

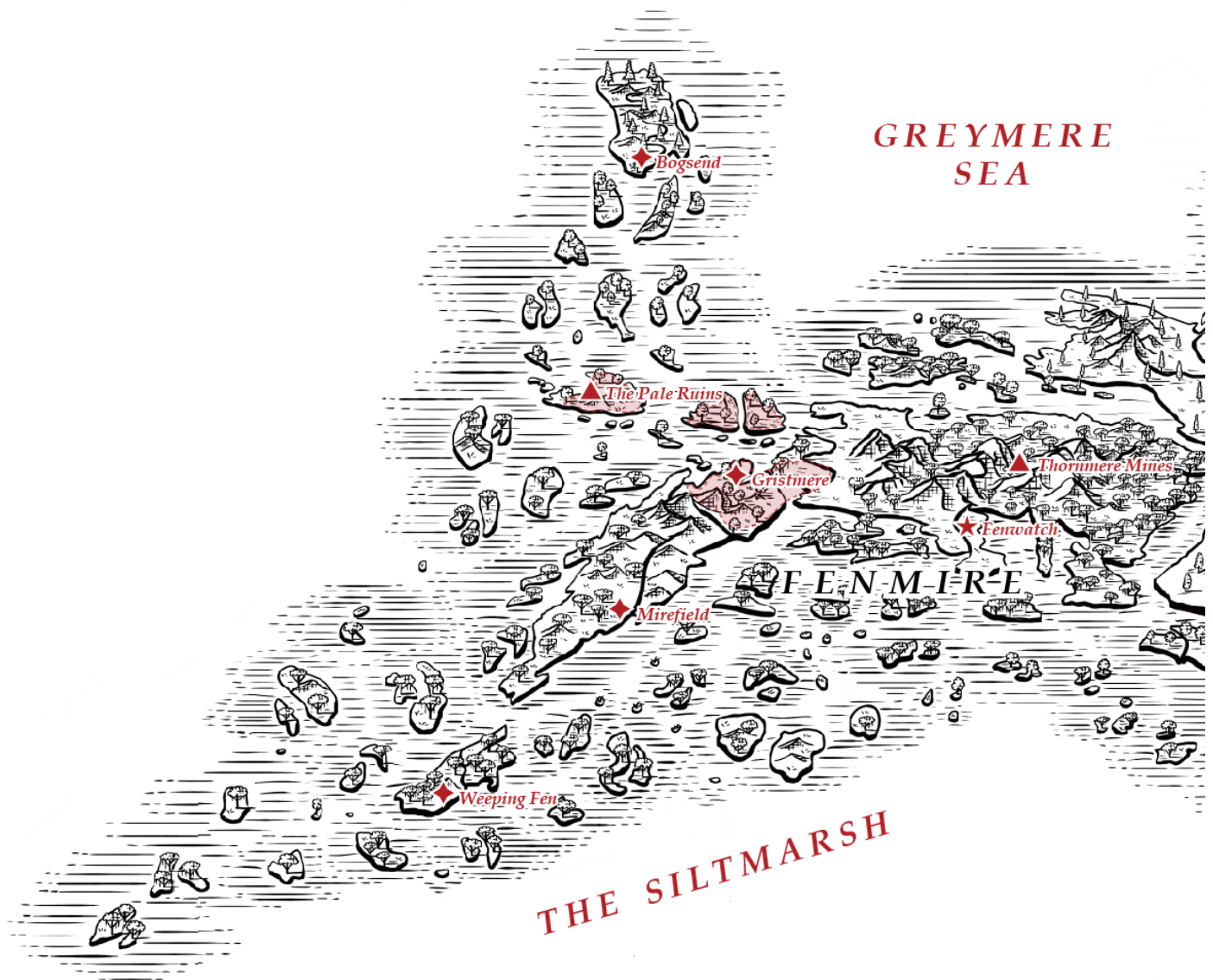
Gristmere

A Town Swallowed by Mire and Blight

“We had no choice. The bridges had to burn, lest the Blight cross with them. I tell myself this, over and over, yet still, I see their faces in the flames. And if faced with the choice again, I would set them alight without hesitation.

