

Following of the Broken Tusk

For as long as they can remember, generations of nomads in northern Avistan have hewn to an itinerant way of life, moving constantly across the land in accordance with the region's changing seasons, plant cycles, and animal migrations. In the hoarfrost-covered plains between Irrisen and the Sarkoris Scar, where the mightiest nomads call themselves Mammoth Lords, these wandering communities are

known as followings. The Broken Tusk is one such following.

Tusk The Broken can trace its origins back millennia, to an era when it was known as the Burning Mammoth and its members served as stewards of a divine lantern called the Primordial Flame. At the onset of the Age of Lost Omens, when the Worldwound opened in Sarkoris, the following's warriors and elders disputed what to do with the artifact, and the resulting schism split the following in two. Ultimately, the Primordial Flame was hidden away, and the warrior 🇼 faction went east to fight at

the Worldwound, taking with

them the banner of the Burning Mammoth. Only a few stayed in the western lands to continue to guard the hidden *Primordial Flame*, forced to make a new name for themselves.

HISTORY

The Burning Mammoth following roamed the Realm of the Mammoth Lords for at least 40 generations, with members numbering in the hundreds, composed mostly of hunters who tracked mammoth herds. But even greater than its numbers was its influence, thanks to the *Primordial Flame*: a tremendous artifact

gifted to the following by the righteous goddess Sister Cinder. This magical lantern—a ribcage-sized mass of unbreakable bones and hide surrounding an ever-burning red flame—provided both light and warmth and enabled the Burning Mammoth to carve a verdant path across the Realm's inhospitable tundra during its migrations. But while it was true that the *Primordial Flame* enabled nomadic communities to flourish across the Realm, it also contained the power to disrupt or destroy the delicate natural balance of

the ecosystem. The following took on a sacred duty to use the artifact's power wisely and to protect it from incompetence and malice.

When the great quake opened the Worldwound, spilling demonic hordes across northern Avistan, the Burning Mammoth following retreated to the plains west of the Tusk Mountains. The following's leaders quarreled over what to do. On one side, the warriors insisted on taking the Primordial Flame to the Worldwound to fight alongside other Kellids, where they

could use the artifact's power invaders head-on. On the other

to face the demonic invaders head-on. On the other side were the prudent elders Sidke and Ludsk, who thought the risk of the demons somehow seizing the lantern too great and insisted that the following hide it to protect it from evil hands. The two elders convinced a handful of their kinfolk to take the artifact in secret and seal it in a remote mountain cavern called Red Cat Cave. There the *Primordial Flame* would rest, the elders calmly explained to the rest of the befuddled Tusks, until the day it could be safely wielded once more. The news was met with shock and dismay, causing a rift in the community. Led by the aasimar

TUSK

BROKE

Chapter 1: Fires on the

Chapter 2: Journey to Rec Cat Cave

Chapter 3: Breaking Tusks

Following of the Broken Tusk



The Broken Tusk's banner memorializes this moment, depicting a mammoth with a broken tusk alongside her two calves. While on the move, the Tusk foremost in the procession holds the banner aloft, higher than everything else in the following. When they make camp, the following plants the banner in the middle of the encampment near the cooking fires. The banner of the Broken Tusk and the story of hope it represents are thus at the center of community life, both literally and figuratively, and it's integral to the following's shared identity.

Broken Tusks use the word *ethgir* to refer to the era before the schism and *syorn* to designate the present period. Throughout the syorn, the Broken Tusk has struggled to endure. For the first generation of the syorn, food was scarce, and many Tusks didn't survive a series of lean winters; the second generation suffered a catastrophic loss of several hunters to a frost giant ambush. For decades, Broken Tusks bore fewer children, fearing what kind of harsh world their descendants would inherit. With the following's numbers dwindling, Sidke's son, Eiwa, convinced the Tusks to try a novel tactic: active recruitment.

They sent envoys to Hillcross and Icestair to solicit new allies from all walks of life, Kellid and otherwise, who wanted to live as a Tusk. The first wave of Broken Tusk initiates included a house of hearty Ulfen settlers-turned-itinerants, a family of dwarf treasure hunters originally from the Mindspin Mountains,

Mihrini halflings, gnome monks by way of the Shay Citadels, and even a Forlorn elf. Tusk elders taught foreign recruits the traditions and customs of their following, alongside first-generation Tusks, and welcomed the new members whose presence could strengthen the following as a whole.

