



# Burning Tundra

**BURNING  
TUNDRA**

## **Chapter 1: Heroes of Hillcross** ..... 4

The Broken Tusk following has traveled Metuak's trail to Hillcross, a huge camp protected by magic that provides shelter to thousands of northern itinerants. As the characters learn about Hillcross and recruit more followers, frost giants attack the settlement. The scouts must save their following by repelling the assault. Afterward, the Broken Tusk elders grant the characters the titles of Mammoth Lords; all that's left for them to do is tame their megafauna mounts.

## **Chapter 2: Barkblood** ..... 26

Metuak fled east into the Tamarnian Tar Forest, a treacherous wasteland home to strange fey, an ancient sphinx, and monstrous creatures of living tar. However, the characters aren't the only ones here seeking out whatever remains of the cursed hero—the Burning Mammoth leader, Ivarsa, and her frost giant ally, the hunter Hegremon, also stalk among the tar-fed trees. The characters must contend with Hegremon while entreating the fetid forest's other denizens to help them uncover Metuak's path.

## **Chapter 3: Darkest Night** ..... 46

Castle Grimgorge was built by Mendevian crusaders, but demons slaughtered everyone, leaving only haunted ruins. As the winter solstice arrives, the undead who dwell in the castle are at their strongest; the characters must face Metuak, the demon who tortures him, and finally Ivarsa herself.

## **FOLLOWERS AND FAUNA**

In the first part of this adventure, the party's goal is to increase the size of their following as much as possible with denizens of the city of Hillcross. The characters then leave these followers behind to protect Hillcross so they can ride their newly befriended megafauna mounts into the nearby wilderness.

The adventure encourages the characters to recruit a large following, then gives them an opportunity to see that following put to the test in a battle against invading frost giants. By the time the siege ends, the characters' organization might be as high as 17th level, and the Broken Tusks could number as many as 800 souls!

In Chapter 2, when the characters trek out on their own, the emphasis shifts to the megafauna that give the Mammoth Lords their name. Having tamed these mighty creatures outside Hillcross, the characters lead their oversized steeds into battle. Most of the encounters in Chapters 2 and 3 are designed to be open and spacious, with plenty of room for Large mounts to charge, trample, and rout the party's foes. Some of these battles might feel a bit one-sided in the players' favor, and this is by design; after all, they've worked hard to become true Mammoth Lords. Rest assured, the characters' true strength will be put to the test by the magus Ivarsa and her most loyal servants at Castle Grimgorge.

**Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross**

**Chapter 2:  
Barkblood**

**Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night**

**Continuing the  
Campaign**

**Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North**

**Adventure  
Toolbox**

## **ADVANCEMENT TRACK**

"Burning Tundra" is designed for four characters.

- 8** The characters begin this adventure at 8th level.
- 9** The characters should reach 9th level before entering the Tamarnian Tar Forest.
- 10** The characters should advance to 10th level by the time they reach Castle Grimgorge.
- 11** The characters should reach 11th level by the conclusion of the adventure.





## Chapter 1: Heroes of Hillcross

Three months have passed since the Broken Tusk recovered the *Primordial Flame* from the white dragon Venexus in Lost Mammoth Valley. The situation has never been more dire: Burning Mammoth raiders remain in pursuit of the Tusk following, and the flame is still under the effects of a terrible curse. To cleanse the artifact, the characters must find Metuak, the man-demon hybrid who slew the *Primordial Flame*'s guardian spirit in Red Cat Cave and invoked his wrath. According to powerful visions they received while wearing Metuak's lost pendant, the characters know he fled east toward Hillcross, the Mammoth Lords' largest and only permanent encampment. To resolve the curse

of the *Primordial Flame* and gather more followers to defend against the Burning Mammoth war horde, the Broken Tusks have followed the trail to Hillcross.

The Burning Mammoth's leader, Ivarsa, hasn't been idle; she has brokered an alliance with the frost giant hunter Hegremon, leader of the Graylok clan, to temporarily work together. Hegremon also seeks the *Primordial Flame*, and he has ordered his kin to root it out while the Broken Tusk camp at Hillcross. Even now, as the characters arrive, a veritable army of giants is assembling to besiege the settlement. The vanguard of this force is scheduled to arrive at Hillcross only a few days after the Broken Tusks.

Meanwhile, Ivarsa has correctly deduced the characters' next move, and so she has cut across the mountains toward Metuak's final resting place, a ruined Mendevian citadel called Castle Grimgorge, half-sunk in the steaming Tamarnian Tar Forest. There, in an underground dungeon, Metuak lies, still tormented by the everlasting curse of the *Primordial Flame* and the shadow demon that possesses him. It's also there, on the battlements of Castle Grimgorge, where Ivarsa intends to at last confront her nemeses, the Broken Tusk scouts, and claim her ancestral birthright: the *Primordial Flame*.

## GETTING STARTED

"Burning Tundra" begins with the characters and their following, the Broken Tusk, arriving at the permanent encampment, Hillcross, deep in the Tusk Mountains. It's been nearly three months since they left Lost Mammoth Valley; see the previous volume in this Adventure Path, "Lost Mammoth Valley," for a reminder of all the deeds the characters accomplished. Now, as autumn ends and the first snows of winter descend on the Tusk Mountains, the characters take a reprieve at Hillcross. Here, they'll search for more followers to join the Broken Tusk. They'll also learn more about Metuak, the demon-possessed warrior responsible for the *Primordial Flame's* curse, and determine the next leg of their journey to follow his ancient trail.

### SOCIETY (RECALL KNOWLEDGE)

Before beginning this adventure, ask your players to each roll a DC 24 Society check to determine what they know about Hillcross. Depending on the results of their checks, tell the players what their characters already know about the legendary encampment. Even if they don't learn everything right now, the party will discover this information as they explore. See the "Hillcross, Oasis of the North" article starting on page 64 for more details on any of the points below.

**Critical Success** As success, but the character also knows the Burning Mammoth following once had a storage site (called a weyko) in Hillcross's deep caverns. They don't know the contents of the weyko or exactly where it is, but followings usually store food, healing supplies, ancestral treasures, and other things too awkward or delicate to travel.

**Success** As failure, plus the following.

- Several thousand people live in Hillcross; most of them are Kellid followings whose stay is temporary or southern traders and travelers bound for Icestair or the Crown of the World.
- The camp is protected by the Hillcross Witches, whose magic protects the Hillcross Ravine from the worst local weather events, such as blizzards and cold snaps.

**Failure** Everyone who comes to Hillcross must respect the Three Rights. The penalty for breaking one of these rules is permanent exile.

- The Right to Shelter dictates everyone who arrives at Hillcross's gates is entitled to stay; those who have been camped in the settlement longest must leave to make room for the newcomers.
- The Right to Peace requires that no violence of any kind take place in Hillcross; even hunting is forbidden. Followings at war often come to Hillcross to broker peace.
- According to the Right to Store, every following may claim a single cave, also known as a weyko, in Hillcross's deep caverns to store emergency supplies and other possessions.

## CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

The Broken Tusks arrive at Hillcross, where the characters leverage their roles as lead scouts to get a lay of the settlement and locate potential new followers. They meet notable camp dwellers, including Yana No-Trail, a shapeshifting guide who has been hired to steal the *Primordial Flame* for Ivarsa, and the Hillcross Witches, who ask the scouts to use the artifact to aid the annual casting of a ritual that protects Hillcross from inclement weather. All the while, the scouts discover numerous opportunities to solve problems, recruit followers, and recover Broken Tusk treasures lost beneath Hillcross for generations.

When the Graylok clan attacks Hillcross, the characters are poised to lead the encampment's defense. Having proved their worth as true leaders, the scouts are promoted to Mammoth Lords, giving them the right to claim their mounts from the mammoths, cave bears, smilodons, and other megafauna in the region. With little time to spare, the newly named Mammoth Lords must trek south to break the *Primordial Flame's* curse and confront the Burning Mammoth's leader somewhere in the Tamarnian Tar Forest. In the meantime, the characters' lieutenants and followers must stay in Hillcross to defend against the rest of the frost giant army and the Burning Mammoth war horde.

### BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood


Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox





**Critical Failure** Hillcross is a myth, told to children to give them something to believe in when winter is harsh and the following is hungry. In this fable, it's always summer in Hillcross, the water is cool and clean, and food is plenty.

Depending on what they know about Hillcross, the characters might have some idea of what areas of the settlement they'd like to explore first. While the party is in Hillcross, refer to the Set Events section on this page, the Recruiting Followers section on page 10, and the "Hillcross, Oasis of the North" article on page 64.

### ARRIVING AT HILLCROSS

To set the scene and begin this adventure, read or paraphrase the following aloud to your players.

Steep cliffs, hundreds of feet high, loom over a narrow pass through the craggy Tusk Mountains just ahead. Icy wind and waves of snow have made the journey through the mountains treacherous, but there's no other way. All around, snowpack covers the slopes and ridges of the mountain range, obscured by flurries of powder. A faint roaring sounds before a high, narrow waterfall comes into view on the northern side of the pass, gleaming like a shower of ice. And then, suddenly, the sun bursts through the high clouds. The snowfall ceases as though a veil has parted. On the other side of this wall, the freezing wind vanishes, and the ground is covered in green grass. A hare—its fur brown, not white as it should be in deep winter—scampers across the grass, and birdsong fills the valley. Behind, the winter snows continue to rage, but ahead, surrounded in a bubble of fair weather more like spring than winter, lie the log walls of Hillcross, thirty feet high and fronted by a palisade of sharpened mammoth tusks. A tall, arched gate lit by torches stands in its center, open wide. A trio of scouts emerge from the gate, each riding a smilodon mount. The scouts wave as they pass by, then ride into the freezing mountains.

As the Broken Tusk arrives, another following—the Cougar Claw—departs out Hillcross's gates on the other side of the encampment. They number several hundred and their departure, mandated by the Right to Shelter, leaves room for the Broken Tusks. A character with a flying animal companion or familiar can see the other following depart out the opposite gate, foreshadowing **Event 3: Out of Time** (page 11).

### SET EVENTS

The Broken Tusk's designated campsite in Hillcross is a slightly muddy dirt clearing not far from Icelake. Use the gazetteer for Hillcross starting on page 64 to describe the camp and give the characters an idea

of the settlement's layout. Before the characters have a chance to explore Hillcross on their own, run the following two events, which take place immediately after the Broken Tusks set up camp.

### EVENT 1: MEETING THE GUIDE

**Creature:** As the Broken Tusks pass through Hillcross to their designated campsite, one of the characters spots a slender human man of modest height with bushy red hair watching them from afar. This person is Yana No-Trail, a roguish guide secretly working for the Grayloks to spy on the characters and steal the *Primordial Flame*. He approaches the characters with a smile and introduces himself in his human form as "Yana."

"It's been a long time since the Broken Tusk has come to Hillcross, hasn't it? You may find many things have changed! And yet, much remains the same. Hillcross has many secrets, many traditions easily forgotten, but known to those who dwell here. People such as I! Perhaps I could help you?"

Yana is an opportunistic kitsune guide; he sells his services to southern travelers and merchants, but he's eager to get out of Hillcross and see the world. Ivarsa recruited him as a spy months ago, and he's been waiting for the Broken Tusks to arrive at Hillcross. He knows they have the *Primordial Flame*, and he intends to steal it and hand it off to the Grayloks in exchange for a comfortable retirement in a warmer climate. Yana poses as a helpful human guide of nonspecific Ulfen heritage.

To steal the *Primordial Flame*, Yana must get info on the characters, and he makes himself useful throughout this chapter as a guide and overly friendly confidant who provides ample unsolicited advice. Most of this advice is even good! As part of his cover, Yana asks for compensation for his services; he suggests 2 gp per day in coin, trade, or services, but he accepts any reasonable offer. While Yana introduces himself in his human form, he doesn't reveal he's a kitsune, though a particularly perceptive character who does some spying of their own might witness the con changing forms when he thinks he's alone.

To relay messages to his frost giant contacts in the Graylok clan, Yana writes cryptic notes in Jotun and uses his *animal messenger* spell to task foxes and other critters with passing along the messages to frost giants hunkered down a few miles outside the city. The characters might catch Yana in the act of writing one of these notes or might intercept it from one of his messengers. See the "An Obvious Con" sidebar on page 9 for more suggestions on running encounters with Yana No-Trail in this adventure.

## YANA NO-TRAIL

## CREATURE 7

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM HUMANOID KITSUNE

Male frozen wind kitsune con (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Ancestry Guide* 120)

**Perception** +13; low-light vision

**Languages** Common, Hallit, Jotun, Skald; *speak with animals*

**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Deception +17, Diplomacy +17, Society +16, Stealth +17, Thievery +17

**Str** +1, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** +3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +4

**Items** *standard potion of flying*

**AC** 25; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +19, **Will** +11

**HP** 110; **Resistances** cold 3

**Cold Tolerant** Yana treats environmental cold effects as if they were one step less extreme.

**Evasion** When Yana rolls a success on a Reflex save, he gets a critical success instead.

**Nimble Dodge** **Trigger** Yana is targeted by a melee or ranged attack from an attacker he can see; **Effect** Yana gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

**Speed** 25 feet, climb 10 feet

**Melee** **◆** claw +19 (agile, finesse, unarmed), **Damage** 2d4+3 slashing

**Primal Innate Spells** DC 23; **2nd** *animal messenger*, *speak with animals* (at will)

**Change Shape** **◆** (concentrate, divine, kitsune, polymorph, transmutation) Yana can transform into an Ulfen human, Tiny fox, or hybrid kitsune form. Using Change Shape counts as creating a disguise for the Impersonate use of Deception. He can remain in any of his forms indefinitely.

**Sneak Attack** Yana deals an additional 3d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Yana knows most of the permanent residents of Hillcross; he can help the characters navigate the settlement and make introductions. He's well-liked and known as someone who makes people laugh. No one knows he's a kitsune or that he can change shape.

**Another Friendly Face:** Later, when the party is settled at Hillcross, Yana approaches and attempts to befriend them in his fox form, introducing himself as "No-Trail." He does this when his human form isn't needed or after he has been dismissed. He might approach one or more Broken Tusks as they gather water at Icelake. Yana figures the characters will be suspicious of strangers, including himself, but by approaching them in multiple forms, he believes he's improving his odds of pulling one over on them. After all, one friendly stranger is suspicious, but two friendly strangers must be a coincidence, right? He predominantly uses whichever form the characters seem to have taken more of a liking to, though he also changes forms to better spy on the characters' activities throughout their time in Hillcross.

Yana's animal shape is a nimble, white-haired fox—he can talk in this form (a fact that might at first startle some characters).

"Many animals live here," the fox notes, washing his paws in the cold water of the lake. "Falcons, raccoons, squirrels, thrushes, finches... and many more." The fox looks up to the caves that dot the northern cliff. "Some of the People Who Never Left—those who originally came to Hillcross for just a day or a month but found a way to stay permanently—some of them train us to run errands for them, up and down the



## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



cliffs, so they don't need to leave their caves. Silly humans! So lazy. But I don't mind. Because I get to meet people. And since the other animals can't talk, I guess you could say I'm their spokesman. Um... spokesfox? Human languages are so difficult!"

Yana attempts to befriend different characters as a fox than he does as a human, and he feigns ignorant innocence while asking why the Broken Tusks are here and what adventures they've had along the way.

## EVENT 2: WITCHES OF SUMMERLAND

Soon after the party's arrival at Hillcross, the Hillcross Witches summon the characters to an audience.

A man wearing dark furs and holding a pine staff approaches the camp. "Hail," he says in a bold voice. "I am Kasan, and I speak for the Hillcross Witches. Oga the Grasswalker, leader of the witches, bids you attend her in her cave." Kasan looks up and gestures to a dark opening high on the southern cliffs. "She has heard much of you and your following and believes we may all be able to help each other. Will you come?"

**Kasan** (NG male human witch 7) is a spokesperson for his fellow witches and will answer questions, always portraying Oga and the other witches in a positive light. Privately, he's deeply ashamed over the loss of Jesseri the Hailstorm (page 53), who was captured last year by frost giant raiders. Kasan keeps his concerns to himself for now but might bring them up to the characters later (see *Metuak's Fate*, below). A character who spends some time with Kasan and succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check intuits that the man is deeply troubled about something he can't yet discuss.

The characters can meet with the witches now or come later; whenever they do so, Kasan guides them to a sturdy, reinforced ladder attached to the cliff wall with wooden pegs. Lashing his staff over his back, he begins to climb. The witches are high up on Soucliff, and the climb is exhausting; every character must attempt a DC 23 Athletics check. Those who fail are fatigued by the time they reach the top.

The witches live in a cave complex consisting of half a dozen large chambers and countless smaller rooms. Although there are only six witches, they have

a large staff of servants, bodyguards, apprentices, and other attendants; nearly a hundred people live here.

When the characters arrive, read or paraphrase the following aloud to your players.



Kasan leads the way through a large entry cave, parting a heavy tapestry to reveal a wide tunnel that leads to a spacious central cavern.

There, around a dark pool, five individuals stand in a half circle facing the water. Among them is an ancient human woman, her back hunched but her eyes bright with cunning. A servant attends her, and guards flank tunnels that lead off the central chamber. "Oga the Grasswalker," Kasan says by way of introduction, kneeling to the old witch solemnly before rising and standing beside her.

"These are the Broken Tusks," he tells his elder. Then, turning, he says, "Please, tell us your names, and how you and your following came to Hillcross."

**Oga** (N female human witch 11) has brought the characters here because she sensed a powerful artifact in the ravine coinciding with the Broken Tusk's arrival at Hillcross. Knowing a great deal about the Broken Tusk and its tragic history, Oga believes she might know what this artifact is, but she wishes to see it for herself before making any assumptions. When they first meet her, Oga's attitude toward the characters is indifferent.

As soon as the characters have introduced themselves, Oga questions them, asking what powerful magic they've brought with them and what they intend to do with it. Oga is naturally terse and unpleasant in conversation with no regard for courtesy or tact. It quickly becomes clear, however, that she merely treats everyone this way. She's incredibly knowledgeable and a master of ritual spellcasting, and she's the unquestioned leader of the Hillcross Witches. If the characters answer her questions and speak truthfully—telling her about the *Primordial Flame* and its powers—she becomes friendly toward them.

**Metuak's Fate:** Oga knows much that can help the characters in their quest. She's familiar with the *Primordial Flame* and knows the Burning Mammoth Metuak came here over a century ago, seeking relief from a curse. She was young then, still a novice witch like Kasan, but she remembers Metuak. The witches were

unable to help him, and when they discovered he'd lost the lantern artifact sacred to all Mammoth Lords, they banished him from Hillcross. He fled east, as far as Oga knows, into the Tamarnian Tar Forest. This knowledge is critical information the characters need to continue their quest, and if Oga's attitude is friendly or better, she reveals it immediately but then makes a request of them in exchange. If her attitude is indifferent or unfriendly, she makes the request first and offers to give the characters the information they require only if they agree. She doesn't tell them anything if she's hostile. Read or paraphrase the following aloud to relay Oga's request.

"They call me Grasswalker," Oga says bitterly. "That's a title I inherited from the first Grasswalker, Brogan, who created Hillcross many, many years ago. Let me tell you what my title means. Every year, I renew the ritual he performed, the spell that keeps Hillcross safe from winter's fury. The spell has a terrible cost, and every year for decades, I've paid it. I'm old, and I've beaten death before. Many times. But I can't do it again."

At this, Kasan starts, about to argue, but Oga silences him. "Shut up! You know it's true, Kasan. Don't lie to my face." Kasan falls silent, his face red with frustration and shame. Oga turns her eyes back toward her guests. "But you," she says, holding up a crooked finger, "you have brought an ancient artifact of great power to us. We have the chance here, you and I, to do something good. Something that could last a long time. Something that could outlive us all. I want to perform the Summerland Spell one last time, and I want you to help me. With the power of your artifact, we could transform Hillcross forever."

If the characters agree to Oga's request, she tells them the Hillcross Witches will convene in 3 days' time to perform the *Summerland Spell*. Sometime before then, run the Shamed scene, below. Then, after 3 days have passed, run the scene described under Bringing Summer, below.

## SHAMED

Shortly after the characters meet with the Hillcross Witches, Kasan approaches them once more, accompanied by over two dozen guards, hunters, and scouts. He asks the scouts about their intentions now that they know Metuak has fled east. If the characters tell him they intend to pursue Metuak, he shares some information with them and makes a request.

"Two years ago, Ivarsa and the frost giants of the Graylok clan attacked Hillcross. We drove them off. But in the raid, they captured Jesseri the Hailstorm, one of the witches and my mentor. In her absence, I have taken her chair.

## AN OBVIOUS CON

The roguish kitsune Yana No-Trail might insist he's a benign guide or simple fox, but canny players will sense his nefarious motives from a mile away. Rather than attempt to outplay your players or force an unsatisfying plot, you're far better off allowing your group to suspect Yana and playing the situation out naturally to see where it goes. The party will likely find many opportunities to discover Yana's duplicity, such as catching him in the act of shapeshifting or by intercepting one of his notes to contacts in the Graylok clan.

Thanks to the Right to Peace, neither Yana nor the characters can fight one another while within Hillcross, and there's no way Yana agrees to face them in the Dueling Cave. All bets are off, though, once the Grayloks attack and the settlement descends into chaos; the attack might be the characters' best opportunity to confront Yana with force to finally determine his true agenda.

If Yana does manage to get his paws on the *Primordial Flame*, go easy on the player whose character suffers the brunt of the artifact's curse in its absence. The mechanical effects of this curse are extreme, to say the least. Fortunately, this also means that if another creature gets ahold of the flame—such as Yana or the Graylok commander Bulrakun—then that foe will be much weaker if the party can wrest the artifact back from them.

"Jesserri has never returned, and her capture is a source of shame to us. I am considered one of the witches now only because we failed to protect Jesserri. Ivarsa is your enemy, and I want to go with you when you leave Hillcross. I think, if you find Ivarsa, you will find Jesserri the Hailstorm. I want to be with you on that day, and I will not come alone."

**New Followers:** It's up to the characters to decide whether they accept Kasan's offer. If they do, he's a 7th-level lieutenant (use the stats for a sage [*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 241] with the elite adjustment if relevant). The 25 guards, hunters, and scouts who accompany him are 3rd-level followers. In his absence, an apprentice named **Mawaki** (LN genderfluid dwarf witch 5) takes Kasan's place among the Hillcross Witches.

**XP Award:** If the characters accept Kasan and his allies as followers, award them 30 XP.

## BRINGING SUMMER

Three days after their meeting with the Hillcross Witches, the party is asked to return to their cavern

## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood


Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox





to assist with the *Summerland Spell*; see page 77 for details on this ritual. Oga the Grasswalker is the ritual's primary caster; she asks the characters to serve as secondary casters. One of the secondary casters must wield the *Primordial Flame*, as Oga intends to tap its power for the ritual. If none of the characters have any of the skills necessary to act as secondary casters, Oga asks at least one of them to wield the *Primordial Flame* and participate in the ritual anyway. Other witches, possibly including Kasan, fill in for any secondary caster roles the characters don't fill.

The ritual is performed just before dawn, timed to end at the moment the sun comes over the horizon. The secondary casters don costumes representing animals and various characters from popular Mammoth Lord folklore, then sing and dance around a prepared circle, invoking the rising sun and calling on Sister Cinder and other deities. A hole bored in the wall of the witch's cave cuts all the way through the cliff, pointing toward the rising sun; as the secondary casters perform their work, a dim gray light slowly becomes visible through this hole, signaling the approach of dawn. Each of the secondary casters should attempt the relevant check, with a DC of 24 (this is slightly lower than normal for a 5th-level ritual); the character carrying the *Primordial Flame* gains a +4 circumstance bonus to this check.

Once all the modifiers from secondary checks have been totaled, it's time for Oga's Nature check; she has a +23 modifier herself—plus any modifiers the characters have generated—and the DC for the ritual is 30. Allow a player to attempt this check, rolling for Oga. Regardless of the result, read the following aloud to set the scene.

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Suddenly, a beam of brilliant sunlight shines through the hole in the cave wall, illuminating Oga as she stands up straight, her arms raised. As she speaks ancient names of primal power, the *Primordial Flame* erupts with fire, its light reaching out to embrace and amplify the sunbeam penetrating the witches' cave. Moment by moment, the light and heat grow ever more intense, until the entire chamber is filled only with white light and nothing else can be seen. Time seems to hang suspended, with no reference point by which to measure it. And then, after a few seconds or perhaps an eternity, the white light fades and the cave returns to view. Oga weaves on wobbly feet and collapses.

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If Oga failed her check, she still managed to perform the ritual, but she's dying. She has fought off death many times, but it's now her time, and nothing can save her. If she critically failed, the ritual fails, and she dies. Even in death, Oga is bitter and mean. "I can see Pharasma," she whispers, gazing into the distance. "I'm gonna spit in her eye..." These are her final words.

Importantly, the *Primordial Flame* has amplified the *Summerland Spell*, extending its duration from 1 year to an entire century. A character can determine this effect with a successful DC 25 Nature check. If none of the characters succeed, Kasan or Oga (if she lived) tells them.

The more effective ritual promises to transform life in Hillcross. Although Hillcross has always been treated as a permanent camp by the Mammoth Lords, everyone has always understood the magic that protects it could fail any day. Now that Hillcross will be protected from winter storms for the next hundred years, it might be able to transform from a permanent campground to an actual settlement. Though some inhabitants would welcome this development, not everyone is so keen on the idea of Hillcross becoming like the gaudy and greedy cities of the south; see the "Hillcross, Oasis of the North" article starting on page 64 for more info on the factions that might or might not be in favor of extending the effects of the *Summerland Spell*. The long-term ramifications, if any, are up to you.

If the inhabitants of Hillcross find out the Broken Tusks have ensured the summer for a hundred years, they hail the characters as heroes. A tremendous feast follows, during which the characters are showered with praise. This is an excellent time for the characters to discover that an army of frost giants is approaching; see **Coming of the Frost Giants** on page 17.

**Yana:** Yana does everything he can to be present for the performance of the *Summerland Spell*, so he can see the *Primordial Flame* for himself and find out where the characters keep it. He'll use this information to try and steal it later; see **Event 8: The Theft** on page 18.

**XP Award:** Award the characters 80 XP each for taking part in the *Summerland Spell*.

## RECRUITING FOLLOWERS

Once the Broken Tusk has made camp, the following's leaders meet with the characters. "Soon we'll have to fight the Burning Mammoth and their allies," says Mammoth Lord Merthig. "We need allies, weapons, and supplies. Perhaps we can find those things here. Go, speak to the people of Hillcross, and learn about this place. If you find an opportunity to bring more warriors to our ranks, take it!"

