



Hillcross, Oasis of the North

The only permanent encampment in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords fills a deep ravine cutting through the Tusk Mountains. Protected from fierce blizzards by ancient magic, Hillcross is where the people of the Realm come to rest, negotiate, celebrate, and barter with each other and foreigners. This legendary locale exists as much on any map as it does in the hearts and minds of the followings of the Realm.

Hillcross lies in a deep ravine that has been used as a pass across the Tusk Mountains since time out of mind. The ravine is more than a half mile wide with steep walls—Norcliff and Soucliff—rising 350 feet on each side. The encampment fills the entire ravine and stretches for almost two miles. On each end is a 30-foot-high bristling palisade made of pine logs and mammoth tusks. These walls completely block the pass, accessible only through a single wooden gate beneath a 30-foot-wide arch. The strip of land sheltered by the cliffs and walls comfortably accommodates 7,500 visitors and their (often quite large) animals, but about 20% of Hillcross's population lives in caves that dot the cliffs.

The nature of the magic that protects Hillcross from freezing cold and blizzards is a mystery to most, kept secret out of caution and tradition. Legend has it the magic originated from a powerful druid named Brogan who later became known as Brogan the Grasswalker. Brogan's wife Seba Strongarm was with child when their following came to the pass. When complications set in and Seba couldn't be moved, Brogan channeled all his desperation and hope to tame the violent weather around them. In an instant, the sun broke through the clouds and the winds calmed. The effects of Brogan's spell would last for an entire year, tempering the weather in a small diameter centered on the pass. Seba gave birth to twins, and the family decided to stay; Hillcross was born. Every year thereafter, Brogan—or one of his students, in a lineage that has continued over many centuries—renewed the ritual, which they call the *Summerland Spell*.

With its unique resistance to harsh weather and position between the eastern and western halves of the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, Hillcross has adopted a special role in Kellid culture. It's a sacred haven, first and foremost. No violence is permitted in Hillcross. This rule, known as the Right to Peace, is inviolate and enforced by many means, from cultural pressure to occult curses. When two followings would otherwise go to war, or when the differences between them are so intense that to merely approach one another is to court death, the followings meet at Hillcross, where everyone can trust and take comfort in the Right to Peace while leaders broker a resolution. A following can take shelter in Hillcross for any reason, with one limitation: there isn't room for everyone, and so those who have been at Hillcross the longest must be the first to leave, if necessary, to make room for newcomers. This custom—the Rite to Shelter—preserves Hillcross for all.

Few Mammoth Lords bear any interest in the world to the south, but to the merchants of New Thassilon or Ustalav, the people of the Realm have much to offer. When merchants come north to trade for fur, pelts, or tamed animals, Hillcross is the ideal destination. Likewise, travelers bound for Icestair or the Crown of the World nearly always stop at Hillcross to rest, resupply, and hire local guides and translators. For these reasons, Hillcross has a surprisingly cosmopolitan character. To many northern natives, Hillcross might as well be Absalom or Katapesh, so overwhelming is its density and variety of peoples and cultures.

Despite its local reputation, Hillcross is no true city. It has no government, no guilds, no city guard, nor even much in the way of services. It's, truth be told, simply the largest campground in northern Avistan—perhaps in the entire Inner Sea region. Some who dwell in Hillcross would like to see it become more: a true capital, the heart of Mammoth Lord culture. Many others, however, cherish the Oasis of the North for its free spirit and the eons of cultural history that distinguish it from southern cities.

BURNING
TUNDRA

Chapter 1:
Heroes of
Hillcross

Chapter 2:
Barkblood

Chapter 3:
Darkest Night

Continuing the
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis
of the North

Adventure
Toolbox

HILLCROSS

SETTLEMENT 8

N TOWN

Permanent encampment in a magical pass.

Government Hillcross Witches (council)

Population 8,550 (92% humans, 4% orcs, 4% other)

Languages Common, Hallit

Religions Fandarra, Gozreh, Pharasma, Sister Cinder (Sarenrae)

Threats feuding followings, frost giants

Three Rights Hillcross's residents honor the Right to Peace, Right to Shelter, and Right to Store. NPCs begin with an attitude of unfriendly toward characters known to violate these rights.