SOCIETY & CULTURE

Recruiting into the Broken Tusk following continues to this day. The fourth generation of Broken Tusks, now coming of age, include some whose Kellid ancestors have been Mammoth Lords for millennia, some whose parents or grandparents joined the Broken Tusk following in the last century, and some first-generation followers. Tusks have no terms to differentiate between these groups; all who walk under the banner of the Broken Tusk are Tusks, and each is as worthy of respect and a meaningful life as another.

Cosmopolitan explorers from other parts of the world—which many Mammoth Lord communities refer to as "southerners"—view Mammoth Lord

followings' way of life as harsh, challenging, and full of danger, each day pitting raw will against a tough landscape in a perpetual struggle for survival. While the physical demands of living in the Realm are indeed daunting, even for those raised to know the land and its many dangers, followings such as the Broken Tusk don't view life as a fight or contest. Indeed, the southerners' mindset is incomprehensible to many people of the Realm, who see themselves as neither masters nor victims of the land, but simply as elements of it—parts of a greater whole like every other living thing.

ONE WITH THE LAND

Many Mammoth Lord followings emphasize moderation and respect for the land as core tenets. Broken Tusks extend these tenets even further, teaching that all things share a spiritual essence—a divine animating force that unites not only plants and animals, but rivers, clouds, stones, celestial bodies, and everything else. Everything in the physical world is also a spiritual thing to Tusks, and no one thing is above another.

This latter point often perplexes southerners and even other Kellids, many of whom tend to divide things into belonging either to the natural world or the "unnatural world." To early Tusks, there was no division between what nature made and what humanity made, since nature and humanity were indistinguishable. In this original reckoning, there was not even a "world" outside of oneself. These progenitors of the Tusk philosophy regarded their relationship with external phenomena much as most people might regard the intrinsic relationship between one's mind and body: this is me, and I am this.

When Broken Tusks speak of "living a good life," they mean recognizing the spiritual essence in everything and further understanding one's place as neither superior nor opposed, but rather as one. This good life enables herders to befriend animals, songsingers to channel the stories of their ancestors, and warriors and hunters to look death in the eyes without fear.

In the face of cultural intermingling with the south and a greater exchange of ideas than ever before, the Broken Tusk is among the few Mammoth Lord followings that has maintained its fundamental conception of being. Most other followings regard the cherished beliefs of the Broken Tusk as antiquated, chiding the Tusks as naive and attempting to encourage them to adopt the pragmatic worldview that swept through Avistan alongside non-Kellid settlers: the worldview of "things" and "people" and "places."

BIRTH AND DEATH

Beyond the changing seasons, Broken Tusks measure the passage of time by the recency of impactful events, and no two events shape the lives of those around them more than birth and death.

Broken Tusks with child are expected to perform their duties up until the final stages of pregnancy, during which time they're pampered with an outsized share of foraged vegetables and hunted game. The Broken Tusks believe that the food eaten during a pregnant person's final weeks of gestation determines the size, strength, and personality of the baby. Smoked meats from mammoths, woolly rhinos, and bears are thought to result in large, strong warriors; bearberries, willow bark, and bird eggs make quick, keen-eyed scouts; and raw fish, lightly cooked frogs, and certain lichen soups are thought to imbue a fetus with mystical qualities both powerful and dangerous.

Most Broken Tusk deaths are the results of accidents or violence. On the rare occasion that imminent death is apparent ahead of time, attendants from the dying one's house are responsible for creating a comfortable place for their loved one to rest in their final moments. A songsinger also tends to the dying one, listening to whatever final stories, wishes, or secrets the soon-to-be-departed wants to share.

