



Season 3 Narrative

A city built upon the exchange of handshakes and gold, HILLSFAR was, in its infancy, ruled by a council of humans, half-elves, and representatives of the ELVEN COURT of CORMANTHOR. In 1354 DR, the archwizard MAALTHIIR overthrew the council using blackmail and threats of violence and appointed himself as the FIRST LORD of Hillsfar. In the capacity, he appointed the mercenary group THE RED PLUME, as the keepers of peace in Hillsfar, though the group would eventually begin harassing and extorting from the people of the city. Under Maalthiir's rule, the city-state enacted TWO GREAT LAWS--the most infamous of which were the policies prohibiting the presence of non-humans within its walls.

Over a century later, Hillsfar is once more ruled by a council-appointed First Lord; TORIN NOMERTHAL. Torin amasses an army of mercenaries and, augmented by Hillsfar's TOWER GUARD, MAGE GUILD, and ROGUES GUILD defeats a Netherese garrison outside of the city. Once successful, the second purge of non-humans from within Hillsfar begins. In response, nearly every non-human in Hillsfar departs. As a result, First Lord Torin's rule over the city is unquestionable, the Red Plumes are returned, and the only non-humans found within the city are found in the Arena.

Unbeknownst to the First Lord, however, THE DARK PRINCE, GRAZ'ZT, has taken up residence in the UNDERDARK far beneath Hillsfar. Its FIRE GIANT residents of MAERIMYDRA have roamed into the surrounding regions of the Underdark, including nearby SZITH MORCANE, RAVAGESTONE, RYXYG, and SPOREDOME--spurring an influx of DROW REFUGEES would all attest to, were they not being casually tossed into the Arena.

The Setting for Season 3 of D&D Adventurers League Expeditions



by Travis Woodall

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Rage of Demons: Hillsfar

Glossary

HILLSFAR. Known as the City of Trade, Hillsfar is a powerful walled city on the southern coast of the Moonsea. Entrance into the city is achieved through a single, massive gate.

ELVEN COURT. One of the four ancient elven communities within Cormanthor, the Elven Court is a holy site for the elves and a place where the outcome of the Crown Wars and the fate of elves was decided nearly 12,000 years ago. Until 1354 DR, Hillsfar fell under the rule of the Elven Court.

CORMANTHOR. The vast forest to the south of the Moonsea Region of Faerûn and the seat of the vast elven empire of Cormanthyr. Home to such elven communities as the Elven Court, Myth Drannor, Sembholme, and the Tangled Trees.

MAALTHIIR. A greedy, sadistic, and xenophobic wizard who overthrew the ruling council of Hillsfar and became the city's First Lord. The only thing greater than his paranoia was his distrust of non-humans. Pulled up stakes and abandoned the city in 1374 DR.

THE RED PLUME. A mercenary company empowered by the former First Lord Maalthiir to provide security over his new city-state. Widely known for their corruption. After Maalthiir's fall, the Red Plume fell from power, but the mercenary company has since been returned to a semblance of its former glory thanks to the First Lord's ingenuity.

TWO GREAT LAWS. The two primary laws implemented by First Lord Maalthiir. First, the Great Law of Trade: Do not interfere with legitimate trade. Second, the Great Law of Humanity: Only humans are allowed in the city.

FIRST LORD TORIN NOMERTHAL. The rule of Hillsfar. Historically, this position was once of supreme rule, but was recently supplanted by a senate comprised of merchants and guildmasters. Recently, however, First Lord Torin Nomerthal cemented his rule over the city.

TOWER GUARD. The previous standing army of Hillsfar. Well-trained and professional, the Tower Guard exists to serve the interests of the merchants and guilds within the city. The Tower Guard, along

with the surviving Netherese garrison now form the new Red Plume.

MAGE'S GUILD. The mage's guild supplements the Tower Guard in their responsibilities for keeping the city and its surroundings safe from harm. The Guild's mages are well-liked by the people.

ROGUE GILD. Most career criminals in Hillsfar join the guild or are exiled or killed. Because of this, the guild possesses tight control over crime in the city. It maintains a careful balance; not too little where they would lose power, but not too much where they run the risk of the merchants growing tired of them.

