Gryme — The Mason [stub]

- **Canonical portrait:** `assets/art/npc-reference/doran-gryme.png`
 - **Resident building portrait:** same as canonical.
 - **Seen in:** roadmap roster only — no story beat or encounter string wired yet.
 - **Description:** [stub] Broad, stubborn, booming presence per the roadmap’s voice notes; no rendered-appearance detail exists yet.
 - **Bio:** Worked the deep quarries before the fall; lost a crew to a collapse and never forgave the stone — but still cuts it. Met AT the quarry (NW); trades a mining pick for 10 stone; the pick clears the WEST boulder (opens the way to The Thresher), then house → he joins the fort → sharpened pick opens the off-map exit (quest-master §5, updated 07-20 — the old “50 stone / E-W walls / Quarry blueprint” flow here was stale). **Arc finale (canon 07-20, TBD spec):** after he’s moved in, losing X Defend runs triggers his ≈”You keep losing these defenses. You need walls.” — he is the source of the WALLS blueprint; that’s why he’s The Mason. Skill: +stone yield.
 - **Voice:** Argues with everything, loudest when right; blunt but fair. No in-game quote landed yet.
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Old Hollis — The Thresher [stub]

- **Canonical portrait:** `assets/art/npc-reference/old-hollis.png`
 - **Resident building portrait:** same as canonical.
 - **Seen in:** roadmap roster only — no story beat or encounter string wired yet.
 - **Description:** [stub] Stooped, unhurried per the roadmap's voice notes; no rendered-appearance detail exists yet.
 - **Bio:** Outlived three lords' worth of harvests; keeps sowing "because someone has to." Recruit location is TBD (east / wetlands per the roadmap). Gives The Thresher blueprint. Skill: +straw yield.
 - **Voice:** Dry proverbs and weather-talk. No in-game quote landed yet.
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Sela Emberlyn — The Smith [stub]

- **Canonical portrait:** `assets/art/npc-reference/sela-emberlyn.png`
 - **Resident building portrait:** same as canonical.
 - **Seen in:** roadmap roster only — no story beat or encounter string wired yet.
 - **Description:** [stub] Scarred, unhurried per the roadmap's voice notes; no rendered-appearance detail exists yet.
 - **Bio:** An armorer who forged for the losing side of the old kingdom's fall and walked away; her steel outlived the men who wore it. Recruit location TBD. Gives the Forge blueprint. Skill: +armament quality/cap.
 - **Voice:** Speaks in the hammer's rhythm — few words, each weighed. No in-game quote landed yet.
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Summary — draft/unconfirmed items for Nathan

The roadmap's `RESIDENT ROSTER` capture (07-13) gave every named character a personality brief, but backstory depth and in-game wiring vary a lot. Flagged `[draft – confirm]` / `[stub]` above:

- **Protagonist** — the deathless mechanic has no in-story explanation yet.
- **Sgt. Garrick Vane** and **Wren Cassel** — no story beat, encounter string, or art plate exists yet (recruit location for both is TBD per the roadmap); their only quoted lines are from the roadmap's voice-direction brief, not live `game_strings.gd` text. Wren's art is separately noted as being redesigned.
- **Piper Fenn** — his warning beat (`scout_warned`) is designed but not yet shipped in `story_beats_config.gd` ; his resident house/quest loop is explicitly unresolved per Nathan ("we'll work through that in-game").
- **The Bandit Chief** — no physical description or direct quote exists in source material; he is narrated, not voiced.
- **The Dying Soldier** — unnamed and likely intentionally anonymous; no backstory beyond the opening beat.
- **Doran Gryme, Old Hollis, Sela Emberlyn** — full personality/backstory in the roadmap, but `[stub]` -level here because no story beat or encounter string references them in `story_beats_config.gd` / `game_strings.gd` yet — flesh out once their content lands.

Not included above: the roadmap notes a future Mage mentor and Cleric/Priest mentor, names TBD — add entries once those classes and names land.