Blue Bonnet Brucan (CN male human pirate 7) dashing roper and outlaw in hiding

Frilla the Mouse (NG female human farmer 6) advocate for agriculture

Jana Blade-Hands (CG female orc merchant 9) weapons dealer

Oga the Grasswalker (N female human witch 11) ancient leader of the Hillcross Witches

HISTORY

Mammoth Lord culture doesn't value written history, and its oral culture maintains a timelessness that ebbs and flows with the seasons instead of counting the years. In Hillcross, seasons become an afterthought, and the timeless nature of nomadic Kellid life is amplified. If not for the births, deaths, and coming of age ceremonies that occur within Hillcross's walls, it might be hard to notice the passage of time at all. Thus, to speak of the history of Hillcross is to weave legends, facts, and rumors into a tapestry that, though beautiful, is only an approximation of the truth.

Hillcross began with the arrival of Brogan, his wife Seba Strongarm, and their kinfolk, the following of the Proud Elk. As they crossed the pass over the Tusk Mountains, Seba entered labor. The birth was a difficult one, and Brogan—knowledgeable in the ways of medicine and healing—knew she couldn't be moved. But the Proud Elk couldn't linger, so Brogan chose to be left behind with his family. They sought shelter in one of the cliffside caves, and Brogan made a great sacrifice. Calling on ancient spirits of the sun and the earth, he performed a mighty ritual that calmed the pass's harsh weather. In the process, Brogan's health broke; he survived and would be a father to his children for decades, but he was forever after weak and sickly, wracked with hacking coughs and deprived of the use of one leg. He judged this a fair trade for the safety of his wife and children.

The spell lasted a year, and Brogan renewed it ever after. When the Proud Elk returned after many moons, they expected to find nothing but frozen corpses, but instead they discovered a miraculous refuge established by one of their very own. Other followings came and went, and soon the word spread of the "oasis of the north" Brogan had created. Brogan and Seba never claimed to be the place's rulers, but they did establish their community's Three Rights, which everyone who entered agreed to uphold. Over the years, people erected walls and gates to protect the ravine camp which came to be Hillcross.

Eventually Brogan—who was called Brogan the Grasswalker after the founding of Hillcross—died, but he passed the *Summerland Spell* on to others, who have maintained it every year for generations without number. When followings came, they stored their valuables in the deep caverns by the Right to Store, negotiated their grievances under the Right to Peace, and healed their wounds in safety using the Right to Shelter. Travelers bound for Icestair and far-off Tian Xia spread word of the permanent encampment, and soon fur traders and other merchants arrived, seeking the rare hides only Kellids could deliver and living creatures only the Mammoth Lords could tame. A small but growing population decided to live in Hillcross permanently; they forsook the campground on the floor of the ravine to dwell in caves, as Brogan and Seba had.

Periodically, Hillcross has come under attack from frost giants and others, but its stalwart residents have repelled each and every invasion. A popular story told by Hillcross elders took place a century ago, when a demon lord made the mistake of judging Hillcross to be nothing more than a tent-city populated by pacifists, wounded warriors, and beleaguered travelers. His demons and frost giant cultists were soundly defeated by the Hillcross Witches and the brave followings who fought on the encampment's behalf.

The most recent attack on Hillcross came less than a year ago in 4721 AR, and the memory is still fresh. The Burning Mammoth following, led by a merciless and mysterious magus named Ivarsa, besieged the ravine in tandem with frost giants from the Graylok clan. No one would've ever suspected an old and once honorable following like the Burning Mammoth to ally itself with frost giants, but the people of Hillcross repulsed the raiders all the same. However, the fight wasn't without cost—after the Burning Mammoth had been routed and the dust settled, the Hillcross Witches discovered one of their own number, the respected historian Jesseri the Hailstorm, was missing. Jesseri's fate remains unknown, and the Burning Mammoths have been exiled forever from Hillcross.

CULTURE

The culture of Hillcross is a unique mixture of long-held Mammoth Lord traditions and more recently introduced southern customs.