ARENA. Quite possibly the largest structure in Hillsfar, the Arena hosts regular events pitting various creatures against each other--sapient and otherwise. Nonhumans that reside within the city limits are "residents" of the Arena. While some compete willingly, others are held against their will.

THE DARK PRINCE GRAZ'ZT. One of the most powerful demon lords in the Abyss, Graz'zt has been forcefully removed from his home and now rules a portion of the Underdark beneath Hillsfar. He is most commonly associated with lust, self-indulgence, and narcissism.

THE UNDERDARK. The Underdark is a vast network of subterranean caverns and tunnels beneath the surface of Faerûn. It is comprised of the Upperdark, the Middledark, and the Lowerdark. Descending into the Underdark is a descent into madness.

MAERIMYDRA. This once might drow city is now peopled by fire giants led by the fire titan Hledh.

FIRE GIANTS. Among the most powerful of giant-kin, these giants are Dwarvish in appearance with orange-red hair and dark, almost black skin.

SZITH MORCANE. A relatively small drow trading outpost. Serves as a frontier wall, preventing the derro of Ravagestone from expanding towards a drow city further in the Underdark.

RYXYG. A small mind flayer enclave with a young, naïve Elder Brain.

RAVAGESTONE. A derro town consumed by madness and evil. The derro of Ravagestone have been effected the most by Graz'zt's presence.

SPOREDOME. A vast underground cavern containing a huge myconid colony.

DROW REFUGEES. A startling number of drow have recently fled the Underdark, speaking of roving groups of mad fire giants. Most claim to be from the outpost of Szith Morcane, but others range from other nearby areas in the darker parts of Faerûn.

Themes

Each adventure must be attached to one or both of the themes below.

- ***The Deep Threat (Hillsfar)***. Graz'zt's presence has driven the fire giants of Maerimydra mad and their push into the surrounding parts of the Underdark have led them to Szith Morcane's door. The drow, eager to defend their home, now find themselves in a tenable position to not only do so, but also reclaim Maerimydra itself. To facilitate this, volunteers have been ranging far and wide to seek out those who would respond. A great many have found themselves in the Moonsea region--specifically in the area near Hillsfar. Knowing Hillsfar's feelings towards non-humans, these drow allowed themselves to be captured and spread their tale far and wide in the city's Arena, hoping that the city will react.
- ***The Fight Against Ultimate Evil (Storyline)***. The Dark Prince Graz'zt has carved out a place for himself in the depths of the Underdark beneath Hillsfar. From there, his corrupted influence seeps towards the surface world and throughout the nearby area of the Underdark.

Hillsfar

Themes: Xenophobia, Paranoia, Mercantile Intrigue

Population: 40,000+ in 1490 DR

Recent History

Until recently, Hillsfar was a trading capital controlled by humans, half-elves, and elves from the Moonsea region and Cormanthor to the south. However, with the retreat of the elves in 1344 DR, the council succumbed to corruption and was infiltrated by a number of organizations including, but not limited to, the Zhentarim and the Cult of the Dragon. In 1354 DR, a councilman and wizard named Maalthiir, overthrew the remaining council and set himself up as the sole ruler of Hillsfar. Backed by the mercenary group the Red Plumes, the First Lord of Hillsfar ruled with an iron fist. Non-humans were ousted from the city--elves for their perceived desertion with the disappearance of the Elven Court, and halflings for their suspected racial thievery.

Despite Maalthiir's tyrannical behavior, however, Hillsfar prospered. With the enactment of the first of the Two Great Laws, trade in the city-state flourished. Within two decades, however, the fortunes of Hillsfar took a turn for the worse, and Maalthiir pulled up roots and left, destination unknown. Shortly after Maalthiir's departure, Hillsfar is besieged by and subsequently capitulates to the Zhentarim.

Hillsfar Today

In the void left by Maalthiir's departure and the Zhentarim's fall from power, a senate consisting of thirty-one merchants and guildmasters assumed control of the city. Fine in concept, but they soon found themselves unable to act in the best interest of the city, instead insisting on courses of action that maximized their own personal profit. And so it fell onto the current First Lord, Torin Nomerthal, to lead the city--a task he has achieved suitable success with. After a Netherese garrison was stationed just outside of Hillsfar, Torin waged a bloody battle against their ranks using the Tower Guard, mages of the city's Guild, mercenaries and those Netherese whose allegiance could be bought.