The following sections present short quests and other opportunities for the party to learn more about Hillcross and recruit followers from the people currently staying here. Run these scenes as the characters explore, in any order. Each entry includes suggestions for possible places where the scene might take place; see the "Hillcross, Oasis of the North" article starting on page 64 for more details on these locations. A map of Hillcross appears on the inside front cover of this volume.

### EVENT 3: OUT OF TIME

### LOW 8

Two followings—the Cougar Claw and the Charging Rhino—have been camped at Hillcross for over a month. The two groups are old enemies with generations of bad blood between them. In recent years, the Charging Rhinos have been on the vendetta’s losing end. Earlier this fall, the leader of the Charging Rhino, Batla, called on the leader of the Cougar Claw, **Caido** (CN male human Mammoth Lord 7), and asked to meet at Hillcross to begin peace talks. Both followings used the protection of Hillcross’s Right to Peace so they could discuss a permanent accord.

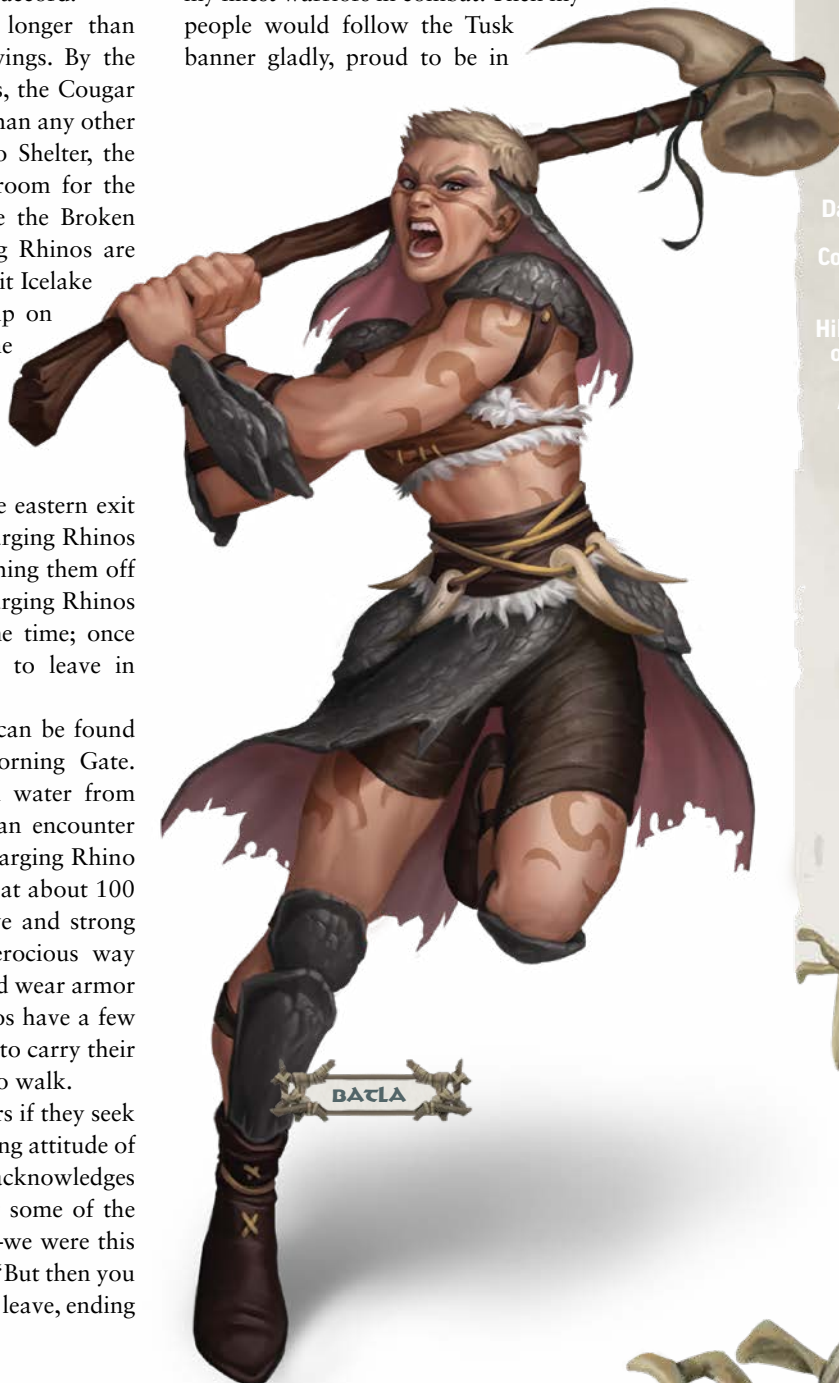
Unfortunately, the discussions took longer than the Right to Peace afforded the followings. By the time the Broken Tusks reached Hillcross, the Cougar Claws had been encamped there longer than any other following. In keeping with the Right to Shelter, the Claws were obliged to leave to make room for the Tusks. They’ve already left by the time the Broken Tusks arrive in camp, but the Charging Rhinos are still around. Whenever the characters visit Icelake to refill their water supplies or catch up on the local gossip, they learn all about the conflict between the Cougar Claw and Charging Rhino. Thereafter, characters who succeed at a DC 21 Diplomacy check to Gather Information overhear that the Claws are lying in wait near the eastern exit from Hillcross, ready to ambush the Charging Rhinos as soon as they’re forced to depart, finishing them off for good, which will be soon, as the Charging Rhinos have already been at Hillcross for some time; once another following arrives, they’ll have to leave in accord with Hillcross’s Right to Shelter.

Batla, leader of the Charging Rhino, can be found with her small following near the Morning Gate. Members of the Charging Rhino fetch water from Icelake every day, and the characters can encounter them there. Anyone investigating the Charging Rhino can see they’re relatively few in number, at about 100 individuals. Nevertheless, they’re a brave and strong following, known especially for the ferocious way they wield two-handed picks in battle and wear armor made of rhino skin. The Charging Rhinos have a few tamed woolly rhinoceroses that they use to carry their supplies and followers too weak or old to walk.

Batla agrees to meet with the characters if they seek her out. Grim and honest, she has a starting attitude of indifferent toward the characters. She acknowledges her situation but also attempts to point some of the blame on the characters. “Caido and I—we were this close to an agreement,” she says bitterly. “But then you came along and Caido’s following had to leave, ending

our talks. I know, I know, it’s not your fault. But we were almost there! Now... I don’t know. Caido has lost patience and his warriors are eager for blood. Scouts say many giants have been sighted to the west. The Cougar Claws lie to the east. Either way, I fear the Charging Rhino will soon see its last battle.”

If the characters propose Batla and her following join the Broken Tusk, she’s at first skeptical. It would only delay the inevitable, she grunts, and her people are too proud for such a cowardly solution. “Unless,” she says, suddenly enthusiastic, “you can best me and my finest warriors in combat. Then my people would follow the Tusk banner gladly, proud to be in



## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



the company of such strength.” Not only that, she goes on, but the Cougar Claws might be inclined to forget their old grudges against the Charging Rhinos if the Rhinos join up with a clearly superior following.

If the party is amenable to this idea, Batla gathers her four best lieutenants and asks to meet the characters at the Dueling Cave at sunset to settle the matter.

The Dueling Cave is a simple but spacious circular stone cavern about 100 feet in diameter. There are no terrain hazards, weapons, or even sconces in the cave; it’s left completely empty to ensure the duels within are fair.

The Dueling Cave is the only location in Hillcross where individuals determined to commit violence can come to resolve their grievances without breaking the Right to Peace. At sunset, a massive boulder is rolled in front of the entrance and left in place until the next sunrise. By then, it’s assumed one of the two warriors who entered the cave will be dead.

**Creatures:** Batla offers no quarry to the scouts and makes no indication, while outside the cave, that their fight is anything but a deadly duel. During the fight, once Batla or all her rhino warriors are brought to 10 Hit Points or fewer, the warrior yields and admits defeat.

## BATLA CREATURE 6

CN female monster hunter (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 227)

**Initiative** Perception +13

## RHINO WARRIORS (4) CREATURE 4

RARE CN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Human barbarians


**Perception** +11

**Skills** Athletics +12, Intimidation +10

**Str** +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0


**AC** 20; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +10

**HP** 70

**Counter-Charge**  **Trigger** A creature Strides within reach of the warrior and critically fails to Strike the warrior with a melee weapon; **Effect** The rhino warrior knocks the creature to the ground, and the triggering creature falls prone and takes 2d6+5 bludgeoning damage. The rhino warrior is flat-footed until the end of their next turn.

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee**  pick +14 (fatal d10), **Damage** 1d6+7 piercing

**Dig In**  **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The rhino warrior makes two pick Strikes against a creature within reach. The rhino warrior rolls only one attack roll for both Strikes, then compares the result against the creature’s AC. The rhino warrior’s multiple attack penalty doesn’t increase until after both Strikes.

**New Followers:** The 100 members of the Charging Rhino are 2nd-level followers, and Batla is a 6th-level lieutenant.

**XP Award:** Award the characters 30 XP if they recruit the Charging Rhinos as followers.

## EVENT 4: LOOTED MODERATE 8

Like many Mammoth Lord followings, the Burning Mammoth has long had a weyko—a storage cave or cache—in the deep caverns of Hillcross. According to Hillcross’s Right to Store, the following can use this cave to put aside food, supplies, and other goods. However, after Ivarsa’s attack on Hillcross last year, the Burning Mammoths are exiled from Hillcross and so are banned from accessing their cave. The Broken Tusk is too young a following to have their own weyko, but because they’re descendants of the original Burning Mammoth, they have a good case for gaining access to the resources and treasures set aside by their ancestors.

A character who critically succeeded at the Society check at the beginning of this adventure automatically knows about the Burning Mammoth’s weyko. If the party doesn’t know about the cave, Yana might mention the deep caverns and Right to Store offhandedly at some point (he believes the characters are less likely to suspect him of working for the enemy if he helps them find items useful for their following). If all else fails, one of the Broken Tusk’s leaders simply tells the party about the weyko and gives the scouts orders to find the lost cache. “If we’re to fight the Burning Mammoth,” Nakta says, “let us turn their own weapons against them.”

A character who succeeds at a DC 23 Society check deduces the Broken Tusk has a reasonable claim to the contents of the Burning Mammoth’s weyko and, because Ivarsa’s Burning Mammoths are forbidden from returning to the encampment, no one in Hillcross will oppose the Broken Tusk’s usurpation of the cache.

The exact location of the Burning Mammoth’s storage cavern is a mystery, but Yana has an idea of who might be able to help them find the place. He leads the characters to the far corner of Soucliff, where a gang of children kick around a sad-looking ball made of tattered leather. Yana explains that children in Hillcross know the most about the deep caverns, and although the Right to Store is sacred, allowances are made for children caught in weykos, provided nothing is stolen and no harm is done. He suggests the characters befriend some of these children and ask them about the Burning Mammoth weyko.

The children are very bored; any character who is Small or smaller, agrees to play ball with the children, and is a good sport about winning or losing a game

of ball-kick automatically wins the kids' trust. Other characters can win the children's good favor by demonstrating magical powers, giving them a gift worth at least 1 gp, or succeeding at a DC 23 Diplomacy check.

Any alchemists or goblins in the party automatically pique the curiosity of a particularly lonely child named **Popo Koswalla** (N male goblin child -1), the only young goblin currently staying in Hillcross. Popo's parents are members of a group of nomadic goblins called the Slushbomb Tribe—talented grenadiers who have mastered turning mundane ice and snow into volatile weapons. Popo is thrilled to see fellow goblins or practitioners of the explosive arts, and he happily helps them find their treasure.

Regardless of which children the party win over, the youths lead the characters to the Burning Mammoth weyko, shouting, "If you can catch us!" before running off, laughing. A character must succeed at a DC 18 Acrobatics or Athletics check to keep up with the children; otherwise, they arrive at the weyko 2 turns after everyone else.

**Creature:** As soon as the youths reach the Burning Mammoth's weyko, they peel off and scatter, squealing wildly in excitement. The weyko consists of a 50-foot-long, 10-foot-wide tunnel that opens into a 100-foot-diameter cavern. Bits of discarded refuse dot the cave floor, but this area is otherwise nearly identical to the Dueling Cave.

In addition to its obvious markings—the opening is painted with a symbol matching the banner of the Burning Mammoth—this weyko is one of the best known in Hillcross because it's guarded by a mighty construct called a weykoward. This particular weykoward is ancient and ill-maintained. As soon as the first characters reach the weyko, the guardian creaks to life and attacks.

### CRUMBLING WEYKOWARD **CREATURE 9**

Weak weykoward (*Pathfinder Bestiary 6*, page 83)

**Initiative** Perception +16

**Aftermath:** Once they've defeated the weykoward, the party can get a good look at the dark storage cavern. It's shockingly empty. Although large and spacious, the cave is littered only with empty wooden

crates and barrels. Leather tarps that might once have covered bundles of supplies lie limply on the cave floor.

Thankfully, not everything is gone. A wooden effigy of a humanoid figure stands at the far edge of the cave, dressed in a mammoth-shaped hood complete with curling tusks. At the effigy's side is a wooden sword with sharp flakes of obsidian set into its edge. An ivory horn hangs from a strap across the figure's chest, and it wears a thick gray hide from a mighty beast that has been fashioned into armor.

A character who succeeds at a DC 21 Society check to Recall Knowledge identifies the effigy as a representation of Jonda Tusk-Tamer, a legendary hero from the time before the Broken Tusk parted with the Burning Mammoth and went their own way. The items adorning the figure are Jonda's weapons and gear.

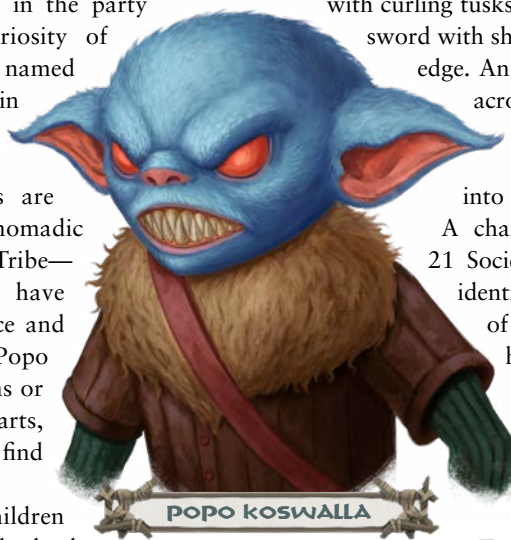
**Treasure:** Jonda's sword is a *gloom blade*, and her mammoth hood is a *greater hat of the magi*. The horn draped around the figure is a *horn of blasting*. The figure wears *rhino hide*.

### WEYKO THIEVES

Even Yana is surprised at the sparseness of the Burning Mammoth's cave. If the characters return to the gang of children playing ball-kick, the kids confirm that, until recently, huge piles of dried fruit, meat, and nuts were stored in the weyko, along with basic herbal remedies and other medicines. However, a few weeks ago, nearly all the goods had vanished. The characters might wonder who stole their food and medical supplies while leaving the valuable magic items behind.

**Regretful Thieves:** A small Mammoth Lord following known as the Proudhawk is to blame for the missing supplies. About a month ago, the Proudhawks arrived in Hillcross in a badly weakened state. Starvation had claimed many of them, and as they made for Hillcross to take shelter, they were caught in an avalanche that killed a third of their number, including their Mammoth Lord, Tobin Wise-Eye. Tobin's daughter, **Sela** (N female gnome trapsmith 4), has taken over the following, and one of the first things she did after arriving in Hillcross was retrieve anything they could from the Proudhawk weyko.

There was little in the Proudhawk's own cache, but while searching for it, Sela and her kin discovered the Burning Mammoth weyko. Deeply conflicted but determined to keep her following alive, Sela ordered



## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



her hunters to take the food and medicine, sneaking past the weykward. Privately, she resolved to gather twice as much in the year to come, return to Hillcross, and fill the Burning Mammoth weyko with it, but for now her focus is on keeping what's left of the Proudhawk following alive.

A character who succeeds at a DC 25 Diplomacy check to Gather Information hears rumors of the Proudhawk's weakened arrival, and that the following has bounced back thanks to the forethought of their deceased leader, Tobin Wise-Eye, who placed considerable food and medical supplies in their storage cave for such an emergency. If the character is an expert in Diplomacy or gets a critical success on their check, they overhear there's no way that a following as small as the Proudhawk could have so much stored in their weyko. Some followings even whisper that they must have stolen from another weyko. If the characters befriended the children at the beginning of this event, the kids confirm the Proudhawk weyko has been mostly empty for as long as they can remember. (The party might track down the thieves some other way; use the DCs and information provided here to adjudicate such an investigation.)

Once the characters know who's responsible for the theft of their food and medicine, they can confront Sela or appeal to what authorities there are in Hillcross, namely the Hillcross Witches. If they publicly charge the Proudhawks with theft, Sela confesses, explains her following's desperate need, and vows to bring twice as much food and medicine back to Hillcross within one year. However, unless a character succeeds at a DC 30 Diplomacy check, the other followings present at Hillcross offer Sela and her kin no leniency. For breaking the Rite to Storage, the Proudhawks are exiled from Hillcross forever. In their weakened state, they're no doubt doomed to be picked off in a matter of weeks.

If the characters confront Sela privately, she confesses to the crime as above. A character who succeeds at a DC 21 Perception check can detect that she's deeply ashamed of her crime of desperation. The fact that she has begun her leadership of the Proudhawks with such moral failing and the breaking of one of the Three Rights has left her full of despair. She suspects even her own kin won't remain loyal to her for long. She begs the characters to be merciful but agrees to any punishment they propose.



**New Followers:** The simplest way to solve this problem is for the Proudhawks to join the Broken Tusks. If no character thinks of this solution, Mammoth Lord Nakta suggests it. “A following weakened by hunger or death sometimes joins with another, stronger following,” Nakta says. “As long as the leaders of both followings are shown respect, everyone is better off.”

Sela agrees to join the Broken Tusk with her entire following if the characters propose it, with two conditions: she must be allowed to continue to lead the Proudhawk, acting as a lieutenant to the characters, and the characters must privately reassure her hunters that they trust Sela and hold no grudge against her for what she's done. If the characters agree to these conditions, Sela and the Proudhawks join their following. Sela is a 4th-level lieutenant; the other 75 Proudhawks are 2nd-level followers.

**XP Award:** Award the characters 30 XP for solving the mystery of their missing goods.

## EVENT 5: FOREIGN TRADERS

Merchants from New Thassilon, Belkzen, and Ustalav come to Hillcross to trade for furs, pelts, and live animals. These traders have contacts among Mammoth Lord society and are tough, experienced folk, willing to make the long trek north to Hillcross and trade weapons, armor, and southern luxuries. If your characters have goods to sell or trade—including loot gathered in previous adventures—they can do so in Hillcross as well as buy items up to 8th level.

**New Followers:** A gang of half-orc, human, and orc warriors from Belkzen are in Hillcross looking for opportunities for glory and a chance to prove their physical prowess. Led by **Kybo One-Tooth** (CN male orc rager 7), this group—who call themselves Kybo's Khymeras—aren't mercenaries and won't work for pay. What they want is food, shelter, respect, a community that appreciates physical strength and courage, and the promise of violence against mutual enemies.

Kybo and his Khymeras haven't found a promising lead yet, and in the meantime, they've bided their time trading Belkzen steel weapons and armor for Mammoth Lord supplies, such as cold weather gear. If the characters need to sell weapons or armor, Kybo can accommodate their needs, but he also asks questions about the characters and the Broken Tusk. If he learns the Broken Tusk is an enemy of Ivarsa and

the Burning Mammoth, Kybo senses the opportunity he and his Khymeras have been looking for.

Over the next few evenings, Kybo brings some of his soldiers to the Broken Tusk camp and shares food and drink, including a barrel of powerful Belkzen beer. He engages the characters in contests of physical prowess and boasting contests. If the characters wish to take part, resolve these with DC 24 Athletics or Intimidation checks, respectively. Kybo isn't necessarily interested in who wins or loses; he's much more interested in how the characters behave after each contest ends. If the characters are good sports, treating the Khymeras as equals, Kybo offers to lead his people into the Broken Tusk "for as long as it takes for you to find these enemies of yours, and put an end to them." If the characters belittle the Khymeras, mock them, or dismiss them as inferiors, Kybo and his soldiers depart through the Morning Gate the next day, disappointed in the party's shameful arrogance.

Kybo is a 7th-level lieutenant; the 50 other Khymeras are 3rd-level followers.

**XP Award:** Award the characters 30 XP each for recruiting Kybo's Khymeras.

## EVENT 6: DUELING PERSONALITIES

Any time the characters are conducting business near Soucliff, they might see an unusual sight.

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One minute, everyone is talking, sharing old stories or the latest gossip, and then slowly a silence comes over the crowd. Curious individuals stand tall and look over the heads of others before nodding somberly and turning to face the disturbance. Two long lines of individuals walk wordlessly through the camps, with a single mammoth keeping pace behind them. A man and woman lead these two lines, both fully armed and armored. Soon the lines reach the base of Soucliff, and under silent direction from the two leaders, a nearby tamed mammoth rolls aside a massive boulder, revealing an opening to a dark cavern.

---

All the individuals present today are members of the Mountain Serpent following. The two duelists are **Maya Strongarm** (LN female human axemaster 4) and **Warno the Bold** (CN male human archer 4). Their conflict goes back a generation—Maya's mother killed Warno's mother. Maya insists the fight was a fair duel, but Warno equally insists Maya's mother cheated, using poison on her spear. The two have made each other's lives miserable for a decade, and the proud warriors simply can't take it anymore. They've resolved to enter the Dueling Cave and end their feud forever. Each warrior thinks they have a good chance of victory, and they're evenly matched.

The characters might seek to intervene in this conflict. The characters can talk the two sides down with a successful DC 24 Diplomacy check, but it takes a critical success to persuade Warno and Maya to permanently set aside their quarrel; otherwise, they let their feud rest for now, but it will soon return to violence as before. A character who volunteers to substitute for one of the two duelists must succeed at a DC 24 Intimidation check to persuade Maya and Warno to allow this impertinent substitution. On a success, the character can choose which duelist they wish to stand in for.

If Maya and Warno are permitted to enter the cave this evening, then in the morning the boulder is rolled aside with an eager crowd looking on. Roll 2d6, with one of the dice representing Warno and the other Maya. Whoever rolls highest has won the duel, killing the other; if each die has the same result, the two warriors have killed each other.

If one of the characters fought instead of Maya or Warno, they easily defeat their foe. You can run this combat encounter if you wish or simply summarize the result; neither Maya nor Warno is strong enough to give the characters much trouble. A character might choose to defeat the Mountain Serpent warrior but leave them alive; doing so ends the dispute for both parties, as if the characters had critically succeeded on the Diplomacy check earlier.

If one or both champions are dead, the Mountain Serpents mark their loss with a communal wail of grief. If any of the characters are known or suspected to be spellcasters, the leader of the Mountain Serpent, a man named **Donar Fair-Minded** (NG male human silvertongue 5), approaches them.

---

"The Mountain Serpents have a ritual that might return our fallen kin to the world of the living, but none among us are wise enough to perform it. Will you examine the ritual? And perhaps, if you think it within your ability, will you correct this tragedy brought on by pride and stubbornness?"

---

The ritual Donar speaks of is *reincarnate* (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 242), and it's written on a leather scroll he keeps with him, protected by a case carved from a mammoth tusk. A character who wishes to learn this ritual from the scroll can spend a day doing so. To successfully cast *reincarnate*, a primary caster must succeed at a DC 27 Nature check, while secondary casters must succeed at DC 22 Occultism and Religion checks. Donar provides the rare herbs required for the spell.

**Treasure:** If the characters reincarnate Maya or Warno, Donar rewards them with furs, luxurious clothing, and other gifts worth a total of 250 gp.

## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



**New Followers:** If the characters successfully reincarnate the fallen Mountain Serpent or permanently resolve the quarrel between the two duelists, they earn the admiration of the Mountain Serpent following and the loyalty of one or both duelists. The warrior whose life the characters saved comes to the party with their entire family and asks to join the Broken Tusk. “Not to repay the debt of life, which can’t be repaid,” they say, “but to walk alongside honorable people who treat others fairly.” The Mountain Serpent following is large, and Donar graciously allows his followers to go. If the characters rolled a critical success on their Diplomacy check

earlier, Maya and Warno both join the Broken Tusk, along with their families.

Maya and Warno are both 4th-level lieutenants; each of them has a family of 25 followers, all 2nd level.

**XP Award:** Award the characters 30 XP if they permanently resolve Maya and Warno’s conflict.

### EVENT 7: UNFOLLOWED

The Bears of Hatli were an old and honorable following that once numbered several hundred. Traveling the land on their massive cave bears, they fought in the wars against the demons of the Worldwound and revered their ancestors. However, the last few decades haven’t been kind, and demons ravaged the following that survived the Fifth Crusade until only 50 remained, led by **Hatli the Small** (LG male human clubmaster 5), the last descendant of the hero who founded the following. Hatli is a towering man about 7 feet tall with broad shoulders and imposing musculature, wrapped in a brown bearskin cloak. He wields a massive club made from the trunk of a pine tree.

As the Broken Tusks settle in at Hillcross and the characters pursue other tasks, Hatli the Small and his fellow Bears watch the Broken Tusks and ask discreet questions about them. In particular, Hatli wants to know if the Broken Tusks and their leaders are honorable people who keep their word and obey the traditions and customs of Mammoth Lord society. Characters who succeed at a DC 23 Diplomacy check to Gather Information learn Hatli and the remnants of his following have been asking about them.

**New Followers:** Hatli is looking for a healthy and honorable following that might take in what’s left of the Bears.

It’s up to you if the Broken Tusk meets that description; if the characters have been a positive example to the people of their following, have obeyed Mammoth Lord customs, and have increased the numbers and strength of their following, Hatli approaches them.

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“I and my people, we have ridden our bears east and west over the mountains for centuries. But fate, and the rage of the Worldwound, is against us, and we can no longer survive on our own. Only a few families are left. I have heard much that’s good about you and your people. If you will have us, the Bears of Hatli will bring honor to the Broken Tusk. And perhaps one day we will be strong enough to travel on our own once more.”