SUMMERLAND

The *Summerland Spell*, a potent ritual that preserves Hillcross Ravine's unusually temperate weather, touches everyone who visits. In a high mountain pass that would otherwise be dangerous to travel in any season, the magic of the Hillcross Witches enables the settlement to exist in what many northern Avistani would consider comfortable conditions. Though proud nomads might balk at a temperate climate, which they believe could encourage idleness and weakness, every northerner knows that a visit to Hillcross is a rare and spectacular privilege. For many, Hillcross is the most magical place they'll visit in their entire lifetime. Those who permanently reside in the ravine recognize their good fortune and understand that their own needs come second to the needs of their guests and Hillcross as a whole. The loss of Hillcross would be a terrible blow to Mammoth Lord culture, if not all of northern Avistan.

The Hillcross Witches perform the *Summerland Spell* annually. Knowledge of the spell is passed down from generation to generation, and a half dozen of the witches know it at any one time, working to cast the ritual together. For more details on the *Summerland Spell*, see page 77.

THE THREE RIGHTS

Everyone who comes to Hillcross must abide by—and is granted—the Three Rights: the Right to Peace, the Right to Shelter, and the Right to Store.

Right to Peace: Within Hillcross's walls, everyone insists on a total ban on physical violence against others. Even hunting is forbidden because it's just too easy for a Kellid hunter to inflict harm on another individual and claim a "hunting accident." Animals, such as game and livestock, can be slaughtered for sustenance, but people can slaughter only the animals they brought with them when they arrived at Hillcross. Because everyone is presumed capable of honoring the Right to Peace, individuals keep their weapons.

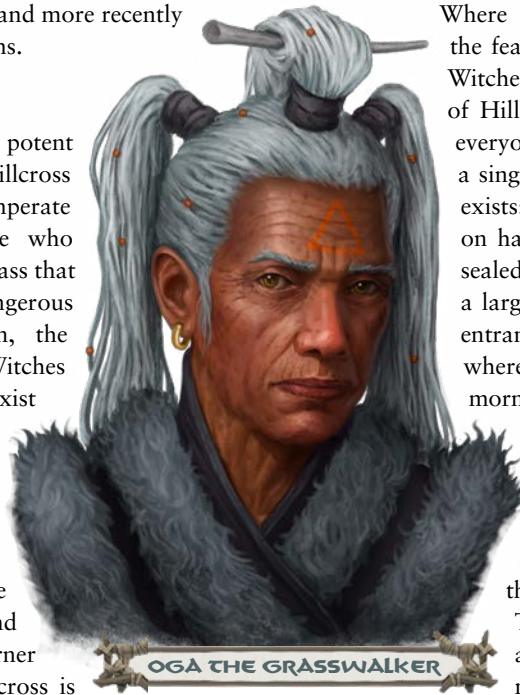
Those who threaten to violate this tenet are warned, while those who break it outright are simply expelled.

Where common decency isn't enough, the fear of being cursed by the Hillcross Witches or of being shunned by the rest of Hillcross is typically enough to keep everyone in line. For the truly determined, a single exception to the Right to Peace exists: two or more individuals hellbent on harming one another can ask to be sealed in the Dueling Cave. At sunset, a large boulder is rolled in front of the entrance to this blood-soaked chamber, where it remains until sunrise the next morning. The decision of what, exactly, happens inside the Dueling Cave during this time is left entirely to its occupants.

Right to Shelter: Everyone is welcome at Hillcross, but there isn't always enough room. Therefore, when a new group arrives at the ravine but there's nowhere for them to set up camp,

other Hillcross occupants must leave to make room, starting with those who have been there the longest. This requirement sometimes forces a group to depart before they're ready; they might be in negotiations with a violent rival or still recovering from injury, but the Right to Shelter can't be broken. Emergency camping space exists just outside the gates, to give those who must depart a little extra time, but that space isn't officially part of Hillcross and isn't protected by the Three Rights. Hillcross's permanent residents—those who live in the Cliffside Caves—are exempt from this rule and aren't required to leave the settlement.