These soldiers would later form the ranks of the new Red Plume and together with Torin's plots and schemes, would secure his position as the ruler of Hillsfar. Among his first acts, Torin reinstated the city's prejudicial laws against non-humans and to

this day, the only such residents of Hillsfar are those found within the Arena.

Organizations

The following are Hillsfar-specific organizations that possess a noticeable degree of influence in the city, along with the names and brief descriptions of noteworthy NPCs.

The First Lord

Location: Tower of the First Lord

After Maalthiir's flight and Torin's rise to power, the position of First Lord was that of a figurehead; power in Hillsfar was possessed by a senate of merchants and guild-leaders. This all changed with First Lord Torin. Though the city is governed with trade in mind, he maintains strict control over who is and who is not permitted within the gates.

- **First Lord Torin Nomerthal (TORE-in NO-mer-thall).** A clever, cunning man, Torin hides his calculating nature behind a genial, almost fatherly guise. He is wildly popular among the human residents of Hillsfar and is often seen taking casual strolls through the markets and is famous for handing out fruit and other delights to children that he encounters. This is merely a façade; he is in actuality a pragmatic, manipulative man with a shrewd business sense. He's the perfect man for his job.

The Red Plume

Location: Hillsfar Castle, Hillsfar Gate

When Maalthiir abandoned the city, it fell under siege by the Zhentarim. The Red Plumes, the mercenary company previously charged with the city's defense largely followed the former First Lord's example and either surrendered or fled. Those that remained behind formed the predecessors of the Tower Guard--the current standing army of Hillsfar. In the days that followed the attack of the Netherese garrison, however, the Tower Guard was rededicated as the new Red Plume, and in the time since, have grown to be nearly as powerful as their predecessors--and just as despised.

- **Guard Commandant Vuhm Yestral (VOOM YES-trull).** Loud and opinionated, Commandant Yestral is nonetheless quite kind and fiercely devoted to the people of the city. Going on 60-some years of age, he's lived in Hillsfar his entire life. His duties are a little more comfortable than they were when he was younger, and his days are consumed with endless paperwork. Understandably, he eagerly

awaits the opportunities where he is able to get out and work alongside his subordinates.

- **Typical Red Plume Guard.** The city is wealthy enough to issue and maintain high-quality arms and armor for the members of the Red Plume. The standard uniform is splint mail and a shield, with a longsword and a shortbow. The typical guard has been entrusted with dispensing fines and short sentences of imprisonment (30 days or less) at their discretion. Corruption and bullying is commonplace, however.

The Mage's Guild

Location: Hillsfar Castle, Hillsfar Gate

Like the Red Plume, the wizards and sorcerers of the Mage's Guild are professional, although tinged with a shade of eccentricity. Also, like the Red Plume, members of the Guild wear high-quality uniforms emblazoned with the livery of Hillsfar. Additionally, the members of the guild individually and personally cultivate what is quite possibly the finest library this side of the Moonsea.

- **Master Torsha Ladron (TORE-shuh LAD-run).** Master Ladron is the ranking member of the Mage's Guild. A female human of middling years, she has dedicated her life to study. Widely considered to be the most learned person in the city, Master Ladron is consulted on just about everything one can think of--from matters of civil defense, public education and sanitation, and everything in between. She loves being busy, and is frequently seen running from one part of the castle to another with sheafs of documents in hand.
- **Typical Guild Mage.** While similar in ethics to a typical Red Plume guardsman, most guild mages serve not out of a sense of public service, but for membership in the guild's extensive library--which is open only to guild member or those persons on the guild's behalf. They are always on the lookout for a new and interesting work to turn into the library, which contributes towards the mage's ascent through the ranks.

The Rogues Guild

Location: The Rogues Guild

Despite the astronomical amount of trade that Hillsfar conducts on a daily basis, crime is astonishingly low--due primarily in part to the guild. The guild has long held the belief that the control of crime (and by virtue of that, its tolerance) is ultimately more profitable than its proliferation and

subsequent intolerance. Besides, the guild makes a bulk of its business in corporate intrigue and espionage. More than one mercantile house has one or more guild member on retainer to ferret out the trade secrets of another house.