---



HATLI THE SMALL

It's common for the survivors of collapsed followings to come to Hillcross to find a new home; these people are known as Survivors. Characters who want to know more about the Bears of Hatli can attempt a DC 23 Society check; on a success, they recall the history of the following and their reputation for courageous, honorable behavior. On a critical success, they recall the legend of Hatli himself, the first of that name, who tamed a cave bear and formed his following. The current Hatli is the last living descendant of the original.

Although the following was once very large, only 50 Bears of Hatli survive; they're 2nd-level followers. Hatli the Small is a 5th-level lieutenant.

**XP Award:** Award the characters 30 XP if they recruit the Bears of Hatli as followers.

## COMING OF THE FROST GIANTS

Ivarsa has allied with the Graylok frost giant clan and their jarl, Hegremon (page 86). Now the Grayloks are headed for Hillcross to finish what they started when they raided the settlement a year ago and captured Jesseri the Hailstorm. Hegremon and Ivarsa both want the *Primordial Flame*, and they've formed a temporary alliance to get it. Both know their goals are mutually incompatible, but they're willing to work together against the Broken Tusk, their common enemy. If Ivarsa or Hegremon gets the artifact, they're sure to fight over it.

Hillcross has no standing army or scouts. Since there's also not much to do in camp, scouts belonging to the various followings temporarily camped here range out both east and west, just to keep an eye on things and maintain their skills. The looming menace of the Grayloks comes to the attention of the characters when you're ready for it. Begin this section of the adventure after the characters have done most of the things they want to do in Hillcross. In particular, they should've finished with all the buying and selling they want to do, learned Metuak was unable to break the curse of the *Primordial Flame* and fled east, and recruited many of the potential followers in Hillcross. They might be enjoying a wave of popularity after completing the *Summerland Spell*.

Read the following aloud to begin this section of the adventure.

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A trio of scouts ride through the Evening Gate on smilodon mounts, and as soon as they're safe inside, one stands up in the saddle and raises her arms. "Hillcross is in danger!" she says in a loud voice. "An army of frost giants comes this way, and their vanguard will be here by tomorrow."

---

These three scouts are the same ones the characters passed as they entered Hillcross. The leader of the scouts, **Brindi Whitehair** (CG female human master scout 5), is ready to give the characters a report. Other leaders from the Broken Tusk, other followings, or the Hillcross Witches might also be present.

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"The giants are the Graylok clan, who raided Hillcross less than a year ago. We defeated them, but they took prisoners away with them. They're far more numerous now. The vanguard of their army is several dozen frost giants; they stride tirelessly on long legs and will reach our gates by tomorrow. They're well equipped, with trees made into battering rams, cauldrons filled with fire, and long ropes thick enough to support a giant's weight. We don't know what all these tools will be used for, but it can't be good.

"The rest of the Graylok army moves more slowly and will take longer to get here. I think they're gathering more of their kind from the mountains.

"The Graylok jarl is a cunning hunter named Hegremon. We crept close and saw him meet with a powerful-looking woman in white fur. She is some kind of magician; she appeared from nowhere and vanished just as quickly. I think they're allies. Soon after, Hegremon departed, leaving the vanguard of the army to a lieutenant, Bulrakun, who rides an enormous roc for a mount."

## PREPARATIONS

After all they've done at Hillcross, the characters can take charge of the defense of the camp. The Hillcross Witches and other NPCs might give advice, as you think best. The characters have 1 day to prepare, and some of the tactics they might use are represented by the special actions on page 18. Preparing one of these actions is a downtime activity taking 1 day, so each character can prepare one before the giants attack.

Each of these actions can be used only once, by any character, directed against the giants. The character's allies in Hillcross must be able to see or hear the character's instructions, though the character might use flags, flying animals, or some other kind of signal.

Most of these actions have restrictions on when they can be used, and wise players will think strategically about how to overcome these restrictions and use these unique tactics in the most effective way. When your players come up with strategies other than those detailed below, you can create new actions, using those provided here as a guide.

## CHARGE OF THE MAMMOTH LORDS

**Requirements** The characters have defeated the giants attacking the Evening Gate (**Event 11: Breaking the Gate**).

### BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



This action can be directed only against enemies outside the walls of Hillcross.

You signal your allies inside Hillcross to charge out the front gate and trample your enemies. All creatures in three lines, each 90 feet long and 15 feet wide, take 2d10+12 bludgeoning damage (DC 24 basic Reflex save). These lines can overlap, and creatures caught in multiple lines must attempt the save each time.

### CURSE OF THE HILLCROSS WITCHES

#### NECROMANCY

**Requirements** This action can only be used in an encounter that takes place inside Hillcross's walls.

You call upon the witches of Hillcross to curse your foes. Each giant enemy in your current encounter must attempt a DC 24 Will save. The effect of this action lasts for 1 minute.

**Critical Success** The giant is unaffected.

**Success** The giant is enfeebled 1.

**Failure** The giant is enfeebled 2.

**Critical Failure** The giant is enfeebled 3.

### DEFENDERS OF HILLCROSS, STRIKE!

**Requirements** The characters have defeated the giants throwing firebombs into Hillcross (**Event 9: Rain of Fire**).

You signal brave warriors within Hillcross to surround the giants and attack on foot. The warriors surround all giant enemies in the encounter, creating a 10-foot burst centered around each such giant. The areas are difficult terrain, and your enemies are flat-footed within it. An enemy that starts its turn or enters one of these areas takes 9d6 slashing damage (DC 24 basic Reflex save).

### RELEASE THE FIRE

#### FIRE

**Requirements** The characters have defeated the giants climbing over the walls of Hillcross (**Event 10: Over the Wall**).

You signal archers on the walls of Hillcross to launch a volley of flaming arrows at your enemies. Every giant enemy in your current encounter takes 5d6 fire and 4d6 piercing damage (DC 24 basic Reflex save).

### SUMMON THE FLYING MAMMOTHS

A group of skilled aviators stand ready atop Soucliff. Each of their swift and sturdy gliders has been equipped with a single firebomb made of pitch and treated with alchemy. On your signal, they leap from the top of the cliff and drop their bombs on your enemies. All creatures in three 10-foot bursts take 9d6 fire damage (DC 24 basic Reflex save).

### EVENT 8: THE THEFT

Ever since the Broken Tusks arrived in Hillcross, Yana

has been shadowing them to find out where they keep the *Primordial Flame* so he can steal it and give it to Ivarsa or her agent, Hegremon. Yana might have gotten this information when the characters performed the *Summerland Spell*. Once he has a plan to steal the artifact, Yana uses his *animal messenger* spell to reach out to the Grayloks and arrange a hand-off.

The specifics of Yana's theft are up to you. If the characters are suspicious of one of his shapes, Yana uses the other shape in his theft. He knows the characters protect the *Primordial Flame* to an obsessive degree, but he doesn't know it's cursed (or he ignorantly believes the curse won't affect him). The ideal point for him to steal the artifact is when the characters rest after **Event 11: Breaking the Gate**. Yana is resourceful and quick and has no intention of fighting the characters. If he manages to grab the *Primordial Flame*, he dashes off, using his climb Speed to ascend the nearest cliff face and holding the flame in his fox snout. If he fails in his theft and is detected, he flees to meet with Bulrakun anyway and attempts to con the giant into taking him somewhere safe.

If Yana successfully steals the *Primordial Flame*, he's immediately subject to its curse. He takes it to Bulrakun but now intends to keep the artifact, rather than give it away. See **Event 13: The Hand-Off** for the details of their exchange.

**XP Award:** If the characters prevent the theft of the *Primordial Flame*, award them 40 XP.

### RUNNING THE SIEGE

The vanguard of the giant army includes about 50 frost giants, and they appear out of the snow as dusk falls on the next day. They're led by **Bulrakun** (CE male frost giant lieutenant 9), who stays out of the fight until the battle is well underway. Then, he flies into Hillcross on the back of his pet roc, as he has a secret agenda; see **Event 13: The Hand-Off** for details. Meanwhile, the Grayloks attack Hillcross on three fronts.

- Graylok artillery lob fiery bombs over the walls and into the camp (**Event 9: Rain of Fire**).
- Giants attempt to climb over the walls (**Event 10: Over the Wall**).
- Other giants, armed with enormous battering rams, assault the Evening Gate (**Event 11: Breaking the Gate**).

Describe all these attacks happening simultaneously; it's up to the characters to choose which order they wish to address the encounters. Once they've dealt with all three events, the party has a moment to rest before more giant threats make themselves known: Graylok scouts, equipped with long ropes, descend from the top of Norcliff, landing near Icelake (**Event 12: Giants from**

the Sky); Yana tries to steal the *Primordial Flame* (Event 8: The Theft); and Bulrakun flies in to rendezvous with Yana to make the hand-off (Event 13: The Hand-Off).

Although the vanguard includes 50 frost giants, the characters won't fight them alone. Rather, as the characters move through each encounter, describe the other defenders of Hillcross fighting against other frost giant invaders not shown on your battle map. Depending on how coordinated or successful the characters are, you might describe these other defenders as doing similarly well or poorly. For example, when a character deals the killing blow to a frost giant, describe their allies teaming up to take down another frost giant not far away. When a character is seriously hurt or falls, nearby allies are scattered by the fierce axe blows of other giants.

Give the characters a chance to rest after the first three encounters, but emphasize that there's no time to rest before then. If the characters insist on resting anyway, skip any of Events 9–11 the characters haven't yet dealt with and proceed directly to Events 12–13. In this case, Hillcross is badly wounded by the frost giants the characters were unable to deal with; see After the Battle on page 23.

## EVENT 9: RAIN OF FIRE

## MODERATE 8

The Grayloks brought huge pots of alchemist's fire with them to Hillcross, and skilled giants have used alchemy to create explosive bombs they hurl over the walls and into the camp. The characters must run, ride, or fly out from Hillcross to confront this threat. The encounter takes place in the flat plain between the walls of the valley where Hillcross is located; no map is provided.

**Creatures:** The characters confront two Graylok artilleryists. As with all the encounters throughout the siege, more frost giants are present in the background, engaged by the characters' followers and allies from within Hillcross. The giants begin Throwing Bombs at the characters, but once engaged in melee, they Ignite their Greataxes and make Wide Swings. After one giant is defeated and the other is reduced to 50 HP or fewer, the survivor flees.

## GRAYLOK ARTILLERISTS (2)

## CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON CE LARGE COLD GIANT HUMANOID

Frost giant grenadiers (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 171)

**Perception** +16; low-light vision

**Languages** Common, Jotun

**Skills** Athletics +21, Crafting +18, Intimidation +16

**Str** +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

**Items** breastplate, +1 striking greataxe, sack with 10 firebombs (see Throw Bomb)

**AC** 26; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +16, **Will** +13

**HP** 100; **Immunities** cold; **Weaknesses** fire 10

**Speed** 30 feet; ice stride

**Melee** ♦ greataxe +21 (magical, reach 10 feet, sweep), **Damage** 2d12+8 slashing

**Melee** ♦ foot +18 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+9 bludgeoning  
**Ignite Greataxe** ♦♦ The Graylok artilleryist combines gelatin and other substances over their greataxe to ignite it. For 1 minute, the greataxe gains the fire trait, and creatures hit by it take 4 persistent fire damage.

**Ice Stride** A frost giant isn't impeded by difficult terrain caused by snow or ice, nor do they need to attempt Acrobatics checks to keep from falling on slippery ice.

**Throw Bomb** ♦♦ (alchemical, fire) **Requirements** The Graylok artilleryist has two free hands; **Effect** The Graylok artilleryist Interacts with a firebomb and then throws it at a point within 100 feet. The bomb erupts in a 10-foot burst, and works as moderate alchemist fire, except it inflicts 4d6 fire damage with a DC 23 basic Reflex save. Creatures that fail or critically fail this save also take 4 persistent fire damage.

**Wide Swing** ♦ The frost giant makes a single greataxe Strike and compares the attack roll result to the ACs of up to two foes within their reach. This counts as two attacks for the frost giant's multiple attack penalty.

## EVENT 10: OVER THE WALL

## SEVERE 8

Frost giants charge Hillcross's western wall. They intend to leap over the ditch, brave the ivory palisade, and climb the wall. The characters must lead the defense. The wall stands 30 feet high, including a 10-foot-high earth embankment surmounted by a block of sharpened tree trunks 20 feet high. A palisade of mammoth tusks projects out from the wall over a 10-foot-wide trench that's 10 feet deep at its deepest point.

Use the map on page 20 for this encounter.

**Creatures:** Three frost giants lead the assault on the wall. If the characters were waiting on the walls for the giant army to arrive, the giants are 120 feet away from the wall when the encounter begins, which gives the characters 1 round to attack with ranged weapons and spells before the giants get close enough to climb the walls. Once they're close enough, the giants Leap over the trench, but each takes 9d6 damage from the ivory palisade (DC 24 basic Reflex save). The giants are so tall they need to Climb only 20 feet to reach the top of the walls; once they do so, they stand toe to toe with the characters and fight in melee combat. The giants have been chosen for their fanaticism, and they won't retreat from their assault until defeated.

## WEAK FROST GIANTS (3)

## CREATURE 8

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 171

**Initiative** Perception +15

## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

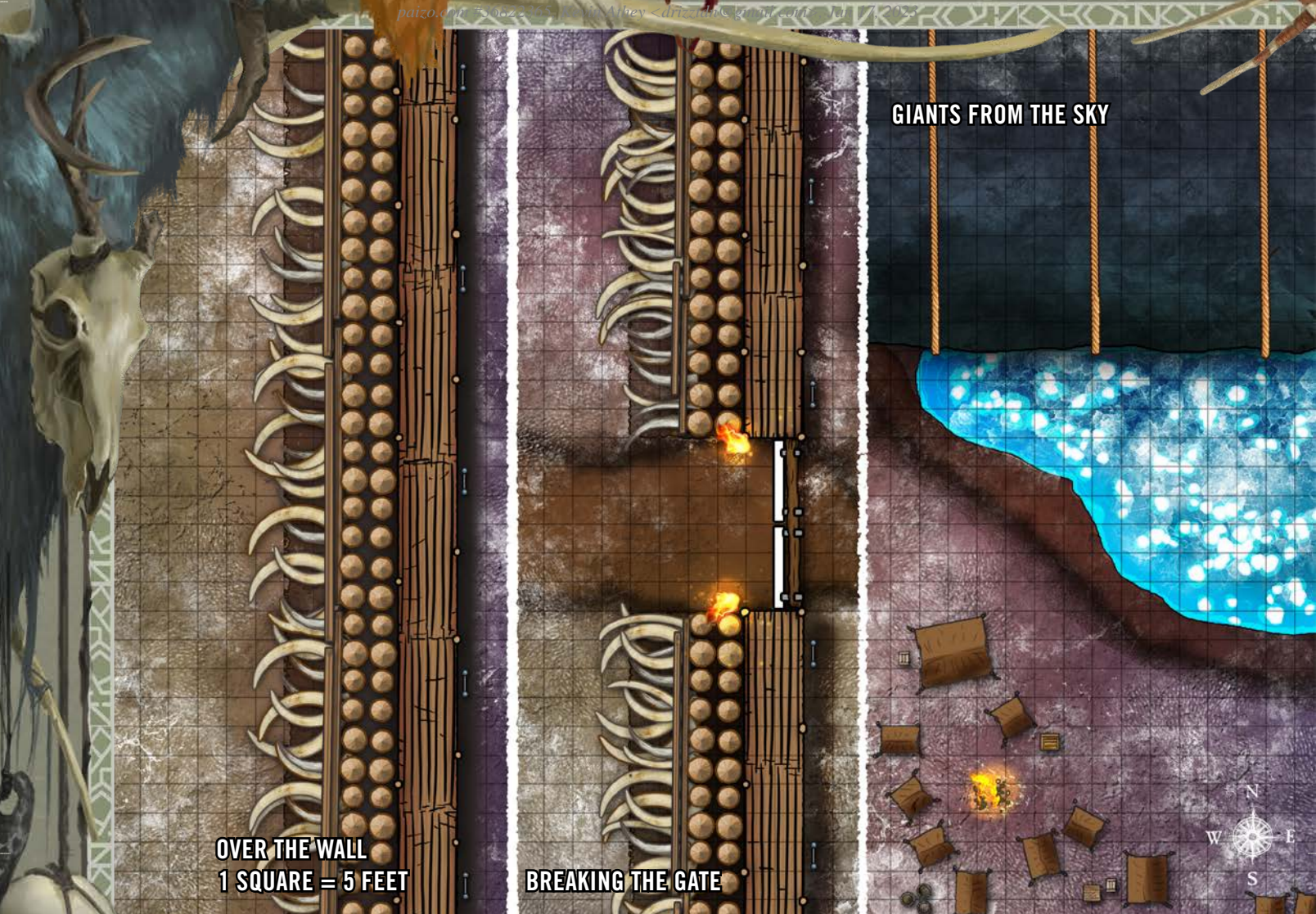
Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox





## GIANTS FROM THE SKY

**OVER THE WALL**  
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

**BREAKING THE GATE**

### EVENT 11: BREAKING THE GATE MODERATE 8

Even as flaming bombs hurtle through the air to crash inside Hillcross and frost giants start to climb over the walls, another group of Grayloks attempt to batter down the gate with improvised battering rams made of tree trunks. The Evening Gate has Hardness 5, 40 HP, and BT 20.

Use the map above for this encounter.

**Creatures:** Two frost giants lead the way, but they're surrounded by a half dozen others that keep the characters' Broken Tusk followers busy. The two giants each carry shields and, between them, a single ram; when they get within 60 feet of the gate, they try to Ram it, knocking down characters in the way. The first time the giants Ram the gate, they might break it, but it will take multiple attacks to destroy it. If they can no longer Ram, the giants use Freeze Blade and fight hand to hand. They don't retreat and fight until defeated.

### GRAYLOK GATEBREAKERS (2) CREATURE 8

**UNCOMMON** **CE** **LARGE** **COLD** **GIANT** **HUMANOID**  
Frost giant besiegers (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 171)  
**Perception** +16; low-light vision

**Languages** Common, Jotun

**Skills** Athletics +21, Intimidation +16

**Str** +7, **Dex** +0, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

**Items** battering ram, +1 striking battleaxe, breastplate, large tower shield (Hardness 5, HP 30, BT 15)

**AC** 28 (30 with shield raised, 32 behind cover); **Fort** +21, **Ref** +14, **Will** +14

**HP** 130; **Immunities** cold; **Weaknesses** fire 10

**Shield Block** ↻

**Speed** 25 feet; ice stride

**Melee** ♦ battleaxe +20 (magical, reach 10 feet, sweep),

**Damage** 2d8+9 slashing

**Melee** ♦ foot +20 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+7 bludgeoning

**Freeze Blade** ♦ The frost giant gatebreaker breathes on the blade of their battleaxe, coating it in a layer of magical ice. For 1 minute, the frost giant's battleaxe Strikes gain the cold trait, and creatures struck by the battleaxe are slowed 1; at the end of each of their turns, the slowed creature can attempt a DC 23 Fortitude save to end the condition.

**Ice Stride** A frost giant isn't impeded by difficult terrain caused by snow or ice, nor do they need to attempt Acrobatics checks to keep from falling on slippery ice.



**Shielded Stride** When the frost giant gatebreaker has their shield up, they can Stride to move half their Speed without triggering reactions that are triggered by their movement (such as Attacks of Opportunity).

**Trampling Ram** **◆◆◆ Requirements** Another frost giant gatebreaker has Readied to Stride on the frost giant gatebreaker's order; **Effect** The two frost giants Stride, with a maximum distance equal to the slowest giant's Speed. Every creature whose space they move through takes 2d8+9 bludgeoning damage (DC 23 basic Reflex save); creatures who fail their save fall prone. At the end of their movement, the giants make a single Strike with a +20 modifier (reach 15 feet), inflicting 4d6+16 bludgeoning damage on a hit and knocking the target prone. If the giants hit, they can immediately attempt to Shove the creature as a free action.

## EVENT 12: GIANTS FROM THE SKY **MODERATE 8**

Once the characters repel the initial assault (**Events 9–11**), there's a short break in the action during which they can Treat Wounds. Soon the fighting renews, though, as Graylok scouts rappel down the side of Norcliff on thick ropes. Use the map on page 20 for this encounter.

**Creatures:** A dozen rope lines are thrown over the edge of Norcliff, but the characters need only to face the two giants in the lead. Each round, each giant spends 3 actions to Climb down the rope. Because they're accustomed to climbing down rope, the giants critically succeed on their Athletics checks to Climb and can descend up to 60 feet per round. Uninterrupted, the giants reach the ground around Icelake in about 5 rounds. Depending on where the characters are and what they've been doing since the initial Graylok assault, they might have 1 or 2 rounds to attack the descending giants with ranged weapons or spells or even fly up to meet them.

The giants do their best to reach the ground, then gang up to flank a target and use sneak attack. They've got little chance of escape from inside Hillcross, so they fight until defeated.

### GRAYLOK AMBUSHERS (2) **CREATURE 8**

UNCOMMON CE LARGE COLD GIANT HUMANOID

Frost giant dirty fighters (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 171)

**Perception** +19; low-light vision

**Languages** Common, Jotun

**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Athletics +21, Intimidation +16, Stealth +18 (+22 in snow), Survival +16

**Str** +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

**Items** breastplate, +1 striking hatchet

**AC** 26; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +19, **Will** +13

**HP** 130; **Immunities** cold; **Weaknesses** fire 10

**Deny Advantage** A Graylok ambusher isn't flat-footed to hidden, undetected, or flanking creatures of 8th level or lower or creatures of 8th level or lower using sneak attack. However, such creatures can still help other creatures flank.

**Opportune Backstab** **↻ Trigger** A creature within melee reach is hit by a melee attack from one of the Graylok



BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1: Heroes of the Hillcross

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GRAYLOK GATEBREAKER



ambusher's allies; **Effect** The Graylok ambusher attempts a Strike against the triggering creature.

**Speed** 30 feet; ice stride

**Melee** ♦ hatchet +18 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet, sweep, thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+9 slashing

**Melee** ♦ fist +18 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+8 bludgeoning

**Brutal Beating** When the Graylok ambusher scores a critical hit with a melee Strike, the target is frightened 1.

**Dread Striker** Any creature that has the frightened condition is flat-footed against the Graylok ambusher's attacks.

**Ice Stride** A frost giant isn't impeded by difficult terrain

caused by snow or ice, nor do they need to attempt Acrobatics checks to keep from falling on slippery ice.

**Light Step** When the Graylok ambusher Strides or Steps, they ignore difficult terrain.

**Sneak Attack** The Graylok ambusher deals an additional 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

### EVENT 13: THE HAND-OFF

### SEVERE 8

Bulrakun leads the Graylok vanguard, and he answers to Hegremon, head of the clan. He has been receiving occasional messages from Yana No-Trail, who has promised to deliver the *Primordial Flame* to the giants. Bulrakun has returned these messages, telling Yana to secure the artifact and bring it to an empty space somewhere in Hillcross. He figures he'll be able to see the glowing *Primordial Flame* from atop his roc steed as he circles the settlement.

**Creatures:** After the initial attack on Hillcross is repulsed (**Events 9–11**), Bulrakun takes to the air riding his roc mount, Ravager. He waits for Graylok scouts to descend the cliff face (**Event 12: Giants from the Sky**) and looks for any sign of the *Primordial Flame*. If Yana has stolen it, the kitsune looks for a spot in the open as far from the characters as possible—since the characters are likely fighting around Icelake, the only safe spot might be outside one of the gates. If Yana's theft was thwarted, Bulrakun probably sees the characters using the *Primordial Flame* in their battle with the Graylok ambushers during **Event 12: Giants from the Sky**.

Regardless, Bulrakun descends on Ravager. If Yana is present, he refuses to hand over the *Primordial Flame* and tries to bargain instead. This attempt proves fruitless; just as the characters arrive on the scene, Bulrakun unceremoniously decapitates Yana with a single blow. The characters can recover the *Primordial Flame* from Yana's body, but they'll have to defeat the giant and his mount.

Bulrakun leaps off Ravager to fight hand to hand; he tries to seize the *Primordial Flame* if he can. If he gets it, or if he's reduced to below 50 HP and his mount has survived, he tries to remount and flee.

### BULRAKUN

### CREATURE 9

Frost giant (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 171)

**Initiative** Perception +17

**Items** breastplate, moderate elixir of life, +1 striking greataxe, javelins of lightning (3)

### RAVAGER

### CREATURE 9

Roc (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 281)

**Initiative** Perception +18

BULRAKUN

**XP Award:** Award the characters 120 XP each for stopping the frost giant siege.

## AFTER THE BATTLE

With the defeat of Bulrakun, the vanguard of the Graylok army has been vanquished. The characters know more frost giants are on their way, but they have some time to regroup and plan. Casualties among the defenders are proportionate to injuries and deaths among the characters; if the characters survived the battle without sustaining significant wounds, the defenders have likewise suffered only minor injuries, and they laud the Broken Tusk scouts as legendary warriors who led Hillcross to amazing victory. If one of the characters died during the battle, however, there were serious casualties among the defenders, and although they repulsed the giants, there will be many grieving families in the days to come. Most likely, the result is somewhere between, with one or more of the characters becoming wounded during the fight and some casualties among the people of Hillcross, with perhaps a lieutenant or two dying bravely in battle.

**New Followers:** Count how many encounters with giants the characters fought through during the battle; the number could be as high as five, if they faced the giants in **Events 9–11**, the Graylok ambushers in **Event 12: Giants in the Sky**, and the confrontation with Bulrakun in **Event 13: The Hand-Off**. For each of these encounters in which the characters were victorious, 25 warriors within Hillcross ask to join their following. These warriors mostly come from followings currently camped, but a few are permanent residents; the heroic deeds of the Broken Tusks have inspired them all.

The characters might want to send out scouts to determine the location of the rest of the Graylok army; if they don't think to do so, one of their lieutenants suggests it. This reconnaissance will take several days, during which the characters can rest or pursue other downtime activities. In the process, they discover that not only are Grayloks coming in from the south, but the Burning Mammoth following is also en route to attack Hillcross from the opposite direction. The first frost giant siege was only a preamble of the true fight to come.

**Treasure:** In recognition of their efforts in saving Hillcross from the frost giant attack, the followings currently camped in Hillcross lavish the Broken Tusk with gifts. These offerings include precious family heirlooms and golden treasures recovered from ancient ruins as well as southern fineries not otherwise available to Mammoth Lords. These gifts are worth a total of 500 gp.