Right to Store: Mammoth Lord followings remain on the move, meaning most typically limit their belongings to only what they and their pack animals can carry. Occasionally, though, a following can't hold onto an important item. The item might be too awkward, heavy, or dangerous. In this case, every Mammoth Lord following is entitled to a single chamber in Hillcross's deep caverns, where they can store whatever they wish. The chambers range in size, some no more than a few feet deep and wide, others as large as a small herd of mammoths. Some followings use their chamber to store important heirlooms, such as banners or magical items. Others store items which have little value to nomads but nevertheless might come in handy someday, such as southern coinage. The wisest Mammoth Lords use the Right to Store to put away emergency supplies—everything from preserved



OGA THE GRASSWALKER

BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:
Heroes of
Hillcross


Chapter 2:
Barkblood

Chapter 3:
Darkest Night

Continuing the
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis
of the North

Adventure
Toolbox



rations and sealed gourds of water to tents, armor, weapons, and even petrified pack animals that might one day be returned to life with a spell. When winter, age, war, or hunger threatens to destroy a following, a trip to Hillcross enables well-prepared groups to resupply and resume nomadic life. Trespassing into another following's chamber protected by the Right to Store is a serious crime, but because there are so many caverns—and because no one has ever successfully kept track of them all—such an offense isn't totally unforgivable. Children are especially known to go where they aren't supposed to, and as long as they don't steal, all is forgiven. Unlike the other rights, only Mammoth Lords and their followings are granted the Right to Store.

TRADE

It isn't unusual to see Mendevian fur traders, New Thassilonian merchants, and Belkzen arms dealers ply their wares among the camps of Hillcross. Most people of the Realm have little use for money, but if they have it, this is where they spend it, buying metal tools, weapons, armor, magic items, rare animals from the south, and occasional luxuries, such as silk, metal jewelry, or unusual foodstuffs. The mixing of cultures and languages creates a demand for knowledgeable translators and guides, and someone able to bridge the gap between the Mammoth Lords and travelers from far away can earn both respect and wealth.

LOCATIONS

While the basic geography of Hillcross is readily apparent to all who arrive, it also has secrets known only to a few.

Cliffside Caves: Precisely 100 caves line the Hillcross Ravine: 37 in Norcliff and 63 in Soucliff. These caves have no consistent elevation; a few are at ground level, but most are at least 20 feet up, and some are near the top of the 350-foot cliffs. Access to the caves varies; some can be accessed by simple but sturdy ladders, others require long ropes. Many caves are connected by light scaffolding held together with leather lashes and wooden pegs.

Hillcross's permanent residents live in the cliffside caves, the number and size of which create a practical limit for how large the permanent population can get. An individual who moves into a cliffside cave is announcing their status as a permanent resident of the camp; they no longer have to depart under the Right to Shelter but are still expected to put Hillcross's needs before their own.

Most of these caves are small and house a single family of up to five individuals. A few, however, are

much larger, having been expanded by permanent subcommunities like the Hillcross Witches or the Growers. Many cave residents keep nimble animals, such as raccoons, falcons, or foxes, as pets. They train these animal friends to run errands down to the ground and back up, delivering messages or even retrieving food and water for sickly or infirm cave occupants.

Deep Caverns: Some of the caves lining the ground level of Norcliff and Soucliff provide access to deeper chambers which, despite Hillcross's long history, have never been fully charted. Common wisdom suggests that if there were anything dangerous down in the "deep caverns," it would've made itself known by now. Of course, such reasoning doesn't satisfy children and adolescents, who are notorious for roaming these deep cave networks. Over the years, youths about to leave Hillcross have passed down what they know of the caverns to young newcomers, creating a chain of dubious but deep oral folklore. As a result, those who want to know something about the deep caverns could do far worse than to consult one of the scrappy children scurrying around the campgrounds.

Among the known parts of the deep caverns are the caches and repositories of Mammoth Lord followings entitled to keep their goods here under the Right to Store. No one really knows the contents of everything stored in these caches; every following is responsible for securing their own cavern and knowing its location, and many ward their caverns with powerful magic or monstrous guardians. When a following dissolves due to war, starvation, or other pressures, the knowledge of their storage cavern's location and contents is often lost. Even when an abandoned cavern is discovered, the Right to Store dictates that its cache be left undisturbed, for one can never be sure if and when a following thought lost might return.

The deep caverns have one final use. Whenever two or more individuals can't abide by the Right to Peace and must engage in violence, they can each ask to be sealed into the one chamber reserved specifically for this purpose: the Dueling Cave. All the individuals—with their weapons and armor—enter this cave the same evening. A boulder is rolled across the entrance at sunset and isn't removed until sunrise. All who emerge from the Dueling Cave are given a wide berth, their very flesh soaked with the stench of death that permeates the cave.

