



Preparing for Fallout 4? Here's all the lore you need to know

Catch up with the future before November

By **Chan Khee Hoon** - Oct 23, 2015

**L**et's get straight to business — *Fallout 4* will be released on November 10. You're probably looking at this for one of two reasons: you are already a fervent *Fallout* nerd making sure I've got my facts straight, or you're part of the curious crowd wanting to hop onto the *Fallout 4* hype train. If you fall under the latter but weren't too sure how to hitch a ride without any prior knowledge of the series, then ready your makeshift leather armour and battle-hardened glare and step into my humble abode, post-apocalyptic wanderer-to-be. Yes, right here at this slightly irradiated spot of the internet, you will discover the lore behind the fascinating but bleak universe of *Fallout* — just enough to get you started on the game in November, while fooling your friends into thinking that you really did play the previous titles. For about five minutes.

Of course, it's also possible you're reading this because you're my concerned mother looking at my internet history out of morbid curiosity (hi mum!). *Finally, just a little warning, if you plan to play the whole series spoiler-free in the remaining weeks, I suggest you read no further.*

## War, war never changes

If you haven't guessed by the gloom and derelict buildings, *Fallout* is a post-apocalyptic series, which means at some point in the *Fallout* timeline, human civilisation as we know it was destroyed. To put it simply, the *Fallout* universe is a parallel of our world with the main divergence point following World War II. There are a few minor discrepancies before then, though, such as a samurai named Toshiro Kago getting abducted by aliens in 1603. ...at least I'm pretty sure that didn't happen in our timeline.



This end of human civilisation started from a series of conflicts known as the Resource Wars in April 2052. When the Middle East raised its oil prices, it caused the United States, China, the Soviet Union, Europe, and Canada to take military action against one another out of desperation for oil and other natural resources. All these eventually cumulated to the catastrophic event known as the Great War in October 2077, where the three superpowers – the United States, China, and the Soviet Union – nuked each other so hard that the attacks almost wiped out the human race.

Like I said, almost. Humankind is a hardy species that, despite the terrible catastrophe, managed to carve out a living in the nuclear holocaust. The aftermath of the Great War and the years that follow are when the *Fallout* series takes place.



## Old timey stuff

Retro-futurism fans will be delighted to know that the *Fallout* universe is a look into the 1950s American culture that could have dominated the country. Military tension in the form of anti-communism sentiments, a nuclear arms race, and even a space race among the various superpowers were prevalent in the years leading up to the Great War.

And like 1950s popular culture, rock and roll, doo wop, swing, and blues music rule the airwaves. Film noir-styled posters can also be found everywhere, from corporate banners to military propaganda ads, while long-abandoned vehicles that litter the streets are distinctively styled after the automobiles of that decade. It is almost like being in a black and white film, albeit with highly advanced technologies like robots, laser weapons and biomedical enhancements.



## The various factions

Before it flooded the world with nuclear weapons, the United States government prepared for the inevitability of nuclear war during the Resource Wars by commissioning Vault-Tec, a company specialising in advanced technologies, to build a system of bomb shelters known as Vaults. Publicly, these were said to protect Americans from the impending nuclear event, but the truth is much more sinister: Most of them were intended as experiments to explore edge-case scenarios humans might have to face when re-colonising Earth after the holocaust.

Vault 12 from the original *Fallout*, for example, was a study on the effects of radiation on humans. Hence, its door was designed not to seal properly, which eventually turned all its inhabitants into ghouls. On the other hand, Vault 101 from *Fallout 3* — the Vault which that game's player character, the Lone Wanderer, emerged from — was intended to be sealed indefinitely to investigate the genetic impact of a small and controlled group of dwellers.



There are tons of factions in the *Fallout* universe, but for brevity's sake, I will only cover those which are most likely to make an appearance in *Fallout 4*.

### Vault Dwellers



It goes without saying that the vault dwellers...dwelt in such Vaults. Most distinguishable by their blue-and-yellow skin tight jumpsuits, they are almost always equipped with a Pip-Boy on their wrists, a wearable electronic device that functions like a personal computer. Since only 122 such vaults were commissioned, these vault dwellers are a minority in the *Fallout* universe.