- ***Isthana Ro (IS-tah-nuh ROW)***. Isthana is a female human in her mid-30's. By the look of her, you'd never guess that she was the leader of a thieves' guild. She constantly looks as if she is on her way to a fancy-dress party, replete in exquisite clothing and jewelry. She is wickedly smart and doesn't give a damn about anything other than the guild. This sense of self-preservation is tempered with an amazingly acute business sense and the ability to think ahead. She is the best thing to happen to the guild in living memory.
- ***Typical Guild Rogue***. Most of the guild rogues are cliché cut purses, ruffians, and thugs. However, the guild also has a healthy stable of assassins, acquisitionists, negotiators, and spies. The latter demand a premium price for the services--something that the various merchant houses and trade guilds happily pay.

The Faithful of Tempus

Location: The Vault of Swords

The faithful of Tempus within Hillsfar are a brash, boisterous lot who spend most of their time in the Arena than out and about in the city (or in some cases, even their own temple). They are held in wide regard in Hillsfar, and although they disagree with the philosophical ideals held by the rulers, they do their part to subvert his beliefs among the members of the Red Plume that they train on a regular basis.

- ***Battle-Chaplain Dargol Sar (DARR-gole SARR)***. This burly man is everything one would expect a worshipper of Tempus to be. Battle-scarred and headstrong, he is frequently seen about town shouting the tenets of Tempus at the top of his lungs and is more frequently participating in fights in the Arena. While he is not undefeated, his record in the pits is impressive to say the least and it is not unheard of for potential opponents to withdraw from the fight upon learning that he is taking part--something that infuriates him to no end. Though whether or not that is out of respect for his abilities or for not wanting to get on the bad side of the most prominent faith in Hillsfar is unknown.

The Joydancers

Location: The House of Happiness

The clerics and lay worshippers of Lliira here do their small part to ease the prejudices that plague the residents of Hillsfar over mugs of locally-brewed ale and visiting musicians. Filled with the sounds of lively celebration every evening of the week, the House of Happiness is one of the few places where daily troubles are left outside. Unbeknownst to the First Lord, the Lliirans assist the factions in pursuing their goals inside city limits when possible--even the Zhentarim find those sympathetic to their cause within from time to time.

- ***Revelmistress Danna Thris (DANN-uh TRISS)***. Danna Thrist is married to an aspiring young merchant originally hailing from Mulmaster. Revelmistress Thrist is charming, gregarious, and welcoming--everything that a worshipper of Lliira should be. Unbeknownst to most, however, she is also a member of the Scarlet Mummerys, an order of Lliira-worshippers charged with protecting the faithful of the Goddess of Joy and doing battle with Loviatans. The Scarlet Mummerys are feared assassins who use blades concealed in boots to slay their foes during elaborate dances and leave a single, red rose as a calling card. She has grown disenchanted with the city due to its recent developments.

The Red Embassy

The Thayans have maintained a presence in Hillsfar for some time, primarily for trade purposes. The Embassy is primarily staffed with diviners. Despite this, their genuinely innocuous purpose for being in the city, they are nonetheless held in suspicion. Most citizens of the city distrust them, and believe they are a portent for something horrible and painful on the horizon.

- ***The Honored Khazark Shazzara Mahn (SHUH-sar-uh MONN)***. Calm, cool, and collected, Shazzara Mahn is an amazingly talented diplomat. While she does not wear the robes and elaborate tattoos that the Red Wizards are known for, red is featured prominently in her garb. She is not an arcanist in her own right, but much of her staff are and she is never seen without at least one Thayan knight bodyguard.

Hillsfar and its Surrounds

Locations within Hillsfar

Hillsfar Castle

Formerly Castle Maalthiir (before it was razed to the ground), Hillsfar Castle was reconstructed to house the Hillsfar Senate, the Red Plume, and the Mage's Guild. At the very center of the castle is the Tower of the First Lord. In an attempt to distance itself from its xenophobic and racially charged past, the senate of old ordered that the new castle be primarily of human design, but incorporate aspects from other races's cultures as well. While those practices have been abandoned by First Lord Torin, the result was a grand building that, while somewhat unusual, is quite beautiful to behold.

Tower of the First Lord

This tower houses the First Lord of Hillsfar and his personal guard. Of the same architecture of Hillsfar Castle, the tower stands over 200 feet tall and is visible from anywhere within the city.