The Gates: Two gates allow entrance through Hillcross's formidable palisade: the Morning Gate to the east and the Evening Gate to the west. Both are wide enough for two mammoths to walk through side by side, and self-appointed guards keep torches lit day and night to mark the entrances. Guarding one

of the gates is considered a great honor, and visitors and permanent residents alike compete to earn this right. The gates can be barred with logs too heavy for people to lift—gatekeepers must entreat domesticated megafauna, such as mammoths or dinosaurs, to put the logs in place. Outside each gate lay several acres of cleared ground; in the event of overcrowding, one or more departing followings can camp in this space, though the protection of the Three Rights doesn't extend beyond the settlement's walls.

Icelake: At night, moonfall illuminates into this frigid pool. By day, thousands of people come here to fill skins, jugs, or baskets with clean drinking water. Water is tightly rationed at Hillcross. Baths, laundry, and other such luxuries aren't permitted except for permanent residents. Likewise, bathing in Icelake is forbidden, even for those who could stand the frigid temperatures of the water. There are always too many people around for even a stealthy swimmer to slip in unnoticed. Nevertheless, Icelake is the single most important spot in Hillcross for socializing and gathering news. Those thirsty for interaction spend much of their day here, idly chatting with whomever comes for water.

Moonfall: The effects of Hillcross's *Summerland Spell* cause the glacier north of Norcliff to constantly melt in a rivulet down the face of the cliff. The glacier is replenished by snowfall and ice during the winter, while in the summer the flow of meltwater increases. Most of the year, the flow is strong enough to form a veritable waterfall connecting the glacier above and Icelake below. The people of Hillcross call this 350-foot-tall cascade Moonfall. When a following approaches Hillcross, Moonfall is the first thing they see and hear—it's how scouts know Hillcross is nearby. Moonfall is spectacular in its beauty, but deafening; the caves that line the cliff near it are the least popular in which to dwell since the noise of the waterfall keeps all but the heaviest sleepers awake.

The Ravine: The Hillcross Ravine is wide enough to be more accurately termed a valley or canyon, but its name is as much a fixture of Hillcross as the Hillcross Witches. The steep walls of Norcliff and Soucliff keep the many camps that line them in the ravine below in frequent shadow. Wildlife is common since the Rite to Peace precludes even the practice of hunting. Squirrels, raccoons, and foxes scavenge

for scraps among the camps, and thrushes, falcons, and chickadees roost along the cliffs. On celebration days, adventurous folk launch themselves off the top of the cliffs with gliders made of hollow bones and animal skins.

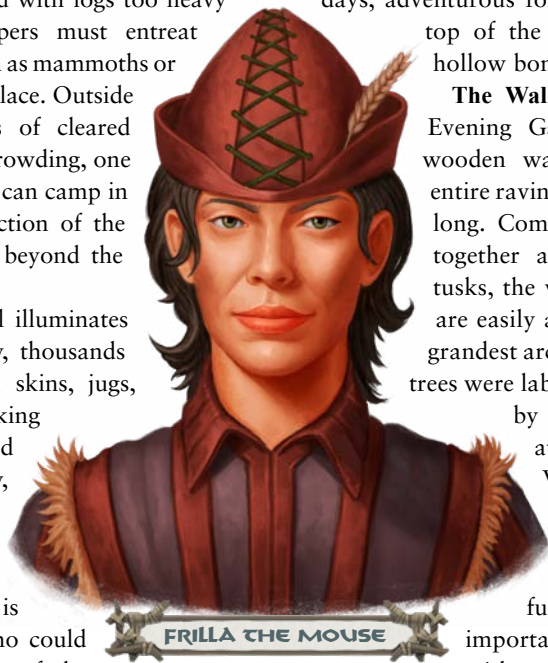
The Walls: The Morning Gate and Evening Gate stand in the center of wooden walls that stretch across the entire ravine, each over a thousand yards long. Composed of tree trunks lashed together and topped with mammoth tusks, the walls stand 30 feet high and are easily among the Mammoth Lords' grandest architectural achievements. The trees were laboriously hauled to the ravine by followings seeking shelter at Hillcross in its early years. When new lumber is needed to repair or replace part of the walls, visitors can earn a great deal of respect by fulfilling this exhausting yet important task. Each wall is topped with a dense thicket of mammoth

tusks sharpened to deadly points. Outside the walls, deep ditches give would-be besiegers starkly disadvantageous terrain. On the inside of the walls, wooden walkways allow those inside to see over the wall to the cleared acreage beyond. The walls of Hillcross aren't traditionally patrolled by guards—there's no official city watch—but visiting warriors nonetheless congregate along the walkways to socialize and keep watch on cloudy nights, if only because old habits die hard.