### The Enclave

The Vault project is the brainwave of these charming folks. Currently made up of the descendants of high-ranking politicians from the pre-War United States government, the Enclave wishes to eradicate all mutated and irradiated humans and rebuild the country to its former glory with only the "truest and purest" of humanity. They're referring to themselves, of course, since they were comfortably tucked away in fully-functioning Vaults during the nuclear attacks.



## The Brotherhood of Steel

Intensely fanatical about the recovery and preservation of pre-War technology, the Brotherhood of Steel is never interested in aiding the downtrodden or the weak, despite its knightly appearance. To its members, pre-War technology is irreplaceable, while human lives are disposable; The nuclear winter wonderland is pretty conducive for baby-making, after all. Paladins of the wastelands they are not, although the Capital Wasteland division from *Fallout 3* has drifted from this vision to prioritise the protection of the populace instead.



## Super Mutants

These green, hulking giants are actually mutated humans infected by a virus called the Forced Evolutionary Virus (FEV), which was originally concocted by the American military to turn its soldiers into overpowered and highly intelligent superhumans. Unfortunately, the FEV did not work as intended; It did turn them into behemoths of immense strength and endurance, but as mindless brutes with infant level intelligence.



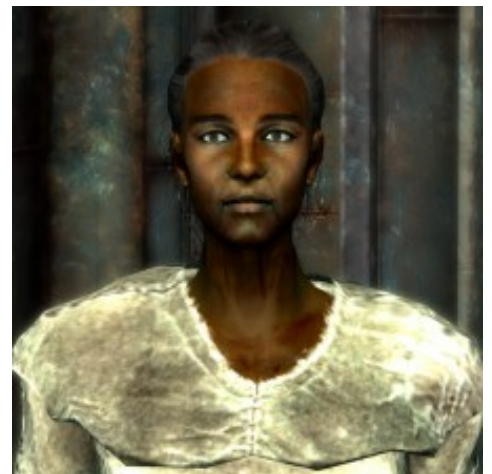
## The Institute



Not much is known about the Institute, although the faction is said to play a major role in *Fallout 4*. Mentioned only in *Fallout 3* and *Fallout: New Vegas*, the organisation resides within the Commonwealth and possesses the technology to produce androids so advanced as to easily pass for human. One such android, Harkness from *Fallout 3*, developed the ability to think for himself. As androids are often used as slaves and seen as mere machines with no rights, he escaped from the Commonwealth and etched a new identity as the security chief of Rivet City.

## The Railroad

Like the Institute, not much is known about the Railroad, other than it is an underground movement to aid sentient androids in their escape from the Institute. The Lone Wanderer met one of its members, Victoria Watts, who pleaded with the character not reveal Harkness's true identity to an agent of the Institute. We can expect to learn more about the organisation in *Fallout 4*.



## Some familiar faces

One of the player's companions in *Fallout 4* is an inquisitive little canine who is often seen tagging along not too far away from the player. That adorable mutt is Dogmeat, and is one of the series' more iconic companions. Dogmeat, whose owner was killed by local thugs and was soon adopted by the player, first made an appearance in the first *Fallout*. The loyal pooch also appeared in *Fallout 2* and *Fallout 3*, but given that the two sequels took place decades after the original game, both iterations were probably descendants of the original Dogmeat.

Madison Li, a brilliant scientist and a close friend of the Lone Wanderer's father from *Fallout 3*, is also speculated to make a return in *Fallout 4*. After the events of *Fallout 3* – which is essentially about ensuring clean, unirradiated water for everyone in the Capital Wasteland – she headed to the Commonwealth, where *Fallout 4* will be taking place.



By the way, the Lone Wanderer's father – YOUR father – is none other than Liam Neeson. Yes, Qui-Gon Jinn. Ra's al Ghul. Aslan the lion. Dedicated father-of-the-year in *Taken*. Go grab *Fallout 3* now, pronto.

## What's next?

Bethesda has been slowly but steadily leaking *Fallout 4* content leading up to its release in November. It is unlikely that we will hear more about the game's plot before then, but now that you are armed with enough knowledge to pose as a diehard *Fallout* fan to unsuspecting friends, go forth and get hyped. Just...don't talk to another *Fallout* nerd meanwhile if you are planning to keep up with the disguise. No amount of Speech skills will get past a friend with



a high Perception score.



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Fallout 4 releases worldwide on November 10, 2015 for PlayStation 4, Xbox One, and PC.

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