Hillsfar Gate

This large, steel gate is the only means of ingress and egress to the city. Housing a full garrison of Red Plume guards and Guild Mages, it can be sealed in the event of a siege in a matter of moments. The gate is typically closed at nightfall and reopened at the break of dawn.

The Rogues Guild

The Guildhall is spacious, well-appointed and centrally located to the east of the Tower of the First Lord.

Hillsfar Arena

The people of Hillsfar still enjoy good sport, and there is plenty to be found at the Hillsfar Arena. Hosting everything from races, gladiatorial games, and even naval combat (the floor is sealed and flooded), the Arena employs paid athletes as well as prisoners. Those seeking to earn some money can wager on the games or even participate for a handsome purse. Nonhuman victors merely get to live another day.

A curious influx of drow refugees have begun showing up in the Arena. Captured while ranging in the area surrounding Hillsfar, the drow have spun

tales of roving bands of fire giants. While these stories have fallen upon the Hillfarrians's deaf ears, they are enough to cause concern.

The Vault of Swords

This large brick and wood building has the words "Disparage No Foe and Respect All" emblazoned above the entry way. Within, the temple is warm and inviting (and slightly scratched and marred) wood with the holy symbol of the god of battle picked out in iron and wood in the center of the floor. An immense state of Tempus standing astride two rearing horses stands on the far end of the central chamber.

The House of Happiness

From the outside, this temple appears to be more a lively tavern or festhall than a place of worship. The only outward indicator of its dedication is the triangle of six-pointed stars on the sign post above its door. Within, the temple is decorated in ribbons and crepe paper flowers and the Joydancers (priests and priestesses of Lliira) serve locally-brewed ale and mead, and perform for the citizenry.

Lastholme

This modestly-sized brick building is the home to a small contingent of Chaunteans. Lastholme is frequented by farmers offering thanks for a bountiful harvest recently sent to market. The Chaunteans of Hillsfar brew a mead that is highly sought after throughout the Sword Coast. With the recent influx of children being born, the Chauntean church has grown to encompass a pair of nearby buildings for use as an orphanage.

Shrines

There are a number of shrines within the city dedicated to:

- Umberlee
- Malar
- Torm

Inns & Taverns

There are a number of inns, taverns, and shops within the city of varying quality. The most popular are, in order of quality (and cost):

- The Dragon's Lair (inn)
- The Hydra's Den (tavern)
- The Classy Lady (inn)
- The Diamond in the Dung (inn)

- The Rusty Nail (tavern)
- The Gully (tavern)

The Docks

The docks area consists of a half dozen squat warehouses and fishmongers with the Rust Nail and the Gully (taverns, above) squeezed in for flavor. A squad consisting of Red Plum guards and a guild mage frequently patrols the area.

Locations Outside of Hillsfar

The following locations are available for use outside of Hillsfar.

Elventree

A village of nearly 300 mostly consisting of elves, but also including humans and half-elves, Elventree seems idyllic and peaceful. This peace is kept by followers of the god Mielikki (rangers, barbarians, and druids), the faithful of Mystra (both clerics and wizards), a handful of Harpers, and Elanil Ellassidil, an elven bard of great renown, who holds the office of Moonsilver Herald. There are no free standing buildings; mostly homes and businesses are high in the trees, hollowed stumps, or caves beneath the ground. The temple of Mielikki is known as the Hall of the Unicorn, the Mystrans dwell in a dim hollowed out cairn that pulses with magical light, and the Harpers harp at the House of the Harp under the watchful eye of Shalaer, an elven ghost.

Elua's Lighthouse

This small lighthouse is of elven make, like much in the area. With the receding of the Moonsea the lighthouse sits like a lone sentinel keeping watch, its light constantly lit.

Elven Ruins

These ruins are ancient to the elves who dwell nearby. The elves of Elventree will not speak of them and they're not on elven maps.

Elven Watch Tower

When Cormanthor ruled Hillsfar the Elven Watch Tower protected against incursion from Zhentil Keep. Witnesses from nearby villages now say something dwells within the ruins.

Abarat's Folly

This ivory tower was constructed solely by the magic of an elven wizard named Abarat. It's unknown why the tower was never completed, but

some say Abarat was sucked into a portal as a result of the unstable wild magic he used to create the tower.