## MAMMOTH LORDS WITHOUT MAMMOTHS

The day after the battle, the Broken Tusk's leaders—Mammoth Lords Argakoa, Letsua, Merthig, and Nakta—approach the party to congratulate them on the successful defense of Hillcross and to grant them the titles of Mammoth Lords.

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"You have proven yourselves to be true Broken Tusks," Argakoa says, her voice deep and solemn. "We have spoken, and we agree the time is right to announce Eiwa's successors. Will you accept the grave responsibilities and join us in leading the Broken Tusk as Mammoth Lords?"

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There's unfortunately no time for pomp or ceremony; this brief offer is all the characters can currently hope for, at the moment, to mark their ascendancy to the highest echelons of power within the Realm of the Mammoth Lords. Nevertheless, the occasion is an important one and shouldn't be understated. The characters are no longer scouts or even head scouts for the Broken Tusks—they're true Mammoth Lords!

There's just one problem: the characters don't yet have mounts. A Mammoth Lord without a mammoth, or an equivalently impressive steed, is hardly a Mammoth Lord. If any of the characters have made a particularly strong bond with one of the animals in the Broken Tusk herd, this occasion is an excellent opportunity to show how that bond has evolved from amiable companionship to a permanent partnership. Otherwise, Letsua suggests the characters tame megafauna from the surrounding environments.

Few megafauna live in the Hillcross Ravine these days, but the surrounding Tusk Mountains are rife with animal life. A character who asks the residents of Hillcross about likely megafauna to tame should attempt a DC 19 Diplomacy check to Gather Information. On a success, the character learns about one group of megafauna within a day's travel to the east, chosen from the list on page 24. For every increment of 5 above the DC by which the check succeeds, the character learns of an additional nearby megafauna species.

Finding, capturing, and taming a megafauna mount requires a series of exploration or downtime activities. Most of these tasks have no particular penalty for failure and are intended to aid you and your group with storytelling. Expedite or prolong these activities as you see fit to ensure your group has the most fun and each player ends up with a satisfactory mount for their character.

### BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



## FIND MEGAFAUNA

### CONCENTRATE EXPLORATION

You spend 1 hour searching for signs of a particular species of megafauna, such as a cave bear, mammoth, or smilodon. This may involve tracks, scat, or locating the animal's prey or den. Attempt a DC 24 Survival check. On a success, if you're in a region where the species you seek lives, you find one or more of the creatures and approach them unnoticed.

## PREPARE TRAP

### EXPLORATION

You rig a pit, net, or other simple trap to capture a specific species of megafauna. The time this takes depends on the size of the creature you want to trap: 1 hour for a Medium or smaller creature, 2 hours for a Large one, 4 hours for a Huge one, 8 hours for a Gargantuan one, and 16 hours for a Colossal creature. Multiple people working on the same trap can combine their efforts, crafting the trap in less time; for example, 4 characters working to capture a Large creature can do so in 1 hour. Your trap might take advantage of local terrain, such as a narrow gully or a dead-end canyon. Attempt a DC 24 Crafting check; if you succeed, the trap is prepared.

## CAPTURE MEGAFAUNA

### EXPLORATION

**Requirements** You or one of your allies have successfully Found a Megafauna and Prepared a Trap.

You and any allies you choose spring your trap on the Megafauna you've Found and Prepared a Trap for. This might require you to chase the animal into the path of your trap, sneak up on it, or simply lure it closer. Select one of the following skills: Athletics, Nature, or Stealth. Alternatively, if you or one of your allies can speak with the megafauna you're trying to capture, through the *Speak with Animals* spell or a similar ability, you can roll Diplomacy instead. Attempt a DC 26 check of the skill of your choice; your allies can Aid you in this check. If you succeed, the animal is captured. If you fail, the animal flees, and you can't try to capture it again for 1 day. On a critical failure, the animal attacks before fleeing, and you become wounded 1.

## TAME MEGAFAUNA

### DOWNTIME

**Requirements** You've Captured a Megafauna.

You spend 1 day trying to tame your captured megafauna. Attempt a DC 26 Nature check; on a success, the creature is tamed, and you can make it your animal companion. If you or an ally who agrees to perform this activity with you can speak to the captured megafauna, through *Speak with Animals* or a similar ability, you can choose to roll Diplomacy instead. If you fail, you can try again in 1 day. If you critically fail, you're wounded 1.

**New Archetype:** When the characters tame their new mounts, each party member gains access to the Mammoth Lord archetype on page 78. Moreover, they automatically gain the following feats from that archetype for free as bonus feats: Mammoth Lord Dedication, Mature Megafauna Mount, and Incredible Megafauna Mount. All these feats can be found on pages 78–79.

**Megafauna Mounts:** A list of possible megafauna mounts is provided below, along with the Pathfinder Bestiary volume and page where you can find the megafauna's full creature stat block and the book and page where you can find the creature's animal companion statistics (some of which appear in the Adventure Toolbox of this volume). Feel free to modify this list if you know your players are looking for a particular kind of mount.

Note that the creature level of a megafauna mount isn't especially relevant once the animal is tamed. Once a megafauna becomes an animal companion, its level becomes equal to the level of the character who tamed it.

Some of the megafauna mounts listed below, such as smilodon or daeodon, use the statistics of a different, pre-existing animal companion, such as cat or boar. In this case, the megafauna's statistics as an animal companion, including size, abilities, support benefits, and advanced maneuvers, are identical to the animal companion referenced.

- **Cave Bear (Bestiary 40):** Use a bear's statistics (*Core Rulebook* 215) for a cave bear animal companion.
- **Daeodon (Bestiary 43):** Use a boar's statistics (*Advanced Player's Guide* 144) for a daeodon, or giant boar, companion.
- **Dire Wolf (Bestiary 334):** Use a wolf's statistics (*Core Rulebook* 216) for a dire wolf companion.
- **Mammoth (Bestiary 154):** See page 73 for the statistics for an elephant or woolly mammoth animal companion.
- **Roc (Bestiary 281):** Use bird statistics (*Core Rulebook* 215) for a young roc.
- **Smilodon (Bestiary 53):** Use cat statistics (*Core Rulebook* 215) for a smilodon animal companion.
- **Triceratops (Bestiary 98):** See page 73 for the statistics for a triceratops or other armored dinosaur, such as a stegosaurus or ankylosaurus.
- **Tyrannosaurus (Bestiary 100):** See page 74 for the statistics for a tyrannosaurus, allosaurus, or similar dinosaur.
- **Woolly Rhinoceros (Bestiary 2 228):** See page 73 for statistics for a rhinoceros or woolly rhinoceros animal companion.

## MAMMOTH LORDS TRIUMPHANT

As the characters tame their megafauna and return in triumph, the people rejoice. The honorable defenders of Hillcross are triumphant!

**New Followers:** For each megafauna mount tamed, the characters recruit 25 additional 1st-level followers.

**XP Award:** When all the characters have a megafauna mount, award each character 120 XP, or however much XP is necessary to get the characters to 9th level.

**Scout's Report:** While the characters have been busy tracking down and taming their megafauna mounts, the scouts they sent to search for the Graylok army have completed their task and begin to return to Hillcross. Some of the Broken Tusk lieutenants might be among this group. They report that the Graylok army is much greater in size than the vanguard the characters have already fought off. More importantly, Ivarsa has been spotted. She rides a frost worm, a huge beast that terrifies even the frost giants. The magus and her elite warriors are headed for the Tamarnian Tar Forest; they've left the rest of the Burning Mammoth following with the Grayloks. The scouts also saw the leader of the Graylok clan, Hegremon, in council with Ivarsa, but they don't know what was discussed or decided. He seems to have left his clan in the charge of his lieutenants.

## PARTING WAYS

At this point, the characters face a dilemma. Metuak's trail leads east, where Ivarsa is already headed. The characters must go that way too if they're to defeat the magus and undo the curse of the *Primordial Flame*. If they delay, Ivarsa could find Metuak first, the consequences of which are unforeseeable.

At the same time, two armies are bound for Hillcross, and the more followers the characters take with them, the slower they'll travel. Mammoth Lord Merthig or another close ally suggests the party leave the rest of the following and head to the Tamarnian Tar Forest themselves. "Thanks to all you have done, the Broken Tusk now numbers in the hundreds. We've come a long way since the Night of the Green Moon, when we were nearly lost. Now is the time when the Broken Tusk make our stand and make you proud. Ride your new mounts east, find Metuak, and end this curse. Then, return here, where we will greet you with open arms and tell you of our victory!"

The rest of this adventure is intended to be undertaken by the characters alone, without any of their lieutenants or followers. Of course, if your players strongly wish to take a lieutenant or two along with them to the tar forest, that's fine, but you should take care to adjust the rest of the combat encounters in this adventure accordingly. Use the rules for Different Party Sizes on page 489 of the *Core Rulebook* to scale encounters so they remain a challenge for the party.

Once the characters are ready to proceed, they can depart Hillcross through the Morning Gate, bound for the Tamarnian Tar Forest. The second battle of Hillcross will be resolved when the characters return at the end of the adventure.



MAMMOTH MOUNT

## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Box





## Chapter 2: Barkblood

Metuak's trail leads east from Hillcross to the Tamarnian Tar Forest, a blighted wilderness cursed by the death throes of an ancient primal being called Barkblood. The forest is bordered on one edge by the Grimgorge, a deep, narrow ravine. Metuak eventually found his way through this ravine to a Mendevian fortress called Castle Grimgorge.

When they reach these black woods, the characters don't know where exactly Metuak went; to discover this information, they'll need to first explore the tar forest and meet some of its unusual denizens. The characters can learn Metuak's final destination in one of three ways: by recovering a map Ivarsa's scouts left

behind at her camp on the shore of Abyssal Lake (area B); by defeating Calcifda the Stone Witch, restoring balance to the forest and earning the good will of Adalemma (area C), who knows where Metuak went; or by completing a quest from the Azure Sphinx (area E) to cleanse the corruption within the mammoth graveyard. However, the characters might simply discover the Grimgorge while exploring and follow it off the map to Metuak's location.

The characters begin their exploration of the forest at area A (page 34); run the encounter at that location to give the party their first objective of this chapter: find Adalemma, the Solstice Queen.

## THE TAMARNIAN TAR FOREST

Long ago, in ancient and unrecorded history, a powerful arboreal known as Barkblood came to this sprawling pine forest to die. For centuries, Barkblood had warred against humanoid peoples, most of whom he regarded as hostile toward nature and a blight upon the land. Over time, this indiscriminate hatred twisted Barkblood's very body, turning his sap to viscous tar; eventually, his body began to petrify. Slowly, and in great pain, he fled deeper into the wilderness. Finally, when he could no longer move his limbs, the arboreal froze and eventually died, cursing the world. Empowered by primal magic, Barkblood's bitter hatred flowed out from him and, over centuries, infused the entire forest. Now, tar runs thick and deep beneath the earth in this region, and all the trees of this land drink deeply from it. Deadly tar pits lurk among the pines, claiming the lives of innocent creatures. Sometimes, enough wicked magic gathers in these pits for the tar itself to animate into a kind of life, rolling over the land in search of prey. Barkblood's petrified corpse still stands at the heart of the wasteland, surrounded by miles of bleak tar sands.

### RUNNING HEXPLORATION

To find Metuak's trail, the characters must explore the Tamarnian Tar Forest using the hexploration rules on pages 170–173 of the *Gamemastery Guide* and the hex map of this region on page 28. This chapter is divided into random encounters that take place in designated types of hexes and can be paced as you see best, and set encounters that occur when characters reach specific hexes. See area A on page 34 for the first of these set encounters.

### TERRAIN TYPES

Hexploration makes up the bulk of this chapter and the story the characters create for themselves out of random encounters. The tar forest includes nine distinct terrain types, each of which is further detailed below. Each terrain type has a table for random encounters, including harmless encounters, hazards, and encounters with potentially deadly combatants. Because many of the hazards and creatures on these encounter tables appear in multiple terrain types, all encounters are described in a single list beginning on page 31. With the rules for hexploration from the *Gamemastery Guide* and the terrain descriptions in this adventure, you have the tools you need to adjudicate the journey of the Broken Tusks as they Travel through and Reconnoiter hexes from the map on page 28.

The table on page 28 summarizes the different terrain types, including whether that type is open, difficult, or greater difficult terrain (and thus takes either 1, 2, or 3 hexploration activities to Travel into) and a flat check DC. Each time the characters Travel into a hex, roll a d20 to determine whether they have a random encounter. If the result of the roll is lower than the flat check DC, no encounter occurs. If the result matches or exceeds the DC, roll on the encounter table for the corresponding terrain type to determine which encounter the characters face.

Some encounters on the encounter tables are marked with an asterisk (\*), which indicates encounters that should happen only once. Once the characters overcome this challenge, it's finished. If the encounter is randomly rolled again, then no encounter takes place. See each encounter entry for full details.

## CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

The Broken Tusk following's newest Mammoth Lords take their megafauna mounts to the Tamarnian Tar Forest, where they must explore the vast wilderness to find out where, exactly, the Burning Mammoth hero Metuak fled after his exile from Hillcross. Along the way, the characters meet a variety of good, evil, and mysterious denizens dwelling in the tar forest. Ultimately, they discover they must make their way across the Grimgorge and reach Castle Grimgorge to find Metuak.

### BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

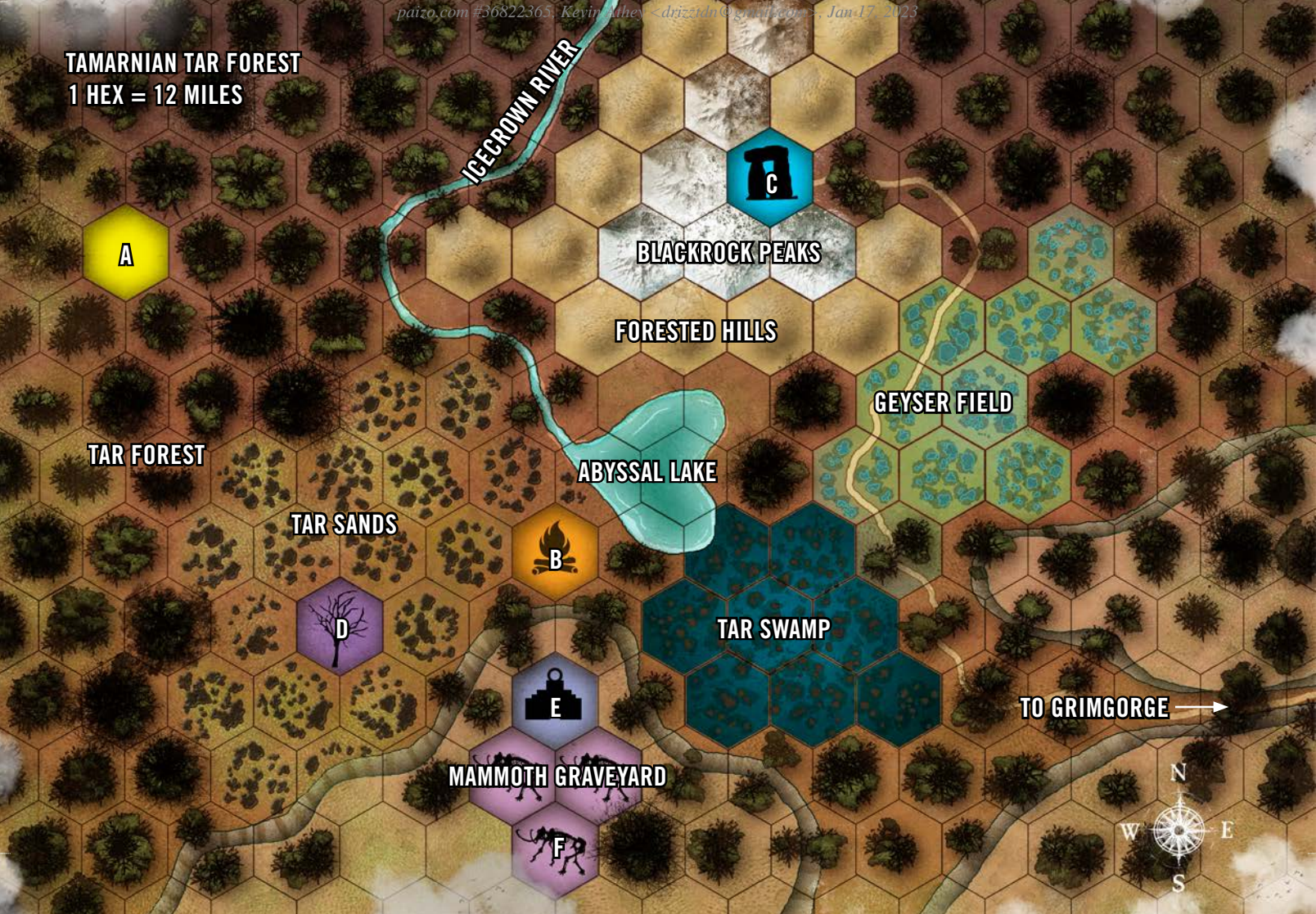
Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



**TAMARNIAN TAR FOREST**  
1 HEX = 12 MILES



**TABLE: TERRAIN TYPES**

Terrain Type	Terrain	Random Encounter Flat Check DC
Barren Plains	Open	—
Frozen River or Lake	Open	12
Forested Hills or Mountains	Difficult (hills) or greater difficult (mountains)	16
Geysers Field	Open	17
Grimgorge	Difficult	14
Mammoth Graveyard	Difficult	15
Tar Forest	Difficult	14
Tar Sands	Open	17
Tar Swamp	Greater difficult	14

**BARREN PLAINS**

Cold, windswept plains surround the pyramidal lair of the mysterious Azure Sphinx (area E). These lands are safe for travel—there are no random encounters—though if the party lingers long enough, the Azure Sphinx eventually approaches them (see Creatures on page 41).

**FROZEN RIVER OR LAKE**

Icecrown River flows south into the forest, where it's swiftly polluted by thick streams of tar. By the time it reaches the center of the Tamarnian Tar Forest, the river is entirely made of tar, and it collects in the forest basin as a viscous, mucky body of water called Abyssal Lake. During winter months—including the time when the characters arrive in the forest—both the river and lake freeze solid, forming a black highway that meanders through the northern reach of the forest.

The surface of Icecrown River and Abyssal Lake isn't entirely smooth; every winter the tar freezes in thick, undulating rivulets that make for bumpy, slippery terrain. When living creatures spend time on this frozen surface, their body heat partially thaws it, making the tar stick to their feet. There's no danger of the surface cracking and anyone falling in—not in midwinter at least—but the wide, empty space created by the frozen tar creates an excellent hunting ground, especially for aerial predators. Raptors and humanoids alike prowl this area because the sticky tar clinging to creatures' feet makes them easy to follow and stalk.



**TABLE: FROZEN RIVER/LAKE ENCOUNTERS**

d8	Encounter
1	Famine daemon*
2	Frozen hut*
3	Hodag horde*
4	Last words*
5	Mated pair*
6	Restless hunters
7	Thunderbird*
8	Zombies

### FORESTED HILLS OR MOUNTAINS

The Blackrock Peaks are flanked by a range of hills covered in tall, coniferous pines. Like the rest of the trees in this magical forest, these trees are tainted by the tar that has seeped into their roots for centuries. Their bark is a deep, blackish brown, their black needles are sharp as daggers, and their sap has been fully replaced with tar. For the simple reason that tar doesn't flow uphill, many creatures seeking to avoid tar pits and oozes make the hills their home.

**TABLE: FORESTED HILLS/MOUNTAINS ENCOUNTERS**

d12	Encounter
1	Bitter opossum
2	Dripping tar
3	Druid's cave*
4	Forest trickster*
5	Forest wardens
6	Hibernating bears
7	Hodag horde*
8	Mated pair*
9	Restless hunters
10	Tar slide
11	Thunderbird*
12	Toxic stream

### GEYSER FIELD

This particularly hazardous region lies in the east, between Adalemma's grotto and the Grimgorge. A hard, black shell of dried tar and charcoal covers the flat, barren ground.

**TABLE: GEYSER FIELD ENCOUNTERS**

d12	Encounter
1	Calcified remains*
2	Famine daemon*
3-5	Geyser
6	Mated pair*
7-9	Methane flue
10	Restless hunters
11	Thunderbird*
12	Vultures

### HEGREMON

The leader of the Graylok frost giants, a skilled hunter named Hegremon, is fully detailed on pages 86–87. While his clan lays siege to Hillcross, Hegremon sets out after the party alone. Throughout this chapter, he stalks the characters, tormenting them and exploiting every advantage. His goal is simple: like Ivarsa, he wants the *Primordial Flame*.

Hegremon is canny and patient—the ideal hunter. He doesn't confront the characters in a stand-up fight unless he has no other alternative. There are no set encounters against Hegremon in this chapter, and he doesn't appear on the tables of random encounters; you decide when he attacks the characters. Ideally, the characters should feel his presence at least three times, each different than the last, ending in a climactic confrontation. For example, Hegremon might lay an ambush for the characters, sniping at them from a hidden and hard-to-reach location; by the time they reach his nest, he's long gone. Then, he could reappear when they're battling a random encounter or trying to escape a tar pit hazard, dealing damage from afar and making their current emergency more difficult. If one or more of the characters are incapacitated, Hegremon might enter melee to finish them off, but he always has an escape plan and should flee the moment he ceases to have the advantage.

Hegremon's pursuit of the characters should end in one of two ways. First, after they've explored the tar forest and learned its dangers, the characters might lure Hegremon into dangerous terrain and use the forest against him. The lowland tar swamp, with its concealing, flammable fog and many tar oozes, is an excellent place to lay such a trap, as is the nearby geyser field, with its deadly methane plumes. Alternatively, if the characters find the path to the Grimgorge and begin to leave the forest, Hegremon must take this last chance to stop them. After all, Hegremon believes if the Broken Tusks reach Castle Grimgorge, Ivarsa will surely kill them, and the *Primordial Flame* will forever be beyond his grasp.

### GRIMGORGE

The southeast end of the tar forest slopes steadily downward; beyond the tar swamp, the ground dries out, and the dark trees thin. This route leads to the Grimgorge, a narrow ravine once so strategically important that Mendev erected a fortress here. However, even their high stone walls couldn't save the castle garrison from the demons that slaughtered them.

### BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



Now, the restless ghosts of Castle Grimgorge roam the mouth of the ravine. Metuak came this way, thus inevitably the characters must follow him; see page 46 for more info.



RESTLESS HUNTER

### TABLE: GRIMGORGE ENCOUNTERS

d12	Encounter
1	Barkblood's spawn
2	Battle standard*
3	Dripping tar
4	Howling winds
5	Jealous abjurer*
6	Forest trickster*
7-8	Mendevidian ghosts
9	Restless hunters
10	Tar pit
11	Tamarnian ooze
12	Zombies

### MAMMOTH GRAVEYARD

For uncounted centuries, ancient mammoths have made their way to the plateau south of the tar forest to die. Now, undead gather in this mammoth graveyard. The characters have little reason to travel here except to cleanse the place for the Azure Sphinx (see area E for details).

### TABLE: MAMMOTH GRAVEYARD ENCOUNTERS

d8	Encounter
1-3	Graveyard guardian*
4	Hyaenodons
5	Mound of skulls
6-7	Restless hunters
8	Zombie mammoths

### TAR FOREST

Towering pine trees make up nearly all of the Tamarnian's woodlands, though the deep and hidden enchantments of the forest have affected them greatly. Tar has sustained these trees for so many centuries that it has replaced their sap; at this point, the trees are sustained entirely through primal magic.

### TABLE: TAR FOREST ENCOUNTERS

d12	Encounter
1	Barkblood's spawn
2	Bitter opossum
3	Dripping tar
4	Forest trickster*
5	Forest wardens
6	Hodag horde*
7	Mated pair*
8	Restless hunters
9	Tar pit
10	Tamarnian ooze
11	Thunderbird*
12	Zombies

## TAR SANDS

South of Abyssal Lake, the trees of the tar forest give way to a bleak and forbidding landscape of flat tar sands. There's no cover here, just miles of sandy tar so thick that it can—barring disaster—be walked upon. This is a poisoned, inhospitable place, and few creatures dare to live here, though tar pits and tar oozes are common.

TABLE: TAR SANDS ENCOUNTERS

d12	Encounter
1	Calcified remains
2	Mated pair*
3	Restless hunters
4	Stone witch
5	Tar pit
6	Tamarnian ooze
7	Thunderbird*
8-9	Will-o'-wisps
10-11	Witchfires
12	Zombies

## TAR SWAMP

To the east, the tar forest sinks into a depression where methane and other natural vapors given off by the tar accumulate. These gases mix with dust, dirt, and other debris to create a thick cloud of obfuscating mist that's both unhealthy and highly flammable. Every few years, a lightning strike ignites this gas in a giant fireball that comes and goes in an instant, too fast even to set the tar-saturated trees aflame.

This swamp is an excellent place for daring characters to set an ambush for Hegremon.

TABLE: TAR SWAMP ENCOUNTERS

d12	Encounter
1	Barkblood's spawn
2	Dripping tar
3	Forest trickster*
4	Forest wardens
5	Hodag horde*
6	Impenetrable fog
7	Restless hunters
8	Tar pit
9	Tamarnian ooze
10	Will-o'-wisps
11	Yellow mold
12	Zombies

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The following descriptions correspond to the entries on the encounter tables above. As in those tables, entries marked with an asterisk (\*) should occur only once.

**Barkblood's Spawn:** The characters stumble into the lair of 1d4-1 (minimum 1) arboreal tar trees, who are easily mistaken for standard trees within their dark and twisted grove. If the characters pass through without noticing the stealthy arboreals, the undead follow them.

## ARBOREAL TAR TREE

## CREATURE 9

RARE NE LARGE PLANT UNDEAD

**Perception** +18; darkvision

**Languages** Arboreal, Common, Necril, Sylvan

**Skills** Athletics +20, Intimidation +18, Nature +15, Stealth +18 (+22 in forests)

**Str** +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +6, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +4

**AC** 28; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +15, **Will** +18

**HP** 175, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, sleep; **Weaknesses** axe vulnerability, fire 10; **Resistances** bludgeoning 10, piercing 10

**Axe Vulnerability** An arboreal tar tree takes 10 additional damage from axes.

**Speed** 20 feet

**Melee** ♦️ thorny branch +19 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d8+11 slashing plus improved grab

**Ranged** ♦️ rock +19 (brutal, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 2d6+10 bludgeoning

**Primal Innate Spells** DC 25; **5th** *black tentacles*, *cloudkill*, *tree stride* (only between dead trees); **3rd** *earthbind*, *slow*, *wall of thorns*; **2nd** *shape wood* (at will)

**Spawn Tar Tree** (necromancy, primal) A living arboreal or animated tree slain by a tar tree's thorny branch Strike rises as a tar tree spawn after 1d4 rounds. This tar tree spawn is under the command of the tar tree that killed it. It doesn't have primal innate spells or the spawn tar tree ability and becomes clumsy 2 for as long as it's a tar tree spawn. If the creator of the tar tree spawn dies, the tar tree spawn becomes a full-fledged, autonomous tar tree; it regains its free will, gains primal innate spells and the spawn tar tree ability, and is no longer clumsy.