In the ethgir, Burning Mammoths cremated their dead-an unusual custom among Mammoth Lord followings. Most of these tundra-roaming nomads don't have ready access to the necessary ingredients, namely large amounts of wood, to build a pyre hot enough to immolate human remains. Burning Mammoths, however, used the power of the *Primordial* Flame to achieve sufficient heat. The Mammoths' cremation ceremony involved stripping the deceased bare and ceremonially laying them on a rock slab or other rocky, open area, along with offerings of sweet-smelling herbs, dried fruits, and animal organs. Songsingers from the departed's house cried out stories of the dead's brave deeds in life, not to mourn but to remind the ephemeral spirit of the dead who they were in life, so they could continue to be virtuous in whatever form their spirit took next.

In the syorn, without the *Primordial Flame*, the Broken Tusk practices the more common funerary custom of excarnation. House members of the deceased find an outcropping or ledge in the hills on which to lay the body; in plains, they stretch a hide across the tops of trees to hold the body aloft. Scavengers and parasites then consume the body. Preserving bodies or marking where bodies lay isn't customary. Bodily remains are considered exactly what they are: ashes, bones, flesh, and bits of hair and nails. The departed's

BROKEN TUSK MOON

> The Quest for the Frozen Flame

Chapter 1: Fires on the Horizon

Chapter 2: Journey to Red Cat Cave

Chapter 3: Breaking Tusks

Following of the Broken Tusk

spirit is the same as it ever was-at one with its surroundings. As such, Tusks don't mourn death as loss; the living must simply listen harder to hear the words of their departed kin. While many societies make offerings to the dead or their next of kin, the opposite was true for Burning Mammoths, and it remains so for Broken Tusks. Members of a deceased Tusk's house are expected to give one gift to every other house in the following, typically from among the deceased's few personal effects. Sometimes, multiple gifts are shared with each house. In this way, durable and useful goods, such as weapons, tools, and jewelry, can pass between many houses.

BODY MODIFICATIONS

Some Mammoth Lord followings ritualize or mandate certain types of body modifications, such as tattoo, scarification, or branding. As with so many of their customs, the Broken Tusk largely leaves this up to the individual and their house to choose whether to ornament their body and how. As such, Tusks practice a wide variety of these arts. Tattooing is a popular pastime in the summer months, whereas scarification and branding are typically reserved for the winter months, when fewer bugs and parasites threaten to cause infection.

In all these arts, each house tends to have a customary set of patterns, shapes, or symbols they use in their designs. For example, members of the Moose House tend to brand their faces and bodies with thick, solid lines. Falcon House boasts many of the best tattooists in the following, who use porcupine needles and herbal salves to apply stick-and-poke healing marks over achy joints and internal injuries.

Scarification is most common in Otter
House, whose master scar-etchers use specially treated beaver claws to carve lines along and around facial features to enhance the senses, commonly the eyes, nose, and ears. Piercings and other pieces of worn jewelry present a popular alternative for Tusks who are hesitant to permanently mark their flesh, and body paint mixed from pigments and river clay are a temporary alternative to skin marking.

POSSESSIONS AND ZOIC FETISHES

Generally, each member of the Broken Tusk has the responsibility of carrying all their own belongings when traveling between camps, and as such, followers generally have few belongings, most of which have a specific function. These items are almost always handmade and one-of-a-kind. Belongings that aren't strictly functional tend to be small, owing to the need to migrate on a regular basis. Durable weapons and armor are among the most highly prized belongings, often passed from one generation to the next. In this way, personal possessions undergo a natural arc: children tend to own few things, adults have as many personal effects as they'll ever have, and elders carry only those things that they cherish most.

Tusks are encouraged to use every part of the animals they hunt, and so they carve a great many things from ivory, such as earrings, pendants, and other accessories. In Musk Ox House, it's customary for members to gift their housefellows pieces of ivory carved into the shapes of animals—what many southerners call a "zoic fetish"—to parents of newborn children. (For more details on zoic fetishes, see page 77.)