— [Lord Harrowden](#), on the fall of Gristmere.

Gristmere is a drowned husk of a town, its remains half-sunken in the endless mire, claimed by the [Rotmire Blight](#) and abandoned to the creeping decay of the swamp. Once a thriving settlement on the fringes of [Fenmire](#), Gristmere was known for its resilience, its people hardened by generations of struggle against the marshlands. Raised walkways and stilts kept the homes and structures above the ever-encroaching waters, and trade flowed through its narrow canals, bringing wealth and survival to those who called it home. Now, all that remains is ruin and silence.



The fall of Gristmere was a devastating blow to [Fenmire](#), as it served as a crucial junction along the main roads leading to the settlements of [Mirefield](#) and Weeping Fen. With its loss, travel and trade to the southwest were severely disrupted, leaving those settlements isolated and more vulnerable to the slow spread of the Blight. Merchants and travelers now take dangerous detours through unstable marshland, where the risk of ambush by the desperate or infected grows with each passing day.

The Blight came swiftly to Gristmere, slipping through the waterways and spreading like a sickness that could not be stopped. In a desperate effort to contain the infection, [House Harrowden](#) implemented strict quarantine measures. A perimeter of wooden barricades was constructed along the main roads, and guards stationed at checkpoints turned back refugees, unwilling to risk the spread of the Blight. Any who attempted to leave without sanction were met with cold steel, and rumors tell of entire families being forced back into the doomed town to meet their fate. Despite these efforts, the quarantine ultimately failed.

When the dead began to rise from the blackened waters, the barricades were abandoned, and [House Harrowden](#), unwilling to expend resources to reclaim the settlement, declared it lost and set fire to the bridges that once connected it to the rest of [Fenmire](#). What little remains of its walkways and stilted homes are now half-submerged, the water swallowing them piece by piece. The only movement that stirs among its decaying structures is the slow lurch of the dead, still bound to the place they once lived.



Now, Gristmere is a skeletal wreck, its once-thriving canals now filled with stagnant black water and broken timbers jutting from the depths like rotting teeth. The skeletal remains of its raised walkways loom over the mire, many collapsed into the murky swamp below, while others creak with the weight of decay, barely holding together. Crooked stilted houses lean at unnatural angles, their roofs caved in, their windows shattered, their interiors swallowed by creeping vines and waterlogged rot. The old market square, once the town's heart, is now little more than a half-submerged ruin, where the tops of merchant stalls barely breach the waterline, their wooden beams softened and bloated from years of exposure.

Despite its desolation, Gristmere is not entirely forgotten. The desperate and the foolish still seek it out—smugglers hoping to use its ruins as a hidden waypoint, scavengers looking for valuables left behind, or outcasts with nowhere else to go. Those who venture too deep rarely return, their bodies joining the restless dead beneath the water. Some say the Blight lingers here in ways unseen, that the mist carries whispers, and that those who breathe too deeply feel something creeping into their bones.

Nowadays, Gristmere holds an even more unique interest, as it is believed that a lost silver shipment remains hidden somewhere within its ruins. This shipment, originally bound for [Mirefield](#), was overtaken during the town's final days, vanishing into the depths of the waterlogged streets.

Whether stolen by desperate survivors, lost in the chaos, or buried beneath collapsed buildings, the silver remains unclaimed—drawing treasure hunters and mercenaries willing to risk the dangers of the Blight for the chance at unimaginable wealth. [House Harrowden](#) has offered no official comment on the matter, but whispers suggest that they still seek their lost treasure, quietly dispatching agents into the ruins in hopes of reclaiming what was once theirs.

Legends persist of something deeper within the ruins—a presence that watches, waiting beneath the waterlogged streets. Strange lights flicker within the mist at night, shadows shift where none should be, and those who camp near the ruins speak of dreams that feel too real, as if something in Gristmere does not wish to be forgotten. [House Harrowden](#) refuses to speak of the town, and those who know its history choose to forget. Whatever Gristmere once was, it is now a graveyard, its secrets drowned beneath the endless swamp.

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