**Throw Rock** ♦️

**Battle Standard\*:** The torn and besmirched remains of a Mendevian battle standard rest against a blackened tree. The standard belonged to soldiers who served in the garrison of Castle Grimgorge. If the characters present the standard to undead Mendevian soldiers in the Grimgorge or the castle before engaging in combat, the undead's attitude improve by one step for 1 round and attempts to interact with them gain a +2 circumstance bonus.

**Bitter Opossum:** A single khavgodon (*Bestiary* 3 192) lairs nearby and is scavenging for food. It doesn't attack a group of characters but sees solitary individuals as a potential meal. If the characters can speak to it, the opossum can tell them where Adalemma, Calcifda, and the Azure Sphinx live, though it avoids all of them.

BURNING  
TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



## SUBSISTING IN THE FOREST

The characters can forage and hunt within the Tamarnian Tar Forest with a successful DC 24 Survival check to Subsist. A character must be at least an expert in Survival to attempt this check.

While many dangerous beasts and monstrosities dwell here, the forest is also home to elk, wolves, boars, bears, rabbits, foxes, squirrels, and other common animals. Nevertheless, the evil magic that suffuses the place touches all living things, making prey animals sickly and predators mindlessly violent. Many animals, once killed, prove to be indigestible, their meat rotten or suffused with tar. Edible plants are rare in the forest, especially in midwinter when this part of the adventure takes place, though persistent foragers might come across a few stubborn berries and edible roots.

**Calcified Remains:** The petrified corpse of a former traveler lies in the characters' path. Wild animals have consumed its flesh, and its bones have turned to coal.

**Dripping Tar:** Acidic tar drips from the boughs of the pine trees. It has the same statistics as green slime (*Gamemastery Guide* 78).

**Druid's Cave\*:** A cave entrance leads to the abandoned home of a druid who came to the forest to cure its evil and instead died. The entrance is protected with a *polymorph trap* (*Core Rulebook* 525) that transforms the target into a black squirrel. The druid's corpse lies within, his cloak pinned with an *iron medallion*.

**Famine Daemon\*:** A single meladaemon (*Bestiary* 2 59) explores Icecrown River and Abyssal Lake. The open spaces here make the daemon relatively easy to spot, but it's easily mistaken for a sick or famished hyaenodon. If it detects the characters, it attacks but flees when reduced below 75 HP.

**Forest Trickster\*:** A tikbalang (*Bestiary* 3 267) makes the forest its home and delights in causing travelers—such as the characters—to become lost. It bedevils them with *hallucinatory terrain*. If the characters see through this illusory maze, it flees.

**Forest Wardens:** The characters pass a grove of 1d4+2 arboreal reapers (*Bestiary* 3 20); these reapers spend their days hunting for arboreal tar trees to slay.

A character who succeeds at a DC 28 Perception check spots the reapers. They're unfriendly if approached, but their attitude improves by one step if the characters can direct them to potential enemies.

**Frozen Hut\*:** The players spot, in the distance, a black hemisphere resting on the ice. It's a small hut fashioned out of frozen tar, carved out of the river or lake by a now-dead traveler. Animal droppings scatter the floor, giving testament to how long it has been abandoned, but within—among the bedroll and other personal possessions—is a *reddish orange elemental gem*.

**Geyser:** A geyser of tar erupts in the distance. The characters aren't in danger, so long as they don't get closer than 30 feet. The eruption lasts for 3d6 seconds and leaves behind a pool of steaming tar.

**Graveyard Guardian\*:** The mammoth graveyard is now the domain of a dread monstrosity called the Ivory Behemoth (a fossil golem; *Bestiary* 3 116) that wanders among the skeletons ceaselessly, attacking any living thing. Killing this creature earns the good will of the Azure Sphinx (area E).

**Hibernating Bears:** A cave nearby is home to a cave bear and her three young cubs, all of whom are hibernating through the winter. The mother bear defends her home and offspring with her life, but really, she just wants to be left alone. If

the characters can talk to the bears, the mother is unfriendly while the cubs are indifferent (and curious).

**Hodag Horde\*:** A pack of eight ferocious hodags (*Bestiary* 2 145) moves tirelessly through the forest, consuming any living creatures they find. They're fast but not subtle; the characters detect them moving through the trees at a distance of 120 feet.

**Howling Winds:** In the evening, as the characters rest, unnatural winds howl through the Grimgorge. Characters trying to sleep must succeed at a DC 26 Will save or be fatigued.

**Hyaenodons:** A pack of 3d6 hyaenodons (*Bestiary* 211) notice the characters and begin to follow them, observing from a distance. Afraid of the characters' megafauna mounts, however, they don't attack.

**Impenetrable Fog:** The fog that plagues the tar swamp collects here into a thick smoke that lasts for 2 days. Creatures beyond 5 feet are hidden; Stealth checks gain a +4 circumstance bonus. The fog isn't healthy; anyone engaging in intense physical activity (including combat) must succeed at a DC 24 Fortitude



CALCIFIED REMAINS

save or be sickened 1. A creature can't reduce this sickened condition until it leaves the fog.

**Jealous Abjurer\*:** The tortured spirit of a Mendevian wizard, this haunt is detailed on page 79 of the *Gamemastery Guide*.

**Last Words\*:** Words in Hallit have been carved into the frozen tar with a hatchet and remain readable despite the passage of years; a character spots them with a successful DC 24 Perception check. They read, "Go not through the sands to the south! There, the Stone Witch—source of all that is evil here—lies! Mord wrote these words."

**Mated Pair\*:** A pair of black dracolisks (*Bestiary* 2 35) make their lair in the hills and hunt throughout the forest. Unusual for their kind, their petrified victims turn to coal. On a successful DC 10 flat check, one of them flies overhead; otherwise, they're hunting together. If they're hunting together and spot the characters, they attack; if only one spots them, the creature flies home to fetch its mate and return.

**Mendevian Ghosts:** The characters stumble across the corpses of Mendevian soldiers slain in the sack of Castle Grimgorge over a century ago. If this encounter takes place within 1 week of midwinter, the corpses rise as 1d4–1 (minimum 1) graveknights (*Bestiary* 191); otherwise, they rise from their corpses as *dread wraiths* (*Bestiary* 2 298).

**Methane Flue:** The characters wander close to a dangerous vent of natural methane gas seeping up from under the ground. This would be an excellent spot for Hegremon to ambush the characters.

## METHANE FLUE HAZARD 8

### ENVIRONMENTAL

**Stealth** DC 28 (expert) to hear hissing gas

**Description** Invisible but highly flammable natural gas has built up beneath the ground, where geological pressure can ignite it.

**Disable** Survival DC 28 to dig around the vent in a way that diffuses the fumes

**Flame Spurt** **Trigger** A creature moves within 5 feet of the flue; **Effect** A fiery geyser of flaming gas explodes from the ground. Creatures within 5 feet of the flue take 4d10 fire damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save); creatures that fail the save also take 4d10 persistent fire damage.

**Mound of Skulls:** An enormous mound of mammoth skulls is easily mistaken for a small hill. A character

must succeed at a DC 28 Survival check to detect the mound for what it is; otherwise, they risk toppling it unless they succeed at a DC 25 Reflex save. The mound is, in fact, a feral skull swarm (*Bestiary* 3 244); it awakens and attacks if disturbed.

**Restless Hunters:** 1d4–1 (minimum 1) baykoks (*Bestiary* 3 29), the undead remains of Mammoth Lord hunters, glide silently through the trees. In their tormented rage, they attack anyone in sight.

**Stone Witch:** Calcifda (area D) occasionally wanders away from Barkblood's corpse, across the tar sands. She's alone, but will-o'-wisps, witchfires, and tar trees are never far away. If the characters attack, she flees; otherwise, she might ask them their names and purpose, eventually inviting them to join her at the center of the tar sands (where she can destroy them with the help of her allies).

**Tamarnian Ooze:** A tar ooze (page 82) rolls through the forest, accompanied by 1d2 tar zombie predators (page 84). If the characters detect it and remain beyond the range of its blindsight (60 feet), they can avoid it, but if it senses them, it moves to attack.

**Tar Pit:** The characters stray perilously close to a deadly tar pit.

## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

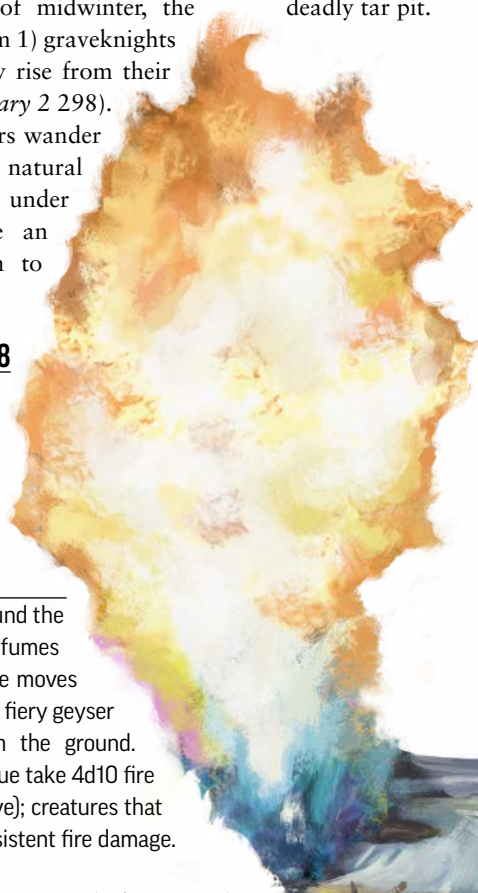
Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis of  
the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



METHANE FLUE



## TAR PIT

## HAZARD 9

COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL

**Stealth** DC 30 (expert)

**Description** A 15-foot-wide patch of tar covered with dirt and leaves attempts to capture creatures that step onto it.

**Disable** Survival DC 25 (expert) to disturb the surface and reveal the tar pit

**Capture** **Trigger** A Huge or smaller creature walks onto the tar pit; **Effect** The triggering creature sinks into the tar pit up to its waist. The tar pit rolls initiative if it hasn't already.

**Routine** (1 action) On its initiative, the tar pit pulls down each creature within it, thick tar adhering to the creature's body. A creature that was submerged up to its waist becomes submerged up to its neck, and a creature that was submerged up to its neck is pulled under and must hold its breath to avoid suffocation.

A creature in the tar pit can attempt a DC 33 Athletics check to Climb to either raise itself by one step (if it's submerged to its neck or full submerged) or to move 5 feet if it's submerged only up to its waist. On a critical failure, the creature is pulled down one step. Other creatures can Aid the creature, typically by using a rope or similar aid or by attempting to pull the creature out with their own DC 33 Athletics check, with the same results as if the creature attempted the check. In addition to the usual results, a character adjacent to the tar pit who critically fails while Aiding moves into the tar pit. A creature that Climbs out of the tar pit escapes the hazard and lands prone in an adjacent space.

**Reset** Though the hazard still captures anyone who touches it, the surface doesn't become hidden again until it settles, which takes 24 hours.

**Tar Slide:** A falling tree proves the last straw for a large field of tarry soil that begins to slide downhill, taking every rock and tree in its path with it. This is an avalanche (*Core Rulebook* 518) that inflicts 5d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save).

**Thunderbird\*:** A thunderbird (*Bestiary* 2 259) roosts in the Blackrock Peaks, competing with the nearby dracolisks (see Mated Pair on page 33) for hunting rights. If the characters kill one or both dracolisks, the thunderbird becomes friendly toward the party; otherwise, it's indifferent. The thunderbird is on good terms with Adalemma, avoids Calcifda, and is indifferent to the Azure Sphinx but knows where all three individuals reside. Extremely proud, this regal creature refuses to provide transportation to the party, even if helpful.

**Toxic Stream:** A rivulet of brackish water descends from the heights. If drunk, it has the effects of lich dust (*Core Rulebook* 552).

**Vultures:** A single vulture spots the characters and begins to follow them, high above. Soon, 2d4

of its fellows join it, slowly circling and waiting for the characters to die. They continue to follow the characters until they leave the geyser field, die, or kill something, at which point the vultures descend to feast on the corpse.

**Will-o'-wisps:** 1d4–1 (minimum 1) will-o'-wisps (*Bestiary* 333) detect the characters. Too weak to attack directly, the creatures instead try to lure the characters to their doom. Reduce the flat check DC for the next random encounter by 3; if a hazard or combat encounter takes place, the wisps take the opportunity to attack.

**Witchfires:** The tar sands surrounding Barkblood's corpse and Calcifda's lair are home to many evil spirits, but the most dangerous are witchfires (*Bestiary* 2 293). 1d4–1 (minimum 1) of these spirits pursue the characters, having been alerted to their presence by will-o'-wisp spies. They follow the characters and try to lure one or two of them away. When the characters rest, one of the spirits flies to Calcifda to warn her of them.

**Yellow Mold:** This hazard (*Core Rulebook* 524) can grow only in the tar swamp, where the thick fog protects it from the rays of the sun.

**Zombies:** 1d4+1 tar zombie snatchers (page 84) wander nearby. Although they're probably the animated corpses of local animals, they might include one or more of Ivarsa's scouts. Regardless, if they detect the characters, they attack until destroyed.

**Zombie Mammoths:** 1d4–1 (minimum 1) tar zombie mammoths (page 85) shamble through the graveyard, destroying anything that moves.

## SET ENCOUNTERS

The following encounters take place in the corresponding hexes shown on the map on page 28.

### A. FOREST ENTRANCE

### SEVERE 9

As soon as the characters enter the forest and begin exploring, they encounter its distinctive threat.

Dark pine trees rise into the sky, bare of the sharp black needles that cover the forest floor. The ground here is soft and pliant, moist with the black, oily substance that gives the Tamarnian Tar Forest its name. A dark gray haze blankets the forest.

In the middle distance, humanoid shapes stagger through the fog—hideous corpses, their bones held together with globs of tar. A huge, roiling mass of oily, oozing tar shepherds these undead straight ahead.

**Creatures:** This tar ooze was responsible for the deaths of several of Ivarsa's followers, who now follow it as zombies. As the characters engage the zombies in melee,

describe their ruined clothes and possessions as relics of Mammoth Lord culture: a tattered cloak of mammoth fur, a shield bearing the symbol of the Burning Mammoths, a shattered axe, and so on. More can be learned from these corpses once the fight is over.

### TAR OOZE

### CREATURE 10

Page 82

**Initiative** Perception +18

### TAR ZOMBIE PREDATORS (3)

### CREATURE 7

Page 84

**Initiative** Perception +15

As the characters battle the ooze and zombies, they attract the attention of a tiny, hummingbird-like creature with brilliant green, white and red plumage. This is Everbright, a friend and companion to Adalemma, a powerful nymph that dwells far to the northeast (area C).

### EVERBRIGHT

### CREATURE 11

Harmona (*Pathfinder Bestiary 3* 132)

**Initiative** Perception +24

Everbright doesn't enter combat unless the ooze incapacitates one or more of the characters and they seem to require help. In that case, the harmona uses her sonic powers to stun or push the ooze away from endangered characters while urging them to flee. Eventually, after the battle ends or the characters have fled through the forest, Everbright comes closer and introduces herself.

"The Tamarnian forest is home to many dangers, and the tar creatures are but one of them. But you seem valiant, and more importantly, my mistress has told me to be alert for a source of great magic that comes this way, like a fire in the night. I think this must be you! What are your names, and where have you come from?"

Everbright is curious, excited, and easily distracted. She speaks quickly and answers whatever questions the characters might have, such as the ones below.

**Who are you?** "I have many names, but my mistress calls me Everbright, for I remind her the sun is never far away, even in the darkest of winters."

**Who is your mistress?** "Adalemma the Solstice Queen. She cares for this land, but the winter solstice is near, and her powers are at their lowest ebb. I will soon fly home to her and tell her all about you."

**What are the other dangers of the forest?** "Undead stalk this land, and not just people like you, but undead trees, and much worse beside. But above all is the Stone Witch. She dwells to the south, in the heart of the tar sands. She isn't the source of the evil that permeates the trees—that wickedness is much older than she—but she guides it and gives it purpose, and she is my mistress's foe."

**Have you seen people like us going through here recently?** "Yes! There was a woman clad in white fur, and she rode a terrible white worm that frightened me. Many followed her and they drew the attention of the evils in the forest. I don't know where they are now, but they went east. My mistress would know!"

**Have you ever heard of Metuak?** "I don't know that name. But Adalemma knows every pine needle in these woods. If anyone can help you, it's she!"

When the characters have satisfied their curiosity, Everbright prepares to leave. Before she does, she offers some final advice for the Broken Tusks.

"Seek the home of my mistress, Adalemma! She dwells far from here, and the journey isn't easy for those who must walk on the ground. Travel east until you reach the river and follow it to Abyssal Lake. East, between the mountains and the lowland swamps, you will find a trail. That trail leads north to my mistress! She knows all that has transpired



### BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox





**IVARSA'S CAMP**  
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

**BARKBLOOD'S CORPSE**

**MAMMOTH SKULL MOUNT**

here for many centuries, and she will have much to say to you, if you indeed have the fire she cautioned me about. But hurry! The winter solstice approaches, and each day the Stone Witch grows stronger!"

With that said, the harmona flies away, rocketing quickly out of sight.

**Burning Mammoth Remains:** A character who inspects the tar zombie corpses—which were plainly Burning Mammoths in life—and succeeds at a DC 24 Medicine check determines that the warriors were killed by the ooze only a few days ago.

**B. IVARSA'S CAMP** **MODERATE 9**

Ivarsa sent scouts through this forest weeks ago and knows the way east to the Grimgorge. With this knowledge and her own mastery of teleportation magic, she has a substantial lead on the characters. These scouts took advantage of a permanent structure erected on the shore of Abyssal Lake: a large hut made of mammoth skulls and covered in animal hide. This hut is made up the bones of more than 60 different mammoths; its creators are unknown, lost to time.

The mammoth-bone hut became a base camp for the exploration of the forest by Ivarsa's scouts, who accompanied her to Castle Grimgorge.

Characters who Reconnoiter this hex automatically discover the camp. Otherwise, characters crossing the lake or along its southern shore can spot the camp by succeeding at a DC 26 Perception check.

On the shore of the frozen lake of tar stands an oblong structure thirty feet wide, covered in brown mammoth hide. Mammoth skulls and other bones make up the structure of the hut, which has a single entrance with no door.

A character who succeeds at a DC 23 Survival check recognizes this type of structure and can tell it has been occupied within the last month. In some parts of northern Avistan, mammoth followings build "mammoth huts" to store food and provide emergency shelter. This hut obviously predates the corruption of the tar forest since no Mammoth Lord in their right mind would linger in these cursed woods long enough to construct a mammoth hut. A character who critically succeeds at the Survival check determines



the hut wasn't used just once in the past month, but twice—the first time by a small group of humans, the second time by a single giant humanoid who left discernible tracks. The next time the characters fight Hegremon, they each receive a +2 circumstance bonus to their initiative rolls.

Ivarsa and her commandos were the first visitors to the camp in the last month; they spent the night then left, and their tracks are too old to follow. Hegremon was the camp's most recent visitor, and his tracks are slightly less obscured.

Since the hut has no door, the characters can see inside; it appears abandoned, but a campfire sits near the door and cast-off supplies and the bones of past meals suggest someone stayed here recently. The back of the hut is blocked off and covered with a dusting of ice and snow.

Use the map on page 36 for this encounter.

**Hazard:** Hegremon has set a deadly trap just for the characters, combining alchemical and magical reagents created by his minions. The result: a tyrannosaurus encased entirely in alchemical ice. At the entrance of the hut lies an explosive magical trap concealed with snow that, when triggered, creates a sonic shockwave loud enough to destroy the tyrannosaurus's icy cage.

## SHATTERING RUNE

## HAZARD 9

EVOCATION MAGICAL SONIC TRAP

Stealth DC 33 (master)

**Description** A magical rune is inscribed on the tarry earth at the entrance to the hut, buried beneath snow, with an invisible sensor that detects creatures within a 10-foot-radius sphere.

**Disable** Thievery DC 30 (master) to erase the rune without triggering the sensor or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 28) to dispel the rune

**Shattering Shockwave** ⤴ (arcane, evocation, sonic)

**Trigger** A small or larger creature comes within 10 feet of the rune; **Effect** The rune unleashes a deafening peal of thunder that deals 10d8 sonic damage in a 20-foot burst (DC 30 basic Reflex save).

**Creature:** The tyrannosaurus is frozen in a huge block of ice inside the hut; the ice is opaque and obscured by snow, hiding the creature. If the *shattering rune* hazard goes off, it breaks the ice confining the tyrannosaurus, which immediately attacks the characters in a panicked rage. If the characters spot the trap and successfully disarm it, they can enter the hut without freeing the frozen tyrannosaurus.

If the characters brush the snow off, they spot the tyrannosaurus, frozen and helpless in the ice. A character who succeeds at a DC 26 Crafting check

identifies the prison as an alchemical substance designed to shatter when exposed to a loud, high-pitched noise. They can drag the tyrannosaurus out of the hut and free it or leave it imprisoned, as they wish. If they remove it from the hut and free it, the tyrannosaurus runs off.

Alternatively, if the characters fail to realize the tyrannosaurus is imprisoned in the back of the hut and use the campfire—perhaps to rest overnight—the warmth of the fire thaws the ice in the dead of night while most of the characters are sleeping!

## TYRANNOSAURUS

## CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 101

**Initiative** Perception +19

**Viewpoint:** From this hilltop campsite, the characters can see the nearby cliffs to the south and, atop those cliffs, a tall step pyramid. No easy way to access the pyramid is visible from here, though the characters can find wide stairs on the cliffs to the southeast. If one or more of the characters flies to the pyramid, they meet the Azure Sphinx (area E).

**Treasure:** Amid the cast-off belongings left behind by Ivarsa's commandos are two items that survive even the *shattering rune*. The first is a moderate elixir of life, and the second is a map drawn with charcoal on deerskin. The map shows many of the landmarks of the tar forest, including Barkblood's corpse (area D), the step pyramid (area E), and the Grimgorge. Castle Grimgorge (area G; not shown on the hex map, but in the direction of the Grimgorge) is marked with an X, as Ivarsa's minions were bound for that location when they left this camp.

## C. HENGE OF THE SOLSTICE QUEEN

If the characters arrived at this hex by following the directions given to them by Everbright, they don't need to Reconnoiter to come across the hora queen's domain. Regardless, travel within this hex is always safe; no random encounters occur here. When the characters arrive, read or paraphrase the following.

Visible after emerging from the trees, the mountains—tall, dark, and imposing—loom ten miles in the distance. Between the forest line and the rocky range beyond rises a rounded hill covered in lush green grass, and atop that hill stands a circle of pale gray, monolithic stones. The sun shines brightly over the mountainside.

An impressive ring of stone obelisks, forming a simple astronomical observatory, crown this hill. The henge includes an east-facing trilithon aligned with the rising

## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



sun and a central block marked by over 50 drilled holes, each no bigger than a child's finger. Every morning, when the sun shines through the front trilithon, it illuminates one of these holes, slowly moving in a figure-8 pattern across the stone. The topmost and bottommost holes denote the summer and winter solstices. Smaller stones placed around the hill align with other astronomical events, such as planetary motions or key constellations. Adalemma is always in her stone circle at dawn, and she's often there at other times as well, communing with animal visitors. Otherwise, she wanders up to a half-day away from her henge, speaking with plants, animals, and even the stones themselves.

**Creatures:** When the characters arrive, Adalemma is within the henge, greeting animal visitors and listening

to whatever news they might bring. Everbright, the harmona the characters met in area A, flits nearby. Adalemma's bond with the forest alerted her to the presence of an artifact the moment the characters brought the *Primordial Flame* within her domain, and she has kept up on their activities with the help of animal spies. Her initial attitude toward the characters is friendly unless they've attacked or destroyed good creatures, in which case she's unfriendly. If they've already defeated Calcifda, she's helpful.

## ADALEMMA

## CREATURE 13

Summer hora queen (page 81)

**Initiative** Perception +26

**Rituals** DC 28; *awaken animal, call spirit, commune with nature, heroes' feast, plant growth*

**Summer Bound** Adalemma is sickened 1 due to the upcoming winter solstice.

Adalemma welcomes the party to her home and—presuming the characters haven't yet confronted Calcifda—tells them of her current problem.

"For long ages of the world have I dwelled here, sustaining the beasts, trees, and everyone who makes the forest their home through winter, when cold and famine would otherwise kill so many.

"This land is blighted by a terrible curse, brought by a wounded arboreal long ago. Recently, an ancient cyclopean being called the Calcifda, the Stone Witch, has given the curse agency. I am too weak to confront her, especially so near midwinter, but she cannot be allowed to pursue her wicked ends unopposed. If you will confront and destroy her, I will help you in your quest."

When Adalemma answers questions, she speaks with a lofty formality that seems a relic of a bygone age. She knows who Metuak is and where he went, but she won't reveal anything about him until the characters help her dispose of Calcifda. She gives other info freely, including answers to questions such as those below.

**What curse afflicts this forest?** "The great arboreal Barkblood was a mighty defender of the forests, but the death of so many of his friends and fellow trees drove him to grief, then rage. He came north to this forest to die, but the corruption in his soul took a physical shape, seeping from his body as the black tar now buried deep within this land. If you face Calcifda, you will see all this for yourself, for she has made her lair in Barkblood's shadow."



### FROZEN TYRANNOSAURUS



**Where is Calcifda?** “If you followed the river east, you saw a vast and sandy wasteland stretching south and west, toward the cliffs. In the center of that land rests the towering stone corpse of Barkblood himself, where the Stone Witch lives.”