Other materials, such as woven plains grass, oiled darkwood, and charred bones, are also commonly used to craft zoic fetishes. A Broken Tusk would likely be bemused to learn that zoic fetishes are bought and sold in foreign lands. Some of these items are purely decorative, sometimes commemorative, but a few are enchanted. Usually, the enchantment provides some protection against a particular type of animal, such as bears or wolves, though certain pieces of jewelry boast stronger enchantments, such as granting the ability to talk to animals or even to charm them.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER FOLLOWINGS

The Broken Tusks' history of generosity has given them an outsized reputation among Mammoth Lord communities. Their spirit of perseverance and hospitality have garnered them many tenuous allies over the years—along with some hostile rivals. Below are a few other communities whose stories have intersected with the Tusk's.

Amethyst Eagle: Amethyst Eagles maintain a strict exclusionist dogma to sustain their ancient bloodline. Their following has two Mammoth Lords: Rizani, the Otagi Circle; and Uskox, Son of the South. Years ago, the Broken Tusk accepted a runaway Eagle into its numbers but failed to protect them from the purple-eyed archers who tracked down this missing member. The assassins coolly executed their kin before a young Eiwa's very eyes, then left as silently as they'd arrived. Decades later, relations between the Broken Tusk and the Amethyst Eagle remain tense.

Bristle Hog: Only the most desperate Mammoth Lords call this cowardly following an ally. The leader of the Bristle Hogs, a disgraced Mammoth Lord and craven sycophant named Bugo, is apparently a distant cousin to the young Tusk herder Imek—a fact which causes the child no shortage of embarrassment. Just before summer's end, Broken Tusks traditionally meet with Bristle Hogs to share news and trade medicinal herbs for one of the Hogs' gangly swine.

Isle of All: Islers don't make a migratory loop like other nomadic followings; instead, they trek ceaselessly toward the setting sun. Its people summer in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords and—if their outlandish tales are to be believed—winter upon hollowed-out logs that they float across a massive glacial lake as salty as tears. The Broken Tusk's elders dismiss these stories of a "world pond" as fairy-tales,

BROKEN TUSK HOUSES

Each member of the Broken Tusk belongs to one of four houses. Though Tusks collectively have a multitude of bloodlines, these familial designations are secondary to house affiliations. Each house is led by a single high-ranking Tusk (who's also typically a Mammoth Lord, though not always). House members spend most of their time with one another, sharing duties, forming friend groups, and occupying the same communal sleeping tent.

In the ethgir, the Burning Mammoth had a dozen houses governed by complex lineage rules, each corresponding to a single animal. After the Burning Mammoth forsook the Tusks, the latter couldn't maintain the numbers to fill 12 houses, so they reduced them to just four. Each house contains a triad of animals that individually embody courage, cleverness, and resilience. Broken Tusks typically identify themselves with just one of the three animals represented in their house, and their personal effects often feature that animal.

A Tusk's house is typically determined by their mother's house, but other than that custom, the rules about lineage from the ethgir are no longer observed.

Falcon House (headed by Eiwa), which includes hares and glyptodons.

Moose House (headed by Nakta), which includes bears and ravens.

Musk Ox House (headed by Merthig), which includes saber-toothed tigers and bighorn sheep.

Otter House (headed by Argakoa), which includes wolves and aurochs.

but they can hardly deny the Islers' evidence: relics, armor, and a fatty meat taken from "singing, club-shaped fish even bigger than mammoths."

Navaran Sun: These old allies of the Burning Mammoth often aided their fellows in battle against enemy followings, particularly against Dulasi slaver bands. Loyal to a fault, Buffalo King Navar and his followers were the first to be conscripted into Ivarsa's violent reimagining of the Burning Mammoth.

RELIGION AND MAGIC

In keeping with the legend of the *Primordial Flame*, the original Burning Mammoths worshipped Sister Cinder—known commonly as Sarenrae in other cultures—to a great degree. Modern Tusks continue this tradition, dedicating many of their rituals and holidays to their patron deity. Sister Cinder guides the Tusks' hands in times of uncertainty, shining a

BROKEN TUSK MOON

The Quest for the Frozen Flame

Chapter 1: Fires on the Horizon

Chapter 2: Journey to Red Cat Cave

Chapter 3: Breaking Tusks

Following of the Broken Tusk

light on moral dilemmas so her adherents can tell right from wrong and act accordingly.