Yulash

Once a client village of Hillsfar, as soon as Maalthiir left it was abandoned to the under-dwelling inhabitants of its subterranean caves. It is rumored that the great underground complex holds extra-dimensional gateways, pathways to the Underdark, and other things, foul and utterly corrupt.

The Stop

Once Maalthiir conquered Yûlash he created The Stop, a caravan stop halfway between Hillsfar and Yûlash. The Stop is now a small village that includes an inn, a livery, and is a full service caravan way station. Several outlying farms provide fresh food for The Stop and much of it is exported to Hillsfar.

Outlying Farms

There are a number of outlying farms in the plains and rolling hills surrounding Hillsfar. These small communities take refuge within the city in times of danger. Some examples of such farms include:

- **Costt Zamoden (COST zam-OH-din).** A crass, outspoken human with a shiny, bald head. He and his wife Randi breed rothé.
- **Dumb Karl.** A homely male hill dwarf that provides much of the grain sold in Hillsfar. His moniker is actually an ironic nickname given to him by locals. He's actually quite bright-- something that becomes quickly apparent as he prattles off on obscure bits of information regarding whatever topic he finds particularly engaging.
- **Misha Gravelscoop (MEESH-uh).** This young female rock gnome inherited her parents's bee farm when after they were recently killed by bandits. However, she longs for escape and wants one day to become a famous adventurer. The honey produced here is used exclusively by the Chaunteans in their meadery.

The Bell of the Depths

The island kingdom of Northkeep was the first human settlement on the Moonsea. Founded in 348 DR and situated between Elventree and Elmwood, it was a beacon of civilization in an otherwise untamed wilderness. However, its power made it a target to the evil humanoids of the Dark Alliance and others, including the black dragon Lyauroth who, in 400 DR,

laid siege to the city with a force 40,000 strong. Their might combined with the vengeance of Gruumsh destroyed the city and sent it sinking beneath the waves of the Moonsea. Today, the tallest of the city's broken towers is still visible beneath the waves and sailors that pass by it occasionally hear the tolling of its ghostly bells. The area surrounding the ruins of Northkeep is peopled with marel--territorial aquatic elves--that harry and attack any who might attempt to explore the sunken city.

The Underdark

Sprawling caverns and tunnels that go for miles and miles below the surface of Faerûn, the Underdark is home to the infamous drow, mind flayers, duergar, and other evil races. The Underdark is saturated in magical radiation called faerzress, the remnant of the forces that created it.

- **The Waydown River.** About a half day's travel from Hillsfar is a moderately deep sinkhole caused by recent rainfall and geographical anomalies stemming from the recent events in Mulmaster. The sinkhole extends about 100 feet straight down before opening into a natural cavern through which flows a narrow river; a distributary of the River Tesh. The river flows through 20 miles of winding tunnels before culminating in a vast lake in the center of the Sporedome.
- **Maerimydra (MARE-uh-MID-ruh).** Worship of Lolth fell out of practice in this once-mighty drow city and was replaced by a cult of the drow goddess Kiaransalee, the drow goddess of death. Within the last ten years, rule over the city was usurped by the fire titan Hledh and its residents enslaved. Those free drow that survived now reside in Szith Morcane; one of the city's former outposts.
- **Sporedome.** This vast chamber is nearly a mile wide and twice as long with a freshwater lake of standing water in the middle of it. Surrounding the lake is a vast, dense fungal forest in which lives a widely spread colony of myconids. To date, their interaction with surface dwellers has been limited. But they war constantly with the mad Derro of Ravagestone.
- **Ravagestone.** Little more than a sprawl of maddeningly twisting tunnels around a large central cavern, this derro "town" is only one in the loosest sense of the word. It is a chaotic place of danger and madness. Occasionally, the derro residents stray into Sporedome, or rarer still to

the surface. That same danger and madness follows in their wake.

- **Szith Morcane.** Slightly north of Maerimydra is Szith Morcane; a former outpost of the city. Ruled by the drow archwizard Solom Ned'razak, this trade hub is nestled into the side of a yawning chasm and connected not by streets or caverns, but by a vast spider's web that covers the chasm's wall. This settlement boasts its own center for arcane study--the Inverted Tower.
- **Ryxyg (RIZZ-eeg).** If you take a different tunnel from the Sporedome, and travel for a day and a half, your journey ends at Ryxyg; a small, relatively new mind flayer enclave.