**What else can you tell us about her?** “Many are her allies. The tar trees, walking corpses of proud arboreals animated by cursed tar, obey her. The wasteland where she lives is home to cunning will-o’-wisp and the spirits of other witches, long since dead. Yours is a harrowing journey, if you take it, but the forest cries out for justice.”

**Have you ever heard of Metuak?** “I know the one you speak of. A century ago, he fled here from the camp you call Hillcross. If you destroy Calcifda and return this land to balance, I will tell you where he is, and more beside.”

**How about Ivarsa? Is she here?** “I know of her, for she has brought shame and ruin to the Burning Mammoth, a following once honorable, wise, and strong. She came here, riding a strange creature—a frost worm with the mind of a man—and leading many of her minions. She seeks Metuak, I think, for she has followed in his wake.”

**A frost worm with the mind of a man?** “The creature Ivarsa rides is no mere beast. Its body is that of a monstrous frost worm, but its spirit is of a mortal man. I did not recognize him, but perhaps you will.”

If the characters agree to Adalemma’s request to destroy Calcifda, she invites them to rest in her home, a grotto located in a cave at the hill’s base. The interior of the cave is lit as if by sunlight, though there’s no window to the outside. A pool of warm water, fed by a natural spring, fills a central depression between terraces carpeted in grass and decorated with summer flowers. There are beds of soft loam and stone jars and bowls nearly overflowing with fresh berries, nuts, and honey. The characters can stay here as long as they like and return whenever they wish, so long as Adalemma remains friendly or helpful to them.

The night before the characters depart, Adalemma casts the ritual *heroes’ feast*. The servers are magical animals, fey, and plants bearing lily-pad plates. They serve fresh berries on beds of cream and loaves of bread, as light as clouds and drizzled with honey; the main course are melons which, when cut open, provide sweet and filling fruit.

**Treasure:** Before the characters leave again, presuming she remains friendly or helpful, Adalemma gifts them an *explorer’s yurt*. “To make your journey easier,” she offers by way of explanation.

**Completing the Quest:** If the characters return to Adalemma after defeating Calcifda, she rewards them with a *greater staff of fire* and again invites them to be guests in her home. She also offers to teach any ritual of 5th level or below to any characters who can be primary casters for them.



## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adalemma's  
Yurt



It takes Adalemma 1 day to teach a single ritual to up to 6 people at a time.

That evening, as the characters enjoy another *heroes' feast*, she tells them all she knows about Metuak and Ivarsa. Specifically, she relays the following key details:

- Metuak sought help from Castle Grimgorge, a Mendevian fortress on the southeast edge of the forest, but the garrison instead imprisoned him. The demonic spirit bound to him summoned demons that slaughtered the entire garrison, but Adalemma was able to bind Metuak to his prison chamber beneath the castle. He still lives within.
- The castle is haunted by the ghosts of the Mendevian garrison. At midwinter, those ghosts take on physical form.
- Adalemma's spell binding Metuak to his prison is weakest at midwinter. She doesn't think he can escape, but he might be able to call for help—or others might be able to enter his prison.
- Metuak isn't one person, but two: a mortal man and Xeleria, the demon. So long as either lives, neither can die. To defeat them, both must be slain at the same time. Doing so is the only way the curse can be lifted.

## D. BARKBLOOD'S CORPSE

## SEVERE 9

To win Adalemma's gratitude and learn Metuak's fate, the characters must destroy Calcifda the Stone Witch, and that means a journey to her lair within the tar sands. When the characters enter the hex, they can spot Calcifda's lair from miles off, as the tar sands are flat in all directions and Calcifda lives beneath the towering corpse of Barkblood, a gargantuan arboreal. They don't need to Reconnoiter the hex to find her.

A titanic, petrified tree spreads its black and calcified limbs in all directions over the tar sands. Its body is made entirely of coal, and vultures nest in its branches. At the base of the tree stands a small hut, little more than a pile of stones.

Use the map on page 36 for this encounter. The circle of stones is Calcifda's hut. If any will-o'-wisps, tar trees, or witchfires have encountered the party and survived, those creatures have told Calcifda about the characters. In this case, she's prepared to meet them.

**Creatures:** Calcifda resides within her hut during the day, using *read omens* and *augury* to guess future events. She emerges at night to communicate with the evil creatures of the tar sands, holding aloft her *aeon stone* to see. Beside the Stone Witch herself, two arboreal tar trees guard Calcifda's home; even if the characters have encountered and defeated her, they remain here.

## ARBOREAL TAR TREES (2)

## CREATURE 9

Page 31

**Initiative** Perception +18

## CALCIFDA

## CREATURE 10

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM EARTH FEY

Female stygira tar witch (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 255)

**Perception** +21; **gemsight**

**Languages** Aklo, Cyclops, Hallit, Jotun, Sylvan, Terran

**Skills** Athletics +19, Gem Lore +21, Nature +19, Occultism +21

**Str** +5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** +7, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +3

**Items** *pearlescent pyramid aeon stone*, opal worth 25 gp

**Gemsight** As long as Calcifda holds a gemstone, she can see through the gem with darkvision and the effects of *true seeing*. When she uses her *pearlescent pyramid aeon stone* for this ability, she also knows the wounded and dying value of every creature she sees. Calcifda is blind when she isn't holding a gem in her hand.

**AC** 31; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +17, **Will** +23; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

**HP** 140; **Immunities** paralyzed, petrified, visual; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5; **Resistances** physical 10 (except adamantine)

**Light Sickness** Calcifda is sickened 1 in bright light.

**Speed** 25 feet, burrow 25 feet; earth glide

**Melee** ♦ claw +22 (agile), **Damage** 3d6+11 slashing plus coal curse

**Occult Innate Spells** DC 29; **5th** *incendiary fog* (page 77), *summon giant* (cyclops), *wall of stone*; **4th** *clairvoyance*, *read omens*, *shape stone*; **3rd** *clairaudience*, *earthbind*; **2nd** *augury*, *undetected alignment*; **Cantrips** (5th) *know direction*, *read aura*

**Coal Curse** (curse, primal, transmutation) Wounds dealt by Calcifda's claws stiffen flesh and turn the blood that runs from them into tar. Each time a creature is damaged by Calcifda's claw Strike, it must succeed at a DC 29 Fortitude save or become permanently slowed 1 (slowed 2 on a critical failure) as its flesh stiffens like stone. If a creature is reduced to 0 Hit Points from Calcifda's claw Strike and fails the saving throw against coal curse, it's petrified and turned to coal. A creature that spends 8 hours in direct sunlight can attempt a new saving throw to remove the effects of coal curse, even if it has been petrified.

**Earth Glide** Calcifda can Burrow through any earthen matter, including rock. When she does so, she moves at her full burrow Speed, leaving no tunnels or signs of her passing.

**Gem Gaze** ♦ (emotion, fear, mental, primal) Calcifda holds aloft a gem and gazes into the mind of a creature within 30 feet, infusing the creature's thoughts with visions of their body slowly turning to coal. The creature must succeed at a DC 29 Will save or become frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure).

**Lashing Stone** ◆ (concentrate) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Calcifda makes a claw Strike that originates from any stony or tarry surface within 60 feet. A creature that fails its Fortitude save against coal curse from this Strike increases its slowed value by 1 (slowed 2 on a failed save, slowed 3 on a critical failure).

**Steady Spellcasting** If a reaction would disrupt Calcifda's spellcasting action, she attempts a DC 15 flat check. On a success, the action isn't disrupted.

Calcifda intends to murder any intruders, but that doesn't stop her from engaging in conversation with them first, especially if she thinks she can learn something useful. During the day, she mitigates her light sickness by remaining in the shadow of Barkblood. When she bores of conversation, or when she expects the characters to attack, she casts *wall of stone* to isolate some of the characters while leaving others open to attack by her tar trees and, if she has time to summon one, a cyclops.

**Treasure:** Once the characters defeat Calcifda, they can investigate her hut. It's a dry and dirty hovel with a small well of tar in the center, a steel chain dipping into its depths. If the characters pull this chain up, an iron chest is attached to the end. Within the chest is Calcifda's hoard of magical secrets: scrolls of *black tentacles*, *illusory scene*, *incendiary fog* (page 77), *shadow walk*, and *transmute rock to mud*.

The characters might use the *scroll of shadow walk* to return to Adalemma's henge; see Shadow Walking on page 44 for guidance on shadow travel.

**Viewpoint:** From Barkblood's Corpse, the party can see cliffs some 20 miles to the southwest. Colossal stone steps have been carved into the cliffside, leading up to a step pyramid. This is the lair of the Azure Sphinx (area E); if the characters turn away from it and return north without exploring the cliffs, the sphinx flies to meet them, as he needs their help; see The Pyramid on the Cliffs, below, for more details.

### E. THE PYRAMID ON THE CLIFFS

Massive stone steps have been carved into the cliffside, facing Barkblood's corpse in the middle of the tar sands—they wind back and forth up the cliff and are clearly visible from miles away. The characters can use these stairs to investigate the pyramid. However, if

they don't and leave either of these sites heading away from the pyramid, the Azure Sphinx flies out to meet them; use the information provided below to roleplay that encounter, which differs from the events described here, primarily in location.

Characters don't need to Reconnoiter the hex to find the sphinx's pyramid; the massive structure rises boldly between the cliffside to the north and the mammoth graveyard to the south, surrounded by a hard and flat plain.

**Creature:** Centuries ago, a wandering sphinx explored to the southern edge of the Tamarnian Tar Forest, where he discovered a mammoth graveyard—an ancient and legendary site of primal magic where



## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood


Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox





mammoths who have reached the end of their lives come to die. As the sphinx watched, an elderly bull mammoth made his way to the center of the graveyard. Before he died, the sphinx met with him, learning his story and all the things he had seen and experienced in his long life. When the mammoth finally perished, the sphinx realized he wanted to stay, meeting every such mammoth as it came and learning its secrets. In return, the sphinx decided to protect the site.

The sphinx remains here still, and because of his unusual hue, he's called the Azure Sphinx; he keeps his real name a secret. The Azure Sphinx constructed a step pyramid on the edge of the southern cliffs overlooking the forest; this pyramid is visible from both Ivarsa's camp and Calcifda's lair in the shadow of Barkblood's corpse. The mammoth graveyard fills a roughly triangular region south of the pyramid.

But the Azure Sphinx has a problem. The graveyard is a natural sink for necromantic power, making undead a constant nuisance. Ordinarily, the mammoth skeletons and other things which animate within the graveyard are easy prey for the Azure Sphinx, but the latest undead is too powerful for him to destroy. For this task, he needs the help of the characters.

Fortunately for the sphinx, he has watched the forest for some time; he knows much of what transpires, and he has information valuable to the characters. If they don't travel to Adalemma's henge, or even if they simply choose to investigate the pyramid once they spot it, the Azure Sphinx can provide them with Metuak's location at Castle Grimgorge and useful intelligence on Ivarsa and her minions. From his vantage atop the cliffs, the Azure Sphinx can see the characters as they arrive at Ivarsa's camp or Barkblood's corpse.

As the characters approach the pyramid, read or paraphrase the following aloud to set the scene.

---

A pyramid of massive gray stone blocks rises two hundred feet into the sky. Four sets of steps, each wide and deep enough for a mammoth to walk, lead up to its summit, where a winged figure perches. With a spread of his wings, the creature launches himself into the air and slowly circles, revealing his magnificent form with the body of a lion and the wings of a giant bird. As the master of this pyramid descends, sunlight reveals the strange, deep blue color of his fur and feathers. He lands on the lowest step of the pyramid and surveys everything before him.

"I am the Azure Sphinx," he says in a voice that's half lion growl and half aloof philosopher. "And I know you are

---

of the Broken Tusk, who once were Burning Mammoths. Other Burning Mammoths have come this way, both recently and long ago. You have questions. The answers are mine. I will reveal these answers to you... but first I wish to reveal something else to you, a problem you are perhaps fated to resolve, a riddle only you can answer."

---

The Azure Sphinx begins with an attitude of indifferent toward the characters, but he responds well to flattery and gifts, especially gifts of food; such offers earn a +2 circumstance modifier to Deception or Diplomacy checks attempting to change his attitude. The sphinx has no interest in fighting the characters; if they attack, he becomes hostile, flies away, and ceases all attempts to communicate with them.

Unless the characters make the sphinx hostile, he tells them about the mammoth graveyard.

---

"South of here lies a place of special interest to you and your following: a legendary place where elder mammoths, some a century old, come to die on their own terms, surrounded by the bones of their ancestors. The mammoth graveyard is a place of many secrets and mysteries, for the beasts that come here have seen things no one else has, and I have met them and heard their tales for many satisfying and intriguing years.

"But a graveyard, even one so fascinating, is a graveyard still, and necromantic power gathers there among the bones. I routinely destroy the occasional walking corpse that arises, as part of my self-appointed stewardship, but a menace has arisen there that is beyond my power: a golem made of fossilized bones. I do not know how such a thing came to exist within the graveyard; this is yet another riddle without an answer.

"You are Broken Tusks. All that was honorable among the Burning Mammoths resides in you. How many of the beasts that you have ridden over the years have come here, when their time with you was done, to die and be at peace? How many of their ancestors lie here still? This place should be as sacred to you as it is to me, albeit for different reasons. Destroy the undead monstrosity that lurks at the graveyard's heart and I will share with you the answers you seek."

---

The Azure Sphinx's request is simple, and he's truthful, if not always straightforward. If the characters destroy the Ivory Behemoth within the mammoth graveyard (area F), the sphinx tells them what they need to know about Metuak and Ivarsa. If prompted, he'll also agree to give the characters additional rewards, "treasures I have stowed away, and which might be of use to you," but he doesn't elaborate.

The sphinx's pyramid is a safe place, and the characters can rest here, but the Azure Sphinx doesn't invite them to do so, and he has few comforts to share besides. He sees their involvement in his problem as transactional, and the sooner the transaction is complete, the better. He has no map of the mammoth graveyard but tells them the Ivory Behemoth wanders randomly near the center, which is distinguished by the largest mammoth skull.

### THE AZURE SPHINX CREATURE 8

Male sphinx (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 305)

**Primal Prepared Spells** DC 27; **6th** *stone to flesh*; **3rd** *far sight* (page 76);

**2nd** *speak with animals*

If the characters return here after destroying the Ivory Behemoth, the Azure Sphinx answers their questions as he's able, such as the ones below.

**Where is Metuak?** "The one called Metuak fled through the forest to Castle Grimgorge, a Mendevian fortress. Ensnared by the spells of the Solstice Queen, he remains there still, trapped in an underground chamber and sustained by the diabolical power with which he was cursed by your Burning Mammoth ancestors."

**Where's Castle Grimgorge?** "You will see the gorge when you leave the cliffs, heading east. Follow it in and beware of Mendevian ghosts. Their power grows as midwinter nears."

**What about Ivarsa?** "Ivarsa's scouts mapped this place well, and she passed through shortly before you did, bound for Castle Grimgorge. Among her followers is Jesseri the Hailstorm, a citizen of Hillcross. Ivarsa has tormented and broken her, and it was from her that she learned Metuak's location, but I believe she can yet be rescued, if you can liberate her from her captors."

**What do you know about Adalemma?** "The Solstice Queen rules the forest and sustains it through the winter when the sun is weakest. I have never met her, but I respect her power. If she gives you her word, she will keep it."

**What about Calcifda the Stone Witch?** "The Stone Witch came not long ago, and she lives at the base of Barkblood's corpse, in the tar sands. She has influence over many evil creatures. I would not trust her."



THE AZURE SPHINX

If the party tells the Azure Sphinx about the necromancer at the heart of the mammoth graveyard, he's shocked at his own lack of information and grateful to the characters for answering this riddle.

He can cast *stone to flesh* to restore anyone petrified by the Ivory Behemoth.

**Rewards:** If the characters return to the Azure Sphinx after destroying the Ivory Behemoth, he gives them a 4th-level *wand of heal* and a *scroll of far sight* (page 76).

### F. MAMMOTH SKULL MOUNT SEVERE 9

The characters have little reason to explore the mammoth graveyard beyond the quest issued by the Azure Sphinx, but if they do enter any of the three hexes, use the mammoth graveyard terrain description and random encounter table on page 30. The Ivory Behemoth they seek appears on the table, and they might encounter and destroy it

before reaching the area at the center of the graveyard. Successfully Reconnoitering any hex in the graveyard finds the center of the graveyard—when the characters go there, read or paraphrase the following aloud.

The ground here is dry and gray, and the skies above are dark and foreboding. The skeletal remains of long-dead mammoths are no new sight here, but in the center are the largest such bones ever seen. Ribs taller than towering trees reach up on two sides to frame a massive space, at one end of which rests a skull bigger than a house. Two enormous tusks, each containing more ivory than found in a herd of ordinary mammoths, curl out and away toward the sun.

A light flickers within the skull, gleaming through what was once the mammoth's eyes.

Geboset, a necromancer from New Thassilon, followed clues and portents that led him to this mammoth graveyard. He made his home here and created the Ivory Behemoth, but when it came to life, he lost control of it, and the golem slew him. When the characters investigate the skull, read or paraphrase the following aloud.

A corpse lies in the center of the empty skull, its bones still fresh enough to attract a pair of stubborn and curious ravens. The dead's belongings litter the area; a simple bedroll lies open at the back of the skull, and the stumps

## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



of candles litter the ground in a scattered circle. Mammoth bones of various sorts lie around the edges of the skull, stacked or piled.

A character who succeeds at a DC 28 Arcana check identifies the candles and bones as reagents for a ritual to animate a golem—powerful constructs that are notoriously difficult to control. A character who succeeds at a DC 23 Medicine check can tell that the corpse was a human male whose head was crushed with overwhelming strength.

**Creature:** If the characters haven't yet fought the Ivory Behemoth, the dread monster arrives at the mammoth skull mount about 10 minutes after the characters discover Geboset's corpse. It mindlessly attacks any living thing it sees. Use the map on page 36 for this encounter.

## THE IVORY BEHEMOTH

CREATURE 12

Fossil golem (*Pathfinder Bestiary 3* 116)

**Initiative** Perception +20

**Treasure:** A *collar of empathy*, which Geboset salvaged from a mammoth corpse, lies among his personal belongings.

## SHADOW WALKING

Arcane and occult spellcasters gain access to the spell *shadow walk* at 9th level, and a scroll of this spell is among Calcifda's treasures (page 41). The spell enables rapid travel over long distances, though it's limited to up to 10 willing creatures at a time. The characters might make quick work of this chapter by using *shadow walk* to bypass large swaths of the Tamarnian Tar Forest. For example, a group tasked by Adalemma with destroying the Stone Witch could save many days by using *shadow walk* to reach the Abyssal Lake and then setting out across the tar sands from there. When the task is complete, they could then *shadow walk* back to the cave.

A party that uses *shadow walk* to traverse the Tamarnian Tar Forest will avoid most of the cursed region's encounters, both for good and for ill.

They're unlikely to meet the sphinx guarding the mammoth graveyard or be tasked with cleansing it, and Hegremon can't follow them into the Shadow Plane. However, suddenly appearing in unfamiliar terrain is a dangerous proposition; any time the characters emerge onto the Material Plane and face a random combat encounter in the hex, they take a -2 circumstance penalty to their initiative roll, utterly taken by surprise. Likewise, the Shadow Plane has its own dangers.

Each time the characters take a jaunt through the Shadow Plane, generate a random encounter for the party by rolling a d12 and referring to the table below. At your discretion, the party might encounter the same threat more than once, or they might encounter other threats of your own design.

## TABLE: SHADOW PLANE ENCOUNTERS

d12	Encounter
1	A spectral light shines in the east. Shadows and other undead fly silently through the sky toward this light. They ignore the characters.
2	The malevolent magic of the Shadow Plane intensifies weather conditions throughout the forest. The characters experience extreme cold, taking 2d6 cold damage every 10 minutes they spend in the Shadow Plane (rounding up).



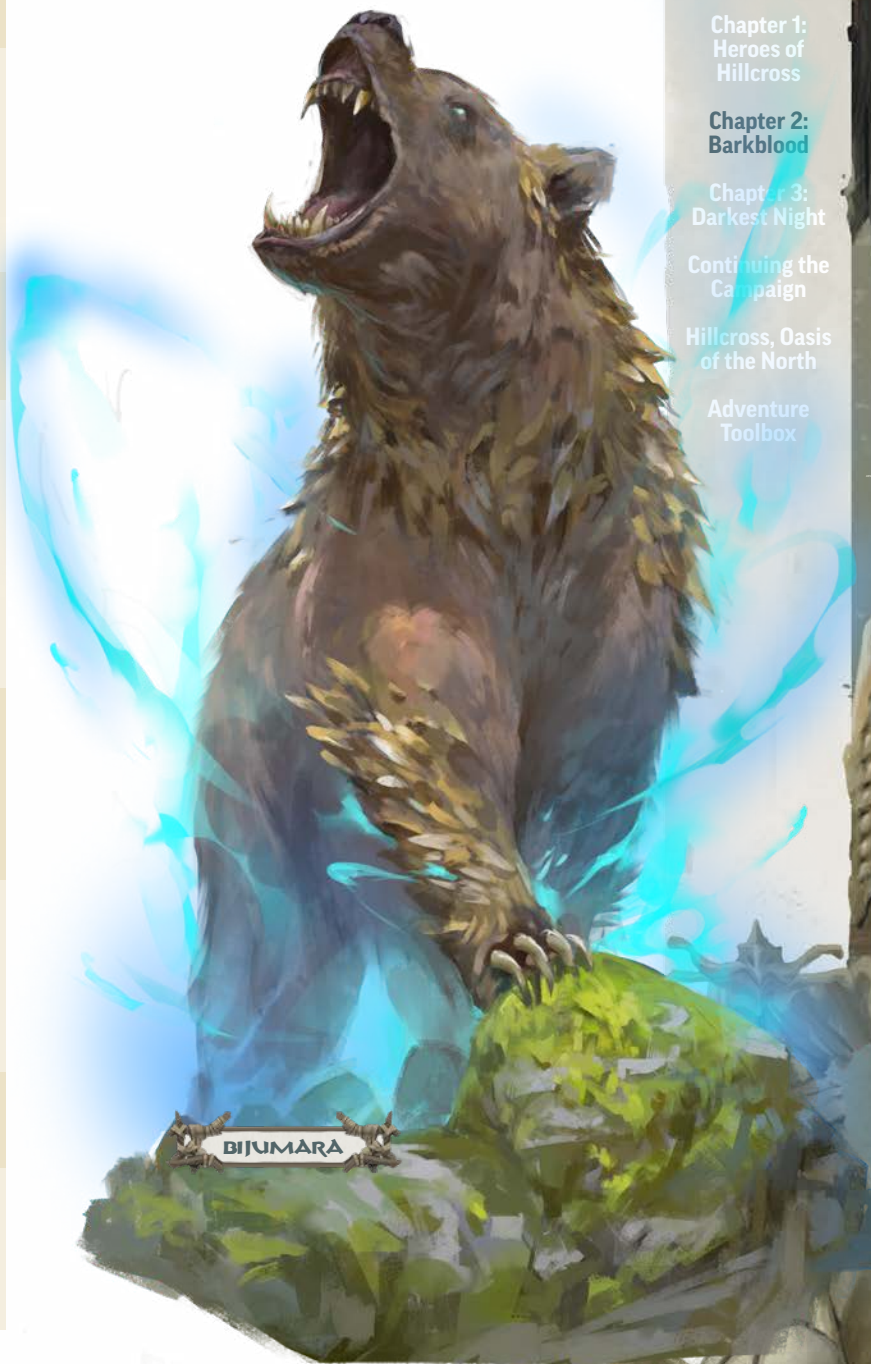
THE IVORY BEHEMOTH



- 3 A fierce storm rages as the characters enter the Shadow Plane. For the next 3d6 minutes, high winds and heavy rain make the journey difficult.
- 4 A procession of ghostly Kellids riding spectral hadrosaurs pass by the characters, going the opposite direction. They can neither sense nor communicate with the characters, but a character who succeeds at a DC 26 Society check identifies them as members of Thunder Horn, a following that died out ages ago.
- 5 A tar pit (page 34) lies in the path of the characters; supernatural shadows increase the Stealth DC of the tar pit by 2.
- 6 The characters come across an old battle site littered with corpses. Their weapons and armor are ancient and have long ago been made useless by the corrosive effects of the Shadow Plane, but a spear at the center of the site is in good condition. It houses a haunt, a bloodthirsty urge (*Core Rulebook* 524). The spear isn't otherwise magical.
- 7 A flock of four greater shadows (*Bestiary* 289) flit over the land, hugging the ground under the cover of trees. When they detect the presence of living things, they attack with a chorus of shrieks.
- 8 A spirit guide in the form of a feathered grizzly bear (*Bestiary* 3 253) stalks the tar forest on the Shadow Plane in search of a treachery demon named Cassiodor (see area **G4** on page 50). The spirit guide's name is Bijumara. If the characters mention they too are looking for a demon, Bijumara offers to accompany them, but only until they meet Cassiodor; once they've slain the demon, the spirit guide leaves the cursed tar forest for good.
- 9 A group of 1d4-1 (minimum 1) jyotis (*Bestiary* 2 153) travel the Shadow Plane, hunting its residents. They have no interest in the characters and, if approached, are indifferent. If they can be made friendly, they might travel with the characters in the hope of finding residents of the Shadow Plane.
- 10 A sacristan (*Bestiary* 2 283) has fled its velstrac masters and returned to the Shadow Plane; it cowers behind a natural feature like a stone or tree, observes the characters silently, and attempts to pursue them. If attacked, it defends itself for a few rounds but quickly flees.
- 11 A young umbral dragon (*Bestiary* 2 96) hunts overhead. Unless the characters take cover, it swoops closer to investigate.
- 12 A weak shadow giant (*Bestiary* 2 6, 127) strides through the darkness on their own private business. If they notice the characters, the shadow giant attacks them, considering the party easy prey and an amusing diversion.

## THROUGH THE GRIMGORGE

Eventually—having learned of Metuak's destination or simply having discovered it through exploration—the characters must enter the Grimgorge at the southeast edge of the tar forest map. If Hegremon hasn't yet made a final bid to seize the *Primordial Flame*, he should do so now, blocking their way forward. Once the characters defeat Hegremon and clear the path through the Grimgorge, they arrive at Castle Grimgorge, the site of the Adventure Path's final chapter.



### BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox





## Chapter 3: Darkest Night

Animals and people alike tend to enter and exit the Tamarnian Tar Forest from an easterly ravine called the Grimgorge. Centuries ago, a Mendevian king constructed a castle at this strategically important site to keep watch on the evil woods. The fortress straddled both sides of the gorge, connected by a causeway and topped with a high tower. With a massive gate blocking the ravine, Castle Grimgorge stood as an impressive outpost of royal might, albeit one far removed from Mendev itself.

Over time, Castle Grimgorge acquired a new role as a logistics and recruitment base. Mammoth Lords eager for battle against demons of the Worldwound

made their way east, and many funneled through the Grimgorge, where they found a castle staff eager for allies. There, aspiring demon slayers learned about their enemies, familiarized themselves with Mendevian ways, and eventually set out with supplies for the next leg of the journey east. Mendevian nobles traveled to the castle to recruit Mammoth Lord scouts and warrior bands, sometimes leading entire followings back east to the crusade.

All this ended about a century ago when Metuak wrested control of his body from Xeleria, who had terrorized her way across the tar forest and earned the ire of Adalemma the Solstice Queen. Standing on the

threshold of the Mendevian fortress, tormented by his curse and exiled from Hillcross, Metuak threw himself to the mercy of the garrison. At this time, the castle steward was a seasoned demon hunter who quickly detected Xeleria's presence within Metuak's body. Accordingly, he was swiftly imprisoned in the castle's dungeon, a hidden storage chamber deep in the gorge. Metuak's pleas for mercy fell on deaf ears—helpless and in misery, he yielded to Xeleria, who took over his body and called demonic allies to the castle. Demons massacred the entire garrison, leaving haunts and undead in their wake. Though, before the demons could free him, Adalemma intervened; the Solstice Queen sealed Metuak's prison behind a magical ward.

For a century, Metuak and Xeleria have remained trapped in a hidden dungeon beneath Castle Grimgorge. Ivarsa learned of his location from Jesseri the Hailstorm, one of the Hillcross Witches, whom she captured and interrogated. Ivarsa and her best scouts arrived at the castle a short time before the characters, only to find the place haunted. Midwinter's approach has empowered the ghostly garrison of the castle to take physical form, slaying many of Ivarsa's minions. Moreover, the hora Adalemma's powers are at their weakest during midwinter, and Xeleria has taken the opportunity to call more demonic allies to the castle. Ivarsa made a camp on the upper level of the castle's tower, where she can watch for the arrival of the characters while her surviving minions search for Metuak.

Ivarsa's primary goal is to kill the characters and take the *Primordial Flame*; she knows they're hunting Metuak, so she has come here to intercept them. She also wants to personally meet him; after all, she grew up on tales of "Metuak the hero." But she also knows about the curse, and she's prepared to kill Metuak herself once she takes the *Primordial Flame* from the corpses of the Broken Tusks.

## CASTLE GRIMGORGE

This chapter begins when the characters leave the Tamarnian Tar Forest in Chapter 2 to follow Metuak's path east, through the Grimgorge to Castle Grimgorge. The time it takes to reach the castle from the forest is intentionally vague; it should take the party however long is necessary to ensure that they reach the castle during mid-Kuthona, the week of the winter solstice when Adalemma's spell is weakest, so they can infiltrate the dungeon beneath the castle and defeat Metuak.

As the characters travel east, the gorge becomes deeper, thicker with trees and brush, and more difficult to traverse. Eventually, they reach a road that leads to the ruins of the castle. When the party reaches Castle Grimgorge, read or paraphrase the following aloud to set the scene. (For more suggestions on how to describe Castle Grimgorge to your players, see the Fish Out of Water sidebar on page 48.)

Mid-winter twilight limns the twisted trees and teetering cairns to either side of this ancient gorge. Looming in the near distance, a strange stone structure, as unnatural and ugly as a mountain made of bones, straddles the hundred-foot-wide ravine. The structure looks like a massive hut made from rock, perhaps cut from the mountainside itself. Tall stone cylinders—like the legs of a colossal mammoth—rise from the corners of the hut, each leg topped with enormous blocky teeth as tall and wide as a person. Ghostly lights flicker from behind the ruined walls. A colossal stone tower rises from the hut, resembling the trunk of a petrified tree several hundred feet high and

## CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

The characters arrive at Castle Grimgorge on the winter solstice atop their megafauna mounts before exploring the ruined fortress. Metuak is imprisoned behind a secret entrance at the bottom of the gorge. The magus Ivarsa, astride her frost worm mount (who is, in fact, the characters' old rival Pakano in a reincarnated form), observes the party's progress from the top of the tower. Undead remnants of the castle garrison stalk the ruins, along with Ivarsa's surviving warriors and demons summoned by Xeleria. If the Broken Tusks defeat Ivarsa and Metuak, they can return to Hillcross in triumph—the *Primordial Flame's* curse finally broken and the threat of the Burning Mammoth extinguished.

### BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



## FISH OUT OF WATER

Throughout this chapter, consider the way you describe the ruins of Castle Grimgorge to your players. Depending on the characters' backgrounds, members of the party might have never before seen anything like the Mendevian citadel and have no frame of reference for this strange edifice. Common elements of castle architecture—battlements, towers, crenellations, and so forth—are utterly alien to people who have spent their entire lives traveling frosty tundra and rocky mountains. To reflect this, describe the environment and terrain in terms more familiar to northern hunter-gatherers rather than technical architectural terms. Of course, if the result of this effect is simply confusion rather than immersion, consider explaining your intentions to your players.

more than fifty feet wide. A campfire burns brightly from the tower's summit, and a regular series of holes—like the traces of a monstrous woodpecker—dot its exterior.

A graceful, thin bridge of stone crosses the gorge, leading from the ruined stone hut over the chasm to another equally massive ruin where more ghostly lights smolder. From the rear of that ruin comes a wide path that leads down to the floor of the gorge, which is blocked ahead by a massive gate made of iron bars. The gorge's floor has been cleared and turned into a level road of hard and unyielding rock.

If the characters travel along the road, they arrive at the ruined gate (area G1). Alternatively, they might descend into the gorge to reach the Grimgate (area G12).

## GRIMGORGE FACTIONS

The castle houses enemies from three different groups, each of whom are as hostile to one another as they are to the characters. The party can explore the ruins, withdraw to rest, and return, but Ivarsa will find Metuak's prison eventually. She's unlikely to kill him until after she has acquired the *Primordial Flame*, but a fight against both her and the man-demon would likely be deadly.

**Mendevian Garrison:** The former garrison of the castle are undead spirits who have manifested corporeal forms as a result of primal midwinter magic.

**Xeleria's Demons:** The invidiak Xeleria has called other demons to the ruins in the hopes of being freed amid the chaos. The demons aren't organized, nor do they possess a real agenda beyond exploring the site for mortal victims.

**Burning Mammoths:** Ivarsa led many of her Burning Mammoth warriors here, most of which perished

fighting the garrison and demons. Some of her dead minions have animated as undead.

## CASTLE FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, the areas in Castle Grimgorge share the following characteristics.

**Doors:** Most doors in the castle were broken down in the demonic siege over a century ago. Those that remain are made of reinforced wood mounted on rusty hinges. The doors are in such disrepair that they're all stuck (DC 15 to Force Open).

**Ground:** Rubble litters the ruins, and squares containing this rubble are difficult terrain. The gorge outside the Grimgate (area G12) and road (area G13) are greater difficult terrain.

**Lighting:** Unless otherwise noted, the ruins of the castle are dimly lit by a combination of starlight and ghostly green witchfire that appears where torches, braziers, and lamps once hung—these supernatural lights are a manifestation of midwinter, when the evil magic of the ruins reaches its zenith.

**Walls:** The ruined walls are crumbling masonry (DC 15 to Climb; Hardness 10, HP 40, BT 20).

The areas of Castle Grimgorge described below correspond to the locations marked on the map on the inside rear cover of this volume.

## G1. RUINED GATE

## MODERATE 10

The west gate of the castle has been torn from its hinges and lies twisted on the ground; this is difficult terrain. Towers to the north and south look down on the gate—once archers would've stood watch and fired arrows against any intruder, but the towers are long abandoned, and only greenish light flickers in the windows. Beyond the gate lies the courtyard (area G2).

**Creatures:** As the characters approach, two ghostly forms become visible standing in front of the ruined gateway. The spirits manifest a physical form: corpses armored in black plate, wielding greatswords and wearing tattered tabards adorned with the royal crest of Mendev. "Turn back," they intone in unison, their voices dry and raspy. "Castle Grimgorge is no place for the living." Characters who are expert in Perception might see the ghostly archers in the towers above (see the spectral archers hazard on page 49).

The graveknights are hostile, but they don't attack until the characters do or until someone tries to walk through the gate. They defend the gate until destroyed and pursue enemies up to 75 feet from the gate.

## GRIMGORGE GRAVEKNIGHTS (2)

## CREATURE 9

Weak graveknights (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 191)

**Initiative** Perception +17

**Hazard:** The towers flanking the gate house restless spirits that manifest to defend the castle. If the characters attack the graveknights or try to enter, ghostly green crossbow wielders appear in the towers' windows and shower bolts down on the party. The archers continue their assault until the haunt is disabled or until the graveknights at the gate are destroyed, whereupon they withdraw from the windows and vanish.

## SPECTRAL ARCHERS (2)

HAZARD 8

COMPLEX HAUNT

**Stealth** +28 (expert)

**Description** Ghostly soldiers wielding crossbows manifest within the towers that flank the gatehouse and rain bolts down upon intruders.

**Disable** DC 31 Intimidation (expert) to cow the archers into fleeing or DC 28 Religion (expert) to temporarily banish the spirits

**Rain of Bolts** **Trigger** A creature attacks the graveknights in area **G1** or enters the castle; **Effect** The haunt makes a spectral bolt Strike against the triggering creature, then rolls initiative.

**Routine** (1 action) The hazard fires one bolt at every creature in a 30-foot-by-30-foot area in front of the gate as 1 action. Because the spectral archers fire bolts continuously, the haunt can also use the Continuous Barrage free action (below) to fire bolts at each creature during that creature's turn.

**Ranged** spectral bolt +20, **Damage** 2d10+11 negative; no multiple attack penalty

**Continuous Barrage** **Trigger** A creature in front of the gate finishes an action; **Effect** The haunt makes a spectral bolt Strike against the triggering creature.

**Reset** The haunt vanishes permanently if the graveknights are destroyed. Otherwise, it returns after 1 hour.

## G2. COURTYARD

A long, roofless courtyard stretches from the ruined gate in the west (area **G1**) to a gate in the east (area **G6**). While this area is empty of creatures, many potential enemies lurk nearby; if the fighting spills into the courtyard, it could potentially attract other foes.

## G3. NORTH TOWER

MODERATE 10

This tower is a hollow shell 90 feet high. All the wooden flooring within it has long since burned to ash, and the ceiling has collapsed, revealing the starlit sky. Greenish lights float within the tower shell.

A ruined space adjoining the tower was once a banquet hall, but nothing remains except burnt

timber and fallen stone. Characters looking into the ground floor of the tower see a banner displayed on the northwest wall, its the faded colors those of the Mendevian flag. Beneath the banner the stone flagstones of the floor appear disturbed, as if they've been partially lifted out of the ground.

**Creatures:** When anyone enters this area from the courtyard, a swirl of necromantic energy manifests six



BURNING  
TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



spectral figures, all dressed as knights and sitting at a banquet table. A Mendevian noble—the castle steward and head of the garrison, who’s now a dread wraith, lifts a golden cup as if to make a toast, but when he sees the characters, his expression turns to burning hatred. “We have uninvited guests,” he says as the other seated figures rise from their chairs. He toasts his chalice. “To your health.” With this, the undead attack.

### WRAITHS (5) CREATURE 6

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 335

**Initiative** Perception +14

### DREAD WRAITH CREATURE 9

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 298

**Initiative** Perception +19

**Treasure:** The steward of the castle kept a small personal cache buried under the floor beneath where the banner hangs. Ivarsa’s minions discovered this cache and were in the process of unearthing it when the wraiths manifested and drove them off. Completing the job of removing the stone flagstones requires a character to succeed at a DC 22 Athletics check. Beneath lies a small chest containing 367 gp, a flask of *good-aligned oil*, and a greater juggernaut mutagen.

### G4. SHATTERED BARRACKS SEVERE 10

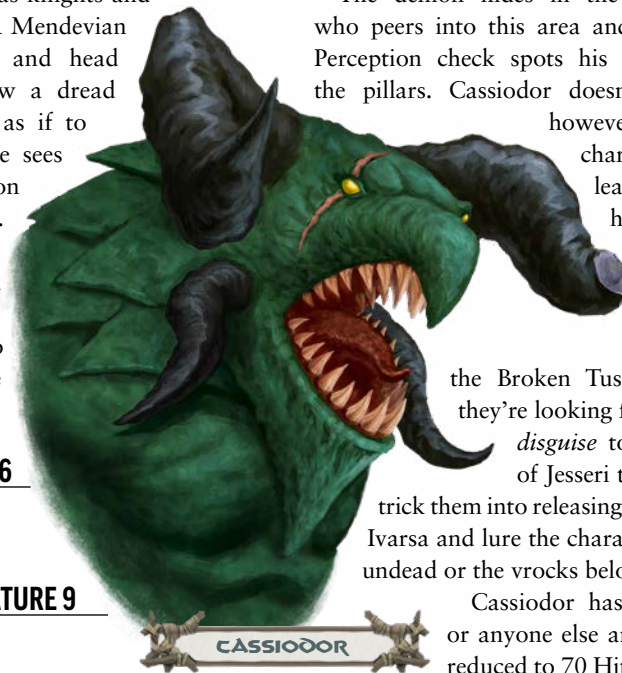
This part of the ruins used to be a barracks for the castle garrison; now, only shattered pillars remain, the wooden roof long burnt. No ghostly lights illuminate this corner of the ruins, which is in darkness broken only by starlight.

**Creature:** A treachery demon, Cassiodor, felt the call of Xeleria’s desperate summons and arrived at the castle about a day ago. Since then, he has been hiding, observing the battle between Ivarsa’s minions and the ghosts that haunt the ruins. When he became bored, Cassiodor adopted the appearance of one of the Burning Mammoths and lured others from the following into ambushes by undead or other demons. Now, Ivarsa and her followers are on the lookout for impostors, and Cassiodor is out of easy victims.

### CASSIODOR CREATURE 13

Glabrezu (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 79)

**Initiative** Perception +24



The demon hides in the darkness; a character who peers into this area and succeeds at a DC 31 Perception check spots his enormous bulk among the pillars. Cassiodor doesn’t immediately attack,

however. Instead, he follows the characters and attempts to learn more about them. If

he thinks he can pick one or two off, he might reveal himself and attack. Alternatively,

once he learns why

the Broken Tusks are here and what they’re looking for, he might use *illusory disguise* to adopt the appearance

of Jesseri the Hailstorm and try to

trick them into releasing Metuak, or impersonate Ivarsa and lure the characters into an ambush by undead or the vrock below the bridge (area G7).

Cassiodor has no loyalty to Xeleria

or anyone else and won’t risk his life. If reduced to 70 Hit Points or fewer, he flees

using *dimension door*.

### G5. RALLY POINT LOW 10

A tall tower to the southwest looks down on the ruins of a broad stone hall. The walls sweep south in a graceful curve to a narrow bridge that arches over the gorge below.

Castle Grimgorge is designed to repel assaults from multiple directions. In the event an enemy forced their way through the Grimgate (area G12), up the road to the causeway (area G11), and into the southern fortress, they’d have to cross the bridge (area G7) in a narrow column where they could be met by a wide defense-in-depth. Unfortunately, when Xeleria called demons to the castle a century ago, many of those demons could fly, invalidating the defensive architecture of the fortress.

**Hazard:** Much of the garrison had mustered in this hall when they were set upon by flying demons, who collapsed the wooden roof with fire spells before snatching soldiers from the flames and lifting them high into the air to be disemboweled or simply dropped to their deaths. This scene of wanton destruction lingers in the tower to this day.

### HALL OF FIERY DOOM HAZARD 10

**COMPLEX HAUNT**

**Stealth** +32 (master)

**Description** While the roof is on fire and collapsing timbers crush those within the hall, demons fly down from the sky to pluck victims from the flames.

**Disable** two DC 32 Athletics or Diplomacy checks to douse the flames; Athletics to do the work yourself or Diplomacy to muster the ghostly soldiers. This reduces the hazard's actions by 1 and prevents it from using Burning Timbers. Banish the demons with up to two DC 35 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion checks; each success reduces the hazard's actions by 1, and two successes prevent it from using Demonic Abduction. When the hazard loses all 3 actions, Burning Timbers, and Demonic Abduction, it's disabled.

**Burst of Fire** **Trigger** A creature enters the hall or ends its turn in the hall; **Effect** The hall bursts into flame, dealing 4d6 fire damage to each creature in the hall. The haunt then rolls initiative.

**Routine** (3 actions) The haunt spends 1 action to fill the hall with burning timbers falling from above, and 2 actions to pluck up random victims and drop them to their deaths.

**Burning Timbers** **◆** Creatures within the 30-foot by 90-foot area of the hall take 4d6+12 fire damage (DC 29 basic Reflex save).

**Demonic Abduction** **◆** Spectral demons lift a single creature 50 feet into the air and drop it. The haunt makes a Strike against the creature with a +23 attack bonus. On a success, the creature is lifted into the air and dropped, taking 25 bludgeoning damage, though it might negate some or all this damage using a spell, such as *feather fall*. On a critical hit, the creature also takes 2d12+13 slashing damage as the demons' claws tear through its flesh.

**Reset** The hall falls quiet for 24 hours, after which it can trigger again.

## G6. EAST GATE

Despite the years, the east gate remains intact. It's almost 30 feet wide and designed to open down the center, but it's locked. The gate is 30 feet high and can be Climbed (DC 10) or broken (Hardness 18, HP 72, BT 36), or the iron bars can be bent (Force Open DC 30).

## G7. BRIDGE

MODERATE 10

A narrow, 10-foot span arches over the Grimgorge, connecting the two halves of the fortress. Ruined railings line the bridge, which is littered with skeletons and rusted arms and armor.

**Creatures:** Three wrath demons, also called vrocks, lurk beneath the bridge, lured here by Xeleria's call for aid. They listen for creatures crossing the bridge, and they might have been alerted to the presence of the characters by the *hall of fiery doom* haunt (area G5).

## VROCKS (3)

CREATURE 9

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 78

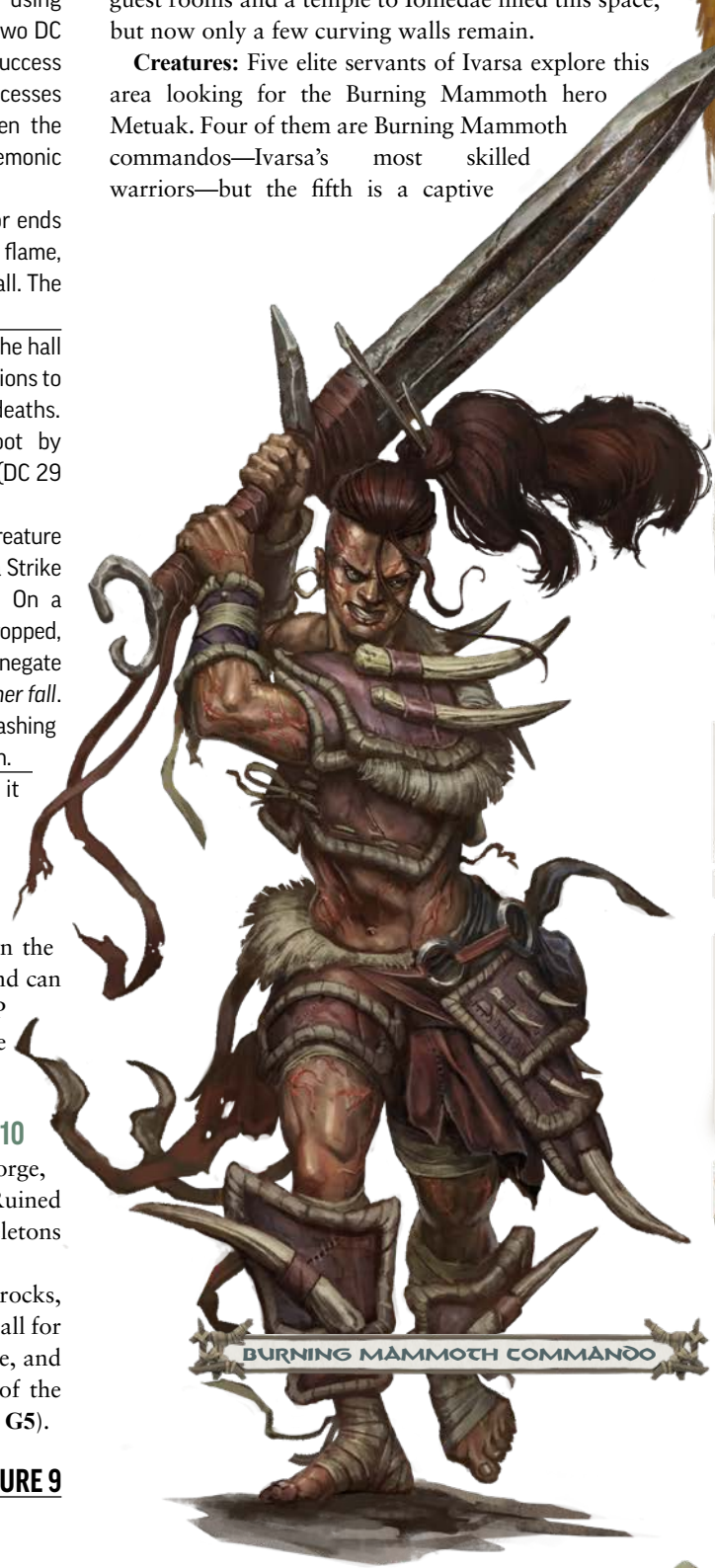
**Initiative** Stealth +18

## G8. SOUTHERN RUINS

MODERATE 10

The southern half of Castle Grimgorge is in a more ruined state than the northern half. At one time, lavish guest rooms and a temple to Iomedae filled this space, but now only a few curving walls remain.

**Creatures:** Five elite servants of Ivarsa explore this area looking for the Burning Mammoth hero Metuak. Four of them are Burning Mammoth commandos—Ivarsa's most skilled warriors—but the fifth is a captive



BURNING MAMMOTH COMMANDO

## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



named Jesseri the Hailstorm. Jesseri is an oral historian and Hillcross Witch who Ivarsa captured in a raid on Hillcross about a year ago. She has been a prisoner of the Burning Mammoth ever since. She does as she's told and lives in perpetual fear of her captors, but she has never given up her hope for freedom. She knows about Ivarsa's schemes, and if the characters can prove

themselves strong enough to defeat the commandos who escort her, Jesseri pleads to help them in their quest. Nevertheless, in the presence of her captors, she's unwilling to attempt an outright betrayal and fights alongside them, albeit half-heartedly.

When Jesseri and the commandos detect the party, they attack.

### BURNING MAMMOTH COMMANDOS (4) CREATURE 7

RARE NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Human veteran warriors

**Perception** +15

**Languages** Hallit

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Athletics +15, Stealth +17, Survival +15

**Str** +4, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

**Items** moderate alchemist's fire (3), carved wooden trinket worth 5 gp, +1 hatchets (2), leather armor

**AC** 25; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +15, **Will** +13

**HP** 120

**Evasion** When the commando rolls a success on a Reflex save, they get a critical success instead.

**Spurred by Death** **Trigger** An ally within 30 feet reduces a creature to 0 HP; **Effect** The commando Interacts to draw a weapon, Steps, Strides, or uses Hunt Prey.

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** **◆** hatchet +18 (agile, magical, reach, sweep), **Damage** 2d6+8 slashing

**Ranged** **◆** alchemist's fire +18 (range increment 30 feet, splash), **Damage** 2d8 fire damage plus 2 persistent fire damage and 2 fire splash damage

**Ranged** **◆** hatchet +18 (agile, magical, sweep, thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+8 slashing

**Cruel Cutter** Burning Mammoth commandos ably carve flesh and wood with their axes. An axe the commando uses gains the reach trait and deals an additional 1d6 damage (included in the hatchet Strikes above).

**Hunt Prey** **◆** (concentrate) The commando designates a single creature they can see and hear, or one they're Tracking, as their prey. The commando gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to Seek their prey and to Survival checks to Track their prey. The first time the commando hits their designated prey in a round, they deal an additional 1d8 precision damage. The commando also ignores the penalty for making ranged attacks within the second range increment when attacking their prey. These effects last until the commando uses Hunt Prey again.

### JESSERI THE HAILSTORM

### CREATURE 10

UNIQUE N MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female human Hillcross Witch

**Perception** +23

JESSERI THE HAILSTORM

**Languages** Common, Hallit

**Skills** Mammoth Lord Lore +16, Medicine +23, Nature +23, Performance +20, Religion +21, Society +18, Survival +21


**Str** +0, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +2

**Items** *moderate healing potion*, +1 *hide*, +1 *staff of divination*

**AC** 29; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +20, **Will** +21

**HP** 150; **Resistances** cold 10

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee**  *staff* +19 (two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4+6 bludgeoning

**Primal Spontaneous Spells** DC 29, attack +21; **5th** (3 slots) *cone of cold*, *wall of ice*; **4th** (3 slots) *hydraulic torrent*, *ice storm*; **3rd** (3 slots) *lightning bolt*, *wall of wind*; **2nd** (3 slots) *create food*, *endure elements*, *water walk*; **1st** (3 slots) *air bubble*, *create water*, *gust of wind*, *heal*; **Cantrips (5th)** *electric arc*, *light*, *ray of frost*, *read aura*, *stabilize*

**Rituals** *reincarnate* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 242), *Summerland Spell* (page 77)

**Child of Winter** When Jesseri Casts a Spell that deals damage and doesn't have a duration, she deals additional cold damage that's equal to the spell's level and ignores cold resistance 10.

**Signature Spells** Jesseri can heighten *heal* and *lightning bolt* to any level for which she has an available spell slot.

The commandos don't use Jesseri's name, even when they bark orders at her. A character who succeeds at a DC 27 Society or Mammoth Lord Lore check identifies her as Jesseri the Hailstorm, one of the Hillcross Witches and a victim of the raid last year. If reduced to 75 Hit Points or fewer, or if the commandos are defeated, Jesseri drops her weapon and cowers.