Regarding temporal concepts such as tracking game or finding a means to ford a river, Broken Tusks speak of the Pursuants—a triad of deities who jointly oversee aspects of hunting and warfare—or the manifestation of natural forces called Gozreh. The latter is considered a partner of the fey lord Ng, the Keeper of Time, who manages the seasons and the annual life cycle of living things. Together, Gozreh and Ng are not so much considered deities as they are spirits who embody the unfathomable immensity of the Realm and beyond.

For more details on these deities and other religions present in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, see "Religions of the Realm" in the next volume, *Pathfinder Adventure Path #176: Lost Mammoth Valley*.

Because Broken Tusks encourage peoples from all walks to follow their banner, they are well exposed to various kinds of magic—including occult arts from as far as Ustalav and divination magic such as that from Varisia. Most Tusks not only tolerate magic, but make an effort to understand it and dispel their mother culture's deep-seated superstitions about its use.

NOTABLE NPCS

At the outset of "Broken Tusk Moon," the Broken Tusk following has 74 members. Depending on how the heroes fare against the Burning Mammoth invasion at the end of Chapter 1, this number might be reduced to as few as 64 by the time the following makes its way toward Red Cat Cave.

Below are the most notable members of the Broken Tusk following. The heroes are likely to know them all and might even be related to one or more of them.

Argakoa the Songsinger (NG female human skald 7), Otter House leader and Mammoth Lord, is the daughter of Ulfen merchants from Hellirinn. Signe (her given name) was still in her teens when she fell madly in love with a snowcaster elf named Letsua. Scandalized by her infatuation with someone outside their house, her parents disowned her. The couple journeyed to Hillcross together, where they met Eiwa and agreed to travel with the Broken Tusks. Argakoa combined her childhood training as a skald with her passion for the lore of the Broken Tusk to become the foremost of the following's songsingers. As she enters old age—what the Tusks call "the long-hair years"—Argakoa hopes to pass on her mastery of song and saga to a worthy student of the art.

Grandfather Eiwa (LG male human seer 4), Falcon House leader, Mammoth Lord, and a rare Kellid centenarian, is the oldest living member of the Broken Tusk. His mother, Sidke, was one of the Burning Mammoth elders who took the *Primordial Flame* to Red Cat Cave, and by her efforts, her loyal followers became the first Broken Tusks. Eiwa is the only Broken Tusk alive who witnessed the following's schism, and he remembers clearly how his parents struggled to establish a new migratory route and preserve their traditions and rituals. Eiwa was briefly married in his youth, but after his husband's early death, he has remained single. He never fathered any children, but he's a popular and beloved mentor to many of the Broken Tusk's youngest generation, hence the appellation he bears proudly.

As a young man, Eiwa rose to prominence in the following due to his quick thinking and forethought. While his cleverness made his opinion valuable, his kindness won him the trust and friendship of many of his own generation and the next. Eiwa was an early champion of recruiting nonhumans into the Broken Tusk and teaching them the following's ways. He continues to take a special interest in new recruits and does his best to help them adjust, even though he senses his time among the following is short.

Imek (LG female human forager 1) of Falcon House loves animals and spends her days brushing out the woolly coats of the following's domesticated mammoths. Other children bully and ostracize her, calling her a tattletale and a know-nothing, though her nine winters make her older than most of her taunters. She currently lacks the physical strength or friends to stand up to her rivals, but she hopes to one day become a great mammoth rider all the same.

Letsua (CG male elf Mammoth Lord 3) of Otter House is a Forlorn elf and Mammoth Lord originally hailing from Kyonin. He doesn't think often of the quarrels that led him to forsake his homeland, nor of the many years he spent wandering Avistan in a fugue. When a young Ulfen woman whose company he enjoyed suddenly became his responsibility, it was as though a dark cloud had been lifted from Letsua's brow. Shortly after he agreed to marry Argakoa, the two took up Eiwa's offer to live among the Broken Tusks. Now, decades later, Letsua has solidified his place as one of the Broken Tusk's most valuable Mammoth Lords. Though highly skilled and passionate, Letsua's impatience can sometimes come across as arrogance. He has a strong willingness to change his mind when presented with new facts or options—this trait greatly aids the following in times when adaptability is key to survival, but it irks more than a few fellow Tusks, some of whom point to Letsua's mercurial decision-making as a sign of unreliability.

