The Festering Lands: An Introduction

> *“The dead do not rest in Faulmoor.”*
> — Doctor Kyra Sheer

The Festering Lands centers on Norvostra during the second year of the Rotmire Blight, with Faulmoor at the heart of the present crisis.

Norvostra is not an empty kingdom waiting to die. People still work, trade, worship, bargain, raise families, enforce laws, smuggle goods, and plan for futures they may never see. What has changed is the price of doing all of those things. Quarantine, scarcity, dangerous roads, abandoned settlements, political fracture, and the return of the dead now shape ordinary life.

The Rotmire Blight

To the people living through it, the Rotmire Blight is a catastrophe of bodies, land, water, wildlife, and the dead. Victims may suffer fever, extreme thirst, darkened veins, damaged flesh, and progressive physical deterioration. Fields fail, water becomes suspect, animals change, and some of the dead rise again.

Public explanations conflict. Physicians, priests, scholars, and survivors describe different causes and routes of exposure because none possesses a complete understanding of the phenomenon.

There is no publicly known cure.

Silver is widely regarded as the most reliable permanent answer to fully turned Blighted creatures. Fire is heavily associated with corpse disposal and containment, but neither practice is considered a cure for the Blight itself.

Faulmoor

Faulmoor is the principal crisis region of the setting: damp, politically fractured, and still inhabited despite the pressure of the Blight.

Quarantines, checkpoints, burned settlements, restricted movement, hoarded resources, bribery, smuggling, and local improvisation shape daily life. Places such as Greymire remain important precisely because trade and movement have not stopped completely.

Three noble houses dominate much of the region's surviving political structure:

- House Valkenmar retains baronial authority and significant military power.
- House Wilthorne rules Ebonmoor, where trade and strategic access have become increasingly important.
- House Harrowden rules Fenmire and has gained enormous leverage through control of silver from Thornmere.

None of these houses offers a simple answer to the crisis. Each responds through its own mixture of duty, fear, ambition, pragmatism, and cruelty.

Silver and Scarcity

Silver is no longer merely wealth. Its effectiveness against the Blighted has turned it into a strategic survival resource.

Coins and household silver are melted down, weapons are silvered, supplies are hoarded, black markets expand, and access to mines and smiths carries political weight. Food, medicine, safe passage, information, and reliable shelter can matter just as much as coin.

Scarcity turns ordinary choices into moral pressure. The question is often not whether a decision is good, but who pays for it.

The Old Ways

The failure of familiar institutions has brought renewed attention to the **Old Ways**. Ancient rites, relics, old texts, pilgrimages, visions, charms, and forgotten traditions have returned to public life.

Interpretations vary widely. Priests, scholars, mystics, rulers, charlatans, relic-keepers, and desperate common folk may all look at the same object or event and reach different conclusions.

Relics in particular attract faith, greed, scholarship, fear, and political interest. What they truly are is not common knowledge.

Life in the Festering Lands

The setting's horror is not limited to the Blighted dead. Much of it comes from human decisions made under pressure.

That pressure is most effective when it remains personal. The setting is not only about whether a settlement survives, but about what survival asks of the people inside it and which choices they will still recognize as their own afterward.

Who is allowed through a gate? Who receives medicine? Who is quarantined? Who controls silver? When does necessary caution become cruelty? When does survival become an excuse?

Characters may be natives of the affected regions or outsiders drawn toward them by duty, desperation, profit, faith, scholarship, family, crime, or circumstance. Their relationship to authority, scarcity, faith, quarantine, and the Blight matters as much as their ability to survive a fight.

Start Here

Readers looking for a broader understanding of the setting can continue with:

- Norvostra Overview
- Faulmoor Overview
- Rotmire Blight
- Silver and its Importance in the Festering Lands
- Character Creation Guide for The Festering Lands

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