**Demonic Intervention:** The hezrou in area G10 watches the characters' confrontation with Jesseri and the Burning Mammoths. It doesn't get involved, preferring to wait for its many enemies to kill each other, but once the characters are triumphant, it might attack before they've had a chance to rest.

**Aftermath:** If the characters defeat the commandos, Jesseri pleads for her life and begs the party not to kill her. If spared, she can tell the characters about the Burning Mammoths' mission.

Jesseri explains how she was captured in the raid on Hillcross and forced to tell Ivarsa all she knew about the cursed demon-man Metuak, who beseeched Hillcross for aid over a century ago but was banished when the Hillcross Witches learned he'd lost the sacred *Primordial Flame*. A few months ago, Ivarsa came to her with the dead body of a former Broken Tusk, Pakano, and demanded Jesseri return him to life. She performed a *reincarnation* ritual, but the spell went wrong and Pakano was brought back in the body of a monstrous frost worm; in this form, Pakano serves Ivarsa as a mount.

Jesseri answers any questions the characters might have as she's able.

**Where's Metuak?** "We haven't found him. Ivarsa sent me to search the ruins, and we've looked in the tower and the northern fortress, but so far nothing."

**Where's Ivarsa?** "Atop the great tower. Her surviving followers guard the entrance, including a powerful aasimar champion named Lomok, who's served the Burning Mammoths since the time of Metuak." Jesseri doesn't know some of these followers have been killed and risen as undead (area G15).

**Who is Lomok?** "He's one of the original Burning Mammoths, spared from Ivarsa's slaughter when she took over the following ten winters ago. He has a good heart, but he's also unerringly loyal to the Burning Mammoth. He'll stop at nothing to kill you and reclaim the *Primordial Flame*."

**What else can you tell us about this place?** "It's haunted by the former garrison, who were slain here a century ago when they imprisoned Metuak. Demons came and killed everyone. Now, on the winter solstice, the spirits of the dead are at their strongest. The demons have also returned—I think Metuak is awake somewhere and calling them, but I can't be sure."

Jesseri has no love for the Burning Mammoth following and wants to help the characters, but she's weak from long months of captivity and fears joining them in combat. If the characters manage to convince her to join them, consider increasing the difficulty of the rest of the encounters in Castle Grimgorge. Otherwise, Jesseri volunteers to guard a safe camping spot in the castle where she can rest and recover.

## G9. SHRINE TO IOMEDAE

In the northeast corner of the southern fortress, this shrine is all that remains of a once larger temple to Iomedae. A ruined statue of the goddess stands in the corner, sword upraised. Characters who have never traveled beyond the Realm of the Mammoth Lords—like many of the Broken Tusk—can recognize this southern goddess with a successful DC 20 Religion check. A character who investigates the statue's base or clears away the rubble around the statue finds a hidden compartment; see Treasure on page 54.

Iomedae hasn't completely forsaken this site, and the statue serves as a focus for divine power. Creatures of lawful good or neutral good alignment within 30 feet of the statue gain a +1 status bonus to attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and Perception checks; if they rest within this area, they recover twice the normal number of Hit Points and can sleep in armor without becoming fatigued.

## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



If the statue is destroyed (Hardness 14, HP 56, BT 28), these effects end.

**Treasure:** A hollow in the base of the statue contains a *cassock of devotion* dedicated to Iomedae.

### G10. FLOODED DEN LOW 10

This section of the ruins has partially collapsed and filled with brackish water that stubbornly refuses to freeze. Shattered stone blocks litter the area, and fallen timbers stick up from the water like drying trees. A curved, ruined wall separates the flooded region from the rest of the southern ruins.

**Creature:** A hezrou followed Xeleria's summons to Grimgorge Castle and hid here. It might have already attacked the party in area G8. If it hasn't and the characters find it here, it flees rather than fight them all at once. It seeks out other demons for help, including the vrocks in area G7 and the glabrezu in area G4. Alternatively, it might stalk the characters to pick off stragglers one by one. If reduced to fewer than 60 Hit Points, the hezrou casts *dimension door* to flee the castle.

### HEZROU CREATURE 11

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 267

**Initiative** Perception +21

### G11. CAUSEWAY

A broad stone path leads down from the southern ruins along the edge of the Grimgorge to the floor of the ravine, where it meets with the road (area G13). The causeway has no roof or other cover, and anyone on it is clearly visible to Ivarsa from her vantage atop the tower (area G16).

### G12. THE GRIMGATE

The road through the Grimgorge leads west to this gate, beyond which the ravine floor is crowded with thick brambles and underbrush. The gate itself is a portcullis 50 feet wide and just as tall. Once, a powerful set of winches were in place to lift the portcullis, but the mechanism has since fallen into ruin. A character can lift the portcullis with a successful DC 40 Athletics check, but there's little reason to do so.

### G13. ROAD MODERATE 10

This broad, flat road through the Grimgorge is littered with the corpses of the garrison that died a century ago, many of them dropped to their death by demons (see the haunt in area G5). Three vrocks (area G7) have made foul nests here beneath the bridge. Each nest is 10 feet in diameter, lined with skeletal remains and tattered scraps collected from the ruins.

**Creatures:** Necromantic power animates the skeletal remains littering the road. As the party approaches the nests, the bleached skulls lying here roll toward each other with a horrifying clatter.

### CLACKING SKULL SWARMS (2) CREATURE 10

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3244

**Initiative** Perception +18

**Treasure:** The vrocks previously searched the ruins and buried what valuables they found in their nests, including 343 gp, a *light brown elemental gem*, a moderate elixir of life, and a *scroll of disintegrate*.

### G14. METUAK'S PRISON SEVERE 10

This chamber, hollowed out from the side of the Grimgorge, is hidden behind a small stone door only five feet tall and three feet wide, which is locked and camouflaged to blend in with the side of the gorge. Adalemma the Solstice Queen further warded it when she sealed Metuak away, rendering it undetectable without her help (see *Everbright's Return* below).

Once, this chamber was a secret storage room, its hidden entrance known only to the stewards of Castle Grimgorge. When the steward at the time detected a demon bound to Metuak's soul, he made this room into a makeshift prison and sealed Metuak within. Xeleria called demons for aid, who massacred the garrison and the steward, but Adalemma used her power to ward the chamber. Metuak and Xeleria have thus spent a century here, bound together in hatred and mutual torment.

**Everbright's Return:** When the party approaches this area for the first time, a familiar creature greets them: *Everbright*, Adalemma's harmona companion. The brilliant bird zips down from the sky and circles the characters a few times to get their attention. (If *Everbright* has somehow perished before this point, another harmona has taken her place. If Adalemma has died, *Everbright* can still lift the ward on the door, but she speaks of her mistress in the past tense.)

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"Hello! Many miles have gone by since I saw you last. How difficult it must be to cross such a distance on land—but then, you have mighty beasts who never tire! I bring greetings from my mistress, for the end of your quest is nigh, and no one can pass this threshold without her help."

*Everbright* lets out a long trill of birdsong. Rocks and rubble fall from the side of the gorge as a dazzling glow of rainbow colors briefly reveals a small secret door.

---

*Everbright* can answer questions and converse with the characters for a few minutes.

**How did you get here now?** “Did I not tell you my mistress knows every pine needle in the forest? She sent me with this errand when she saw you approaching the castle.”

**Is Metuak here?** “Yes! But not only Metuak, Xeleria too—the ancient and terrible shadow demon bound to his soul. Don’t let them escape!”

**Can you open the door for us?** “I have lifted my mistress’s wards concealing Metuak’s prison. The rest is up to you. But don’t linger! For now that the wards are lifted, they can’t be placed again, and Xeleria’s allies will free her if they find this door.”

Before departing, Everbright has some final advice.

“Remember what my mistress told you: Metuak isn’t one soul, but two, and so long as one lives, the other can’t die. To end their horror, you must destroy both at once. Trust the Primordial Flame! Long and far have you carried it, for it to aid you in your hour of need. And now I must fly, for many leagues lie before me ere I rest. Farewell!”

With a final circle around the party, Everbright zips away into the sky and out of sight.

The door (Hardness 14, HP 56, BT 28) is locked (one DC 27 Thievery check to Pick the Lock, DC 32 Athletics check to Force Open). The door is too small for Large creatures to get in, even by Squeezing—the Broken Tusks will need to leave their megafauna mounts outside.

The chamber beyond is unlit. Its rough-hewn walls mark a space about 50 feet across. Two rows of fluted columns support the 15-foot-high ceiling, each bearing an iron sconce for a long burnt-out torch. In the past, the chamber was stuffed with emergency provisions, weapons, and armor for the garrison, but all those things were removed a century ago when Metuak was imprisoned here.

**Creature:** Metuak lurks in a corner of the room, the two parts of his soul arguing audibly with each other until he hears Everbright outside the door. At this, he falls preternaturally silent and hides behind one of the room’s columns, coiling his strength for a desperate attempt to escape his prison. When the characters open the door and enter, Metuak attacks.

## METUAK

Page 90

Initiative Stealth +24

## CREATURE 13

On the first round, Metuak unleashes a Terrifying Howl and uses *shadow blast* on as many characters as possible. On subsequent rounds, he attacks with Swipe or uses Shadow Blend to conceal himself in darkness. He uses *shadow siphon* against the first spell that would damage him.

In his rage, Metuak initially focuses his efforts on killing the characters. However, if he sees an opening on subsequent rounds, he might make a break for the door and try to escape. This confrontation could turn into a running battle or chase, with the characters mounting their megafauna and pursuing Metuak, who calls to other demons (such as the glabrezu in area G4, vrock in area G7, or hezrou in area G10) for aid.



## BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox



**Ending the Curse:** When the characters reduce both Metuak and Xeleria to 0 HP in the same round, the spirit of Syarstik Painted-Tiger, the cat guardian of Red Cat Cave, manifests around the *Primordial Flame*. Blazing with ghostly blue fire, Syarstik leaps at Metuak and claws the phantasmal Xeleria from his body. Syarstik thrashes with Xeleria in his jaws as Metuak's body is frozen in a state between life and death. With a final look back at the party, Syarstik claws through Xeleria, causing himself and the demon to disappear in a burst of spectacular light. Metuak's physical body ages 120 years in an instant and crumples to the ground, an empty husk. The curse on the *Primordial Flame* ends.

**XP Award:** If the characters slay Metuak and thereby lift the curse on the *Primordial Flame*, award them an additional 30 XP.

## G15. TOWER BASE

## MODERATE 10

The door to the ground floor of the tower that overlooks Castle Grimgorge has long since broken and rotted away. An open arch leads into a large, dimly illuminated chamber. Bedrolls, camping supplies, and a cold campfire dot along the southwest wall, spattered with day-old blood. A wide stone staircase begins on the western wall and goes counter-clockwise around the inside of the tower. Once there were floors every 20 feet, but the timbers that made up those floors have burned and rotted away; the rubble makes the floor here difficult terrain. A stone ceiling 100 feet up is the floor of area G16, halfway to the tower parapets (area G17).

**Creatures:** This chamber was a guard point for Ivarsa's Burning Mammoths. A nabasu (gluttony demon) snuck in here the night before the characters arrived and killed the guards, who recently rose as undead. The demon marshals new minions in preparation for an attack on the tower's upper level (area G16).

As soon as the demon detects the characters, it orders the undead Burning Mammoths to attack them; the nabasu opens battle with *grim tendrils*. If the nabasu is reduced to 40 HP or fewer it flees with *dimension door*; the undead fight until destroyed.

## EVERBURNING MAMMOTHS (3)

## CREATURE 8

RARE CE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Undead Burning Mammoth warriors

**Perception** +16; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Hallit

**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Athletics +18, Stealth +17

**Str** +5, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0

**AC** 26; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +17, **Will** +16

**HP** 135, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

**Spurred by Death** ⤴ **Trigger** An ally within 30 feet reduces a creature to 0 HP; **Effect** The everburning mammoth uses Drink Blood on a creature that meets the ability's requirements.

**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee** ⚔ jaws +20 (finesse), **Damage** 2d6+8 piercing plus paralysis

**Melee** ⚔ claw +20 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+6 slashing plus Grab

**Drink Blood** ⚔ (divine, necromancy) **Requirements** A grabbed, paralyzed, restrained, unconscious, or willing creature is within the everburning mammoth's reach; **Effect** The everburning mammoth tears into the creature with its jaws and gorges itself on the victim's blood. This requires an Athletics check against the victim's Fortitude DC if the victim is grabbed and is automatic for any of the other conditions. The victim is drained 1, and the everburning mammoth regains 15 HP, gaining any excess HP as temporary Hit Points. Drinking Blood from a creature that's already drained doesn't restore any HP to the everburning mammoth but increases the victim's drain value by 1.

**Paralysis** (incapacitation, necromancy, occult) Any nonliving creature hit by the everburning mammoth's jaws Strike must succeed at a DC 23 Fortitude save or become paralyzed. It can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns, and the DC cumulatively decreases by 1 on each such save.

## NABASU

## CREATURE 8

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 66

**Initiative** Perception +17

## G16. CENTRAL TOWER CHAMBER

## SEVERE 10

One hundred feet up from the ground, a single stone floor remains intact within the otherwise hollow tower. Stairs, 10 feet wide, lead down along the northeast wall and up along the southwest wall. A small campsite rests here, with a fire in the center of the chamber and sleeping mats arranged around it. More camping supplies are stacked along the southeast wall. The ceiling is 100 feet up—this is the roof of the tower, and atop it are the parapets (area G17).

**Creatures:** Ivarsa posted her most dependable guards here, and they've kept a stubborn watch even as the rest of the fortress has fallen to demons and undead. Three commandos are led by a dour, but magnificent, old man with arresting features that can be described only as angelic. This individual is Lomok, the grandfather of Pakano and brother to Ivarsa's grandfather. He's one of the original Burning

Mammoths to have left their kin (who would become the Broken Tusks) with the *Primordial Flame* to go east and fight the demons of the Worldwound. A character can identify him with a successful DC 25 Society or Mammoth Lord Lore check to Recall Knowledge.

Lomok's longevity—he's nearly 150 years old—can be attributed to his aasimar heritage. His entire life, he has been unerringly loyal to the banner of the Burning Mammoth; he has served five generations of the following's Mammoth Lords, and he continues to serve even under Ivarsa's tyrannical rule. He has come too far and committed too many atrocities in the name of the Burning Mammoth to turn back now.

When the party arrives, Lomok addresses them solemnly. "Halt," he commands. "You shall go no further with the Primordial Flame. That artifact rightfully belongs to the following of the Burning Mammoth. Your ancestors stole it many years ago. I shall reclaim it."

### LOMOK'S RETINUE (3) CREATURE 8

Elite Burning Mammoth commandos (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, page 52)

**Initiative** Perception +17

### LOMOK CREATURE 11

UNIQUE LG MEDIUM AASIMAR HUMAN HUMANOID

Male aasimar human hero

**Perception** +21; low-light vision

**Languages** Hallit

**Skills** Athletics +23, Diplomacy +19, Nature +21, Religion +19, Survival +21

**Str** +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

**Items** full plate, +2 striking longsword, spears (3), lesser sturdy shield (Hardness 10, HP 80, BT 40)

**AC** 30 (32 with shield raised); **Fort** +20, **Ref** +18, **Will** +23; +1 status to all saves vs. disease

**HP** 210

**Aura of Courage** 15 feet. Whenever Lomok becomes frightened, reduce the condition value by 1 (minimum 0). At the end of his turn, when he would reduce his frightened condition value by 1, also reduce the value by 1 for all allies in his aura.

**Powerful Will** When Lomok rolls a success on a Will save, he gets a critical success instead.

**Retributive Strike** **Trigger** An enemy damages one of Lomok's allies, and both combatants are within 15 feet of him; **Effect** Lomok shields his ally and calls for retribution upon the attacker. The ally reduces the triggering damage by 13. Lomok and any allies within reach of the triggering enemy can make melee Strikes against it.

**Shield Block**

**Spurred by Death** **Trigger** An ally within 30 feet reduces a creature to 0 HP; **Effect** Lomok Steps, Strides, or Strikes.

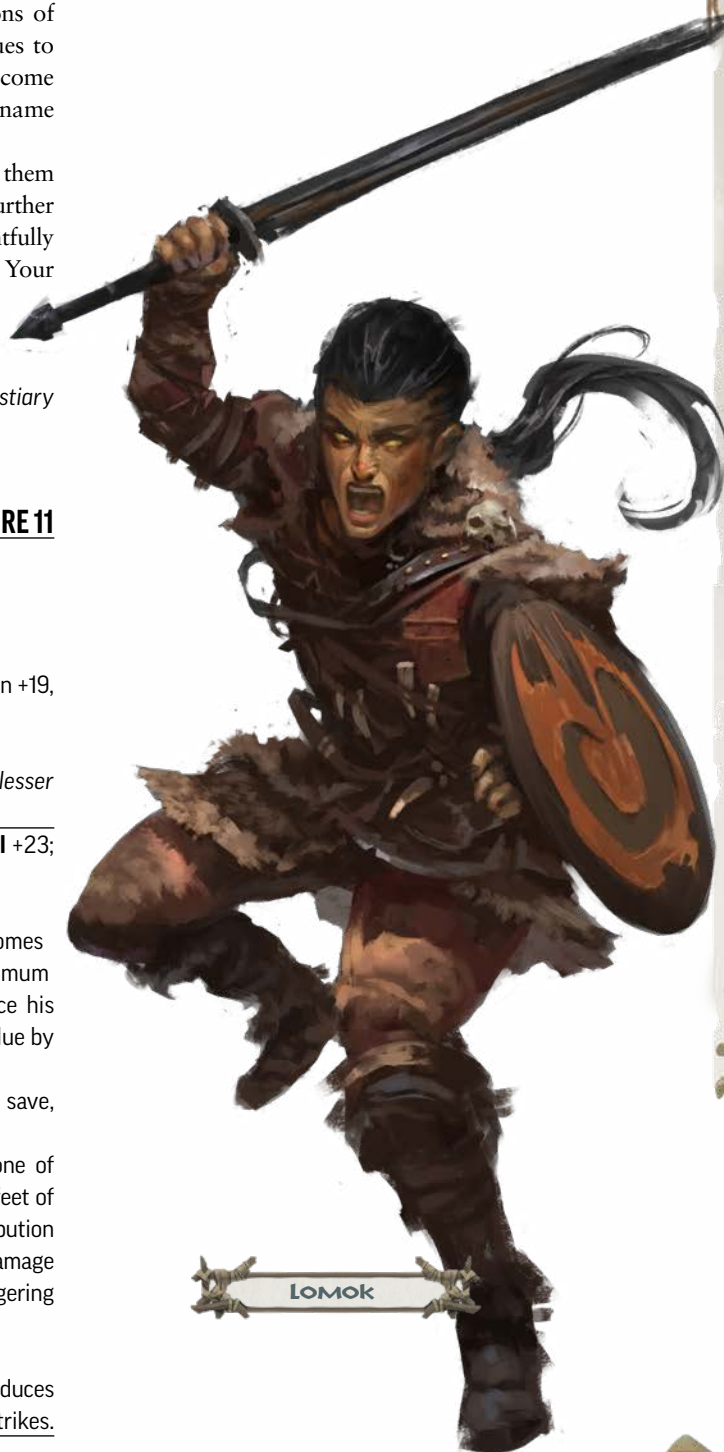
**Speed** 20 feet

**Melee** **◆** longsword +24 (versatile P), **Damage** 2d8+11 slashing plus 1d10 persistent fire

**Ranged** **◆** spear +22 (thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+11 piercing

**Divine Innate Spells** DC 28; **1st** *bles*; **Cantrips (6th)** *light*

**Champion Devotion Spells** DC 28; **6th** (2 Focus Points) *lay on hands* (*Core Rulebook* 387)



LOMOK

### BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1: Heroes of Hillcross

Chapter 2: Barkblood

Chapter 3: Darkest Night

Continuing the Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis of the North

Adventure Toolbox



**Oath of the Burning Mammoths** Lomok's melee Strikes deal an additional 1d10 persistent fire damage. If he critically hits a creature with a melee Strike, the creature is flat-footed for as long as it takes persistent fire damage.

These Burning Mammoths await the return of Jesseri the Hailstorm and her guards (area **G8**). If Ivarsa knows the Burning Tusk are at the ruins—perhaps by spotting them on the causeway (area **G11**)—Lomok and his retinue are alert and ready for battle. Lomok fights to the death. If Lomok is killed or two of his retinue defeated, the remaining commandos flee up the staircase to continue the fight alongside Ivarsa.

**Climbing the Stairs:** The parapets are 100 feet up, accessed by the stairs that circle the inside of the tower. Treat the stairs as difficult terrain for creatures going up; after 100 feet of movement, characters climbing the stairs emerge in area **G17**.

## G17. PARAPETS

## EXTREME 10

The heights of this tower provide a commanding view of Castle Grimgorge and the ravine itself, both east and west. Stone battlements completely encircle the tower roof. Multiple flickering green flames dot these battlements, providing bright light. A tall ivory mammoth tusk topped with a mammoth skull stands in the center of this area amid a pile of traveling supplies, decorated with weapons, mammoth bones, and other trophies of the Burning Mammoth following. This is the *Burning Mammoth Emblem* (page 74). A single 10-foot-wide staircase leads down along the inside wall of the tower, descending 100 feet to the central tower chamber (area **G16**).

**Creatures:** Ivarsa and Pakano await the player characters here. Ivarsa has been watching keenly from the battlements and might have observed the characters fighting within the ruins below, taking the causeway to the road, and even entering Metuak's chamber—a place all her searching never revealed. For his part, Pakano has been writhing back and forth atop the tower, consumed with self-hatred and rage over his terrifying condition; when Jesseri reincarnated him, he found himself trapped in the body of a horrible monster. However, Jesseri was able to keep Pakano's mind intact, so although he's in an animal's body, he retains his full intelligence. He wants to kill Jesseri for what she did, but he wants to kill the characters—whom he blames for his death—even more.

Ivarsa is unlikely to be caught unaware. She's been waiting for this battle for months, and she intends

to take the *Primordial Flame* from the corpses of the Broken Tusks. When the characters reach the parapets, Ivarsa is already mounted atop Pakano. She wastes no time trading verbal barbs; the time for rhetoric is over. Without preamble, she attacks.

## IVARSA

## CREATURE 12

Page 88

**Initiative** Perception +21

## PAKANO

## CREATURE 12

UNIQUE CE HUGE ANIMAL COLD

Male frost worm (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 123)

**Initiative** Perception +22

**Skills** Athletics +25, Intimidation +25, Mammoth Lord Lore +19, Stealth +20 (+24 in ice and snow)

**Str** +7, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

**Human Cunning** Pakano's allies are unaffected by his worm chill aura and Worm Trill, and his Freezing Blood affects random enemies instead of random creatures. His Death Throes, however, still affect all creatures and objects in a 100-foot burst.

Ivarsa enters her Arcane Cascade stance as quickly as possible, either on her turn or using Capture Magic. She uses teleportation spells to move around the battlefield and scatter her opponents, focusing her efforts on the bearer of the *Primordial Flame*, enemies who haven't been fascinated by Pakano's Worm Trill, and those with low HP. Ivarsa fights to the death.

Pakano uses his Breath Weapon on the first round and then performs his Worm Trill to keep some of the Broken Tusks busy while Ivarsa kills those who successfully save against the effect. He continues to use Breath Weapon as often as possible, even on fascinated foes, focusing his melee attacks on characters who hurt him the most in his former life. Pakano surrenders if he's reduced to fewer than 70 Hit Points and the characters offer to return him to a humanoid body—something that could be done by slaying him and again performing a *reincarnation* ritual, though he won't agree to it if Jesseri will be involved, as he believes she inflicted his current form upon him intentionally. Naturally, if the characters follow through on such an offer and return him to human form, Pakano flees as soon as possible, hoping to amass a new following even stronger than Ivarsa's so he can destroy the characters.

**XP Award:** For defeating the leader of the Burning Mammoths and putting an end to the following's reign of terror, award each character 80 XP or however much XP is necessary for the characters to reach 11th level.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With Ivarsa defeated and the curse of the *Primordial Flame* lifted, the Broken Tusks are free to return to their following at Hillcross. If the party has loose ends to tie up in the Tamarnian Tar Forest, they can do so; otherwise, the journey back is uneventful. The arrival at Hillcross, on the other hand, is an important moment which merits more attention, because the last time the characters were there, the Burning Mammoth and the Graylok clan were both on their way to destroy the settlement. Most of the Broken Tusks were left behind to defend the settlement, and this is a chance to determine the outcome of that battle.

### WHAT'S LEFT OF HILLCROSS

As the party comes within sight of Hillcross, ask one player to roll a flat DC 23 check. The party's modifier for this check is equal to their following's organization level (see Table 3–3: Organization Statistics by Level on page 168 of the *Gamemastery Guide*). Determine the organization level of the Broken Tusk following using either its number of followers or its number of lieutenants, whichever is lower. For example, if the characters left 700 followers behind but only 50 lieutenants, they'd have a +16 bonus to their flat check.

The result of this check determines how Hillcross and the Broken Tusk following fared against the siege.

**Critical Success** The armies were repulsed with no significant damage to Hillcross. All lieutenants live; 10% of followers died in battle.

**Success** The Graylok clan broke through the Evening Gate but were eventually repulsed, and the Burning Mammoth never managed to break through the Morning Gate. The damage to the western wall is clearly visible, and the gate is shattered. Ten percent of the Broken Tusk following's lieutenants died in battle, as did 25% of the followers.

**Failure** The Grayloks broke through the Evening Gate and the Burning Mammoths moved through the Morning Gate, sacking the settlement and killing many. Most of the encampments are flattened, and the western wall is in ruins. A quarter of the Broken Tusks' lieutenants died in the battle, along with 50% of the followers.

**Critical Failure** Hillcross has been destroyed; the Graylok clan and the Burning Mammoth following overwhelmed the settlement's defenders and slaughtered at will. Only those swift enough to flee escaped. The walls have been torn down and the gates destroyed. Fires have been lit in the cliffside caves. Half of the Broken Tusk lieutenants are

dead, along with 75% of the organization's followers; the survivors are scattered among the Tusk Mountains, waiting for the party's return.

Narrate what the characters see as they return to Hillcross. Hopefully, there are lieutenants and followers waiting for them with open arms, ready to throw a feast to celebrate their mighty victory against the Burning Mammoth and the return of the *Primordial Flame*!



### BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:  
Heroes of  
Hillcross

Chapter 2:  
Barkblood

Chapter 3:  
Darkest Night

Continuing the  
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis  
of the North

Adventure  
Toolbox