INHABITANTS

As a meeting point for Mammoth Lord followings, southern merchants, and travelers from around the world, Hillcross has a diverse population.

The Growers: Most Mammoth Lord societies are nomadic, but some defy this cultural tradition. No one group typifies this possibility more than the Growers, a vocal segment of Hillcross's permanent population determined to establish agriculture within the ravine. The Growers are led by **Frilla the Mouse** (NG female human farmer 6), a half-Kellid woman in her middle age with a husband and children. Frilla wants to plant seeds in the land outside Hillcross's gates, turning the region affected by the *Summerland Spell* into farmland. She isn't alone—many traveling Kellids who have been exposed to the southerners' bread, wine, and tobacco yearn for their own means of producing such sumptuous luxuries.



BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:
Heroes of
Hillcross


Chapter 2:
Barkblood

Chapter 3:
Darkest Night

Continuing the
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis
of the North

Adventure
Toolbox



Hillcross is in a shaded mountain pass; there wouldn't be much room for crops even if Frilla's plan succeeded, but thanks to the tempering effects of the *Summerland Spell*, Hillcross could possibly enjoy two full growing seasons per year. The main obstacle to her plan is, however, the same thing that would enable it: the *Summerland Spell*. While the spell has always been renewed and Hillcross has always been protected by it, this arrangement is true only because of the diligent work of the Hillcross Witches. If the inhabitants of Hillcross were to at last plant seeds and grow their food as others do, and the *Summerland Spell* were to fail, all their work would be for nothing. Worse, the old ways of foraging and hunting outside the settlement's walls might be forgotten, as they've been for many people from the more cosmopolitan south. This argument has placed enough doubt in the minds of Hillcross's other residents to keep Frilla's ideas from truly taking hold. Nevertheless, the last few years have seen some progress: Frilla and her fellow Growers cultivate mushroom crops in the Cliffside Caves, and they trade these mushrooms with Hillcross residents and visitors.

The Hillcross Witches: Since Brogan the Grasswalker, Hillcross has been home to druids, witches, oracles, and other spellcasters skilled in taming the weather and natural elements. Although these spellcasters seldom number more than a half dozen, they're surrounded by apprentices, servants, bodyguards, hunters, and other hangers-on who, when combined, make for Hillcross's largest influential faction. The Hillcross Witches, as they're known, are responsible for the annual renewal of the *Summerland Spell*. They also perform other duties, such as delivering oracular prophecies to travelers, concocting tinctures or potions, and enchanting or removing curses from items.

The leader of the Hillcross Witches takes the title "the Grasswalker," to recognize their lineage from student to pupil going back to Brogan. The current leader, **Oga the Grasswalker** (N female human witch 11), is an ancient Kellid woman who sustained her life through alchemical and magical means, and she has held the title for over a century. Every few years, she has a health crisis that threatens to end her life, and every time she claws her way back—albeit a bit more shrunken and ill-tempered than before.

The Meeters: This local term refers to followings who have come to Hillcross to take advantage of the Right to Peace, usually to negotiate with an enemy or rival. Hillcross's unique law ensures the Meeters aren't at risk of violence. While Mammoth Lords meet to conduct tense negotiations, their followings enjoy the

opportunity to rest, socialize, craft, and barter for rare treasures. Meeters stay in Hillcross just long enough to do their business and then depart. When it's time for Meeters to leave, it's tradition for each faction to depart through a different gate, ensuring the two groups aren't immediately forced into a small space that tests the new peace.

The People Who Never Left: Lots of people come to Hillcross. Most leave within a few weeks, sometimes a few months. But there are always a few who, contrary to their intentions, just never get around to leaving. They make connections with permanent residents or simply decide they like it in Hillcross, and they manage to inherit one of the limited number of domiciles in the cliffside caves. These individuals are known as the People Who Never Left.