Merthig the Firekeeper (NG male dwarf hunter 8), Musk Ox House leader and Mammoth Lord, is a grandson of the first dwarves to join the Broken

Tusk following. He recently became the following's youngest Mammoth Lord, taking the place of his grandmother. As a young man, Merthig made a name for himself as a fearless hunter and fighter, particularly in skirmishes with frost giants. In the most legendary of his encounters, he slew an ogre single-handedly, but he lost his lower arm as a result. Despite now wielding only one fighting axe, he remains quite formidable when put to the test. He rarely ventures far from the following these days, focusing on tending the fires, finding assistants to help with camp duties, and spending time with his husband, Kopua.

Nakta the Healer (NG nonbinary half-orc healer 7), Moose House leader and Mammoth Lord, is the most powerful wielder of magic among the Broken Tusks. Nakta has been married three times, including briefly to Wipa's sister, Pathua, but none could satisfy their stunning intellect. An orphan raised by Broken Tusks from a young age, Nakta's skill with magic was greeted and honed with great excitement. Given the rarity of spellcasters among Mammoth Lord followings, the Broken Tusk community rightly viewed Nakta's gift as a rare and valuable boon. Nakta maintains a disarmingly calm demeanor in even the most perilous situations; when the healer pauses before speaking—a characteristic quirk—nearly everyone in the vicinity goes silent with anticipation.

Though brilliant, Nakta tends to overestimate their own healing abilities and thus underestimate threats to the Broken Tusk, leading to a somewhat tense relationship with the following's other house leaders. Nakta invites anyone to join them in silent meditation each dawn, and they keep a keen eye on people who exhibit a knack for spellcasting.

Pakano (CE male human bully 4) of Falcon House is the great-grandson of Eiwa's deceased sister and a presumed successor to Eiwa's role as leader of Falcon House. The haughty young Kellid takes considerable pride in his heritage, having heard many stories of the strength of the following back when it was still called the Burning Mammoth.

At the start of this Adventure Path, Pakano shares equal status with the heroes, training under Wipa to become a master scout for the Broken Tusk following. He doesn't make any attempt to disguise his disdain for his rivals. He views them, perhaps rightly, as threats to his ascendency to the role of Mammoth Lord. He also bears great enmity for the head scout Wipa because she serves as a constant reminder to

him of the death of her husband—a death he caused—and of weakness in general. For more details on Pakano, see page 88.

Panuaku (CG female half-elf hunter 2) of Otter House is Wipa's twin sister and one of the following's most reliable hunters. Despite her brash and fiery personality, she's a team player with a deep commitment to seeing others succeed—it's just that she might yell at them a good deal in the process. Young hunters sometimes bear a grudge against Panuaku initially, though a single compliment from the master huntress is often all it takes to dispel such hard feelings.

Wipa (NG female half-elf scout 3) of Otter House is a second-generation Broken Tusk, daughter of Letsua and Argakoa. She and her sister Panuaku are from the same set of triplets, but their brother didn't survive childhood. At the start of the adventure, Wipa is in the last few days of her own pregnancy, and at the end of the first chapter, she gives birth to triplets herself.

Wipa's husband, Weohatan, was a half-elf who joined the following several years ago. He died only a few weeks ago from wounds sustained while hunting an aurochs. Wipa and Weohatan were best friends—closer even than Wipa and her sister, Panuaku. This has become apparent during Wipa's grieving; Panuaku masks her jealousy far better than Wipa hides her sorrow. Attempting to distract herself from Weohatan and her worries over who'll help her with her impending childbirth, Wipa has volunteered to train the newest group of scouts. Wipa is deeply knowledgeable, highly skilled, and kind to a fault. She holds a deep-seated reverence for Broken Tusk traditions that has only strengthened since she became a widow. At camp, Wipa makes worry stones from pretty rocks she finds on her long, solitary walks.

BROKEN TUSK MOON

> The Quest for the Frozen Flame

Chapter 1: Fires on the Horizon

Journey to Red Cat Cave

Breaking Tusks

Following of the Broken Tusk