Most People Who Never Left are southerners who originally came to Hillcross to trade or considered Hillcross just a stopping place on their journey to Icestair or the Crown of the World. However, sometimes even Kellids, most of whom strongly cherish their nomadic lifestyle, also decide to stay, whether because they discovered a passion for an occupation ill-suited to nomadism, because they became estranged or separated from their following, or for any number of other reasons.

The People Who Never Left make up much of Hillcross's permanent labor force; they work as water carriers and translators or herd mountain goats along the pass. There's more than one wanted criminal among them, but now they've made a new home in Hillcross where their crimes are unknown. One of these outlaws, **Blue Bonnet Brucan** (CN male human pirate 7), is a former pirate captain who gave up the sea after one too many close calls with the Chelaxian navy. Now he's an inhabitant of Hillcross with unparalleled skills at rope-making, knot-tying, and weather prediction.

The Survivors: Hunger, war, predators, or bitter cold have spelled the end for many followings. When a following has shrunk to a size so small that nomadism is no longer viable, the hungry and lonely remnants come to Hillcross, where they're known as the Survivors.

Once safe in Hillcross—where food, shelter, and water are easily available for anyone willing to work—Survivors look for a potential new family, investigating the followings currently taking shelter and attempting to earn membership in a suitable following before it departs. A Survivor might linger in Hillcross for many months, working as a water carrier, herder, or other laborer, before finding a following. Some eventually join the People Who Never Left.

Traders: Mammoth Lord culture has refined hunting, trapping, and domesticating animals to a fine art, and the demand for these products from outsiders is always high. The community of southern traders at Hillcross includes representatives from every neighboring realm, including the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Irrisen, New Thassilon, Belkzen, Ustalav, and Mendev. These merchants are hardened veterans of the ice and snow who have learned Hallit and have reliable contacts among many different Mammoth Lord followings. Because the Right to Shelter precludes traders from establishing a permanent outpost, most make regular trips back and forth to their native land, bringing as many furs with them on the homeward leg as they can manage. When they return to Hillcross, they bring crafted goods from their own lands, including iron weapons, metal armor, useful survival gear, along with luxuries like silk from Tian Xia, skymetals from Numeria, and foreign foods, such as wine and seafood.

A Belkzen native named **Jana Blade-Hands** (CG female orc merchant 9) is one famous example of Hillcross's successful merchant class. Jana has made a small fortune trading steel axes, swords, and other weapons. She firmly believes a well-armed populace is a peaceful populace, or as she often puts it, "When everyone has an axe, no one speaks carelessly." She has no reservations about selling to all sides of northern conflicts, even when peace negotiators implore her not to. Her tent is a frequent stop for those headed to the Dueling Cave.

Travelers: Many people pass through Hillcross on their way somewhere else. The most common destination is Icestair, the next step in a path that eventually leads across the Crown of the World to the continent of Tian Xia. The sealing of the Worldwound has also opened routes for trade and travel from the eastern nation of Mendev westward to Irrisen or the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, and all these routes pass through Hillcross.

Travelers rarely dwell in Hillcross long. The lack of inns and other features of a southern city make Hillcross a novelty worth visiting but not a place to remain. Most stay long enough to recruit a guide and secure supplies before continuing. These folks are an important source of information on events in the rest of the world, and it isn't unusual for one of the Hillcross Witches, a trader, or one of the Growers to take a traveler aside and provide them with a hot meal in exchange for news.

Wounded Ones: When a following has taken a beating—either from their enemies or nature itself—they come to Hillcross for rest and recuperation. These followings are known as Wounded Ones, and by claiming the Right to Shelter, they can camp, recover from their injuries, and plan for the future before setting out again. Wounded Ones are the only group not obliged to fight when Hillcross comes under attack. They also enjoy some charity, such as deliveries of water and food. Yet, Wounded Ones can't stay long—the Right to Shelter ensures everyone must depart eventually.



BURNING TUNDRA

Chapter 1:
Heroes of
Hillcross

Chapter 2:
Barkblood

Chapter 3:
Darkest Night

Continuing the
Campaign

Hillcross, Oasis
of the North

A Treasure
Treasure