



Curse of Strahd: Reloaded

A Campaign Guide by /u/DragnaCarta

The Mountain Fane

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Y6. The Mountain Fane

The Mountain Fane is a circular ring of cracked stone that lies within a circle of standing stones at the top of Yester Hill. It is devoted to the Seeker, one of the Ladies Three, but has become corrupted by Strahd von Zarovich. Today, it forms one of the three anchors tying him to the land of Barovia and protecting him from harm.

Long ago, Strahd desecrated the Mountain Fane, perverting its power for his own ends through the use of blood magic and fell rituals carried out beneath the light of the new moon. In doing so, he channeled its energy to obtain the benefits of permanent *nondetection* and *true seeing* spells. So long as he remains bound to the Mountain Fane, Strahd cannot be truly slain; instead, he revives by the will of the Dark Powers in his coffin at Castle Ravenloft 24d6 days after his destruction.

To break this connection and deprive Strahd of the Fane's boon, the PCs must carry out a ritual once performed by initiates of the priesthood of the Seeker. They can learn of this ritual from Elder Ormir, a Mountain Folk priest residing at [Yaedrag in Tsolenka Pass](#).

To complete the ritual, the PCs must first obtain the *Dagger of the Seeker* from the trunk of the Gulthias Tree; and the *Bowl of the Seeker* from the Seeker's reliquary, which is buried at the center of the circle.

Areas of the Mountain Fane

At the western end of the ring of towering boulders stand five ancient, moss-covered megaliths. Four bear carvings that resemble different cities

upon their cracked, lichen-covered surfaces, and a fifth at their center bears ancient runic script weathered with age. All five face a smooth, flat stone three feet across that lies at the western edge of the ring.

A creature that steps onto the soil within the menhirs feels an uncomfortable prickling on the back of their neck. The space within the circle of standing stones is **desecrated ground**, providing all undead standing within it advantage on their saving throws.

The runic script is written in Druidic, and reads:

*Slice the flesh and paint the basin.
An offering to Her ancient home.*

*The blooming petals.
The burning sun.
The falling leaves.
The silent snow.*

*Let thought guide you to the world within.
Let dark wings lead and echoes weave.
Let not their flame go out.*

A creature holding the *Dagger of the Seeker* within the Fane can read the script as if it were written in the creature's native language.

U6a. Reliquary

Buried two feet beneath the earth below the flat stone is the Seeker's reliquary: an ancient stone box fitted with a weighty stone lid. The lid is carved with the sigil of the Seeker: an eye. The reliquary contains the stone *Bowl of the Seeker*. If the bowl or reliquary are removed from the circle, both

items vanish and reappear in their original position beneath the earth.

U6b. Megaliths

A creature who inspects the four carved megaliths finds the following images carved into their stone surfaces:

- **Upper Megalith.** A city in the midst of spring, arrayed in flowers.
- **Middle-Upper Megalith.** A city in the midst of summer, a sunburst overhead.
- **Middle-Lower Megalith.** A city in the midst of autumn, covered in leaves.
- **Lower Megalith.** A city in the midst of winter, covered in snow.

If the characters ask any of the priests or scholarly NPCs in Barovia about the stones, the characters are told that ancient legends tell of the Four Cities, said to be the cities of paradise where the Morninglord, Mother Night, and the other ancient gods first dwelled. If the characters ask the Mountain Folk of Yaedrag about the stones, the characters are told instead that the carvings represent not four cities, but one—a city whose seasons shifted with the whims of its inhabitants—from which the Ladies Three came before arriving in the valley.

Special Events

Consecrating the Fane

To carry out the ritual of the Seeker, the bearer of the *Dagger of the Seeker* must use the stone dagger to cut their own flesh, allowing the blood from any wound made in this way to fall into the *Bowl of the Seeker*. Doing so causes the bowl to magically fill rapidly with blood, until the level lies just below the surface. (When this occurs, the

four carved megaliths briefly rumble and shake, as if from an earthquake). A thin tendril of mist connects the bowl to the ritualist's chest, remaining until the ritualist dies, removes the bowl from the Fane, recovers the seeker's eye during the reconsecration ritual (see below), or chooses to pour out their blood from the bowl onto the earth. (Only the ritualist can do this).

The bearer must then present the blood-filled bowl to each of the four carvings upon the megaliths. Each time the blood-filled bowl is brought near to one of the carvings, that carving alights with a silver-white light. This light emanates wisps of silvery mist, which flow into the bowl and “ignite” into a ghostly, mistlike flame that burns away one-quarter of the blood contained within.

The flame is wispy and insubstantial at first, but grows with each carving it is presented to. When all four carvings have been illuminated, and all of the blood in the bowl has been replaced by ghostly flame, the fire burns strong and bright. The bearer must then sit within the circle and meditate beside the flame-filled bowl.

The Ritual Begins

As the bearer clears their mind and meditates upon the ritual, read:

Tendrils of mist and fog begin to flow across the peaks of the stone ring that rises atop Yester Hill. In the distance, you can see the western wall of fog shimmering as it ripples like an enormous veil.

[To the character conducting the ritual]:
The mists, lithe and serpentine, begin to

swirl around you, tightening in concentric rings that rise and fall in spirals through the air. The ghostly fire in the bowl surges in size, emanating an ethereal illumination that carries no heat. Around you, the landscape begins to vanish, the mists rising with the emptiness of your mind—and then you open your eyes and find yourself once more on the hilltop.

Your companions no longer appear solid; instead, their forms are blurred and translucent, their silhouettes drawn with silver-white mist that sits frozen in the air like threads of crystalline ice.

From here, you can clearly see the wall of fog to the west—and a place where the wall has pulled apart like a curtain, making space for something unseen below.

From a tall boulder beside you, you hear a sharp caw and the sound of flapping wings. A large black raven takes flight from the boulder's peak, its dark wings guiding it down the path below.

From this point on, the ritualist's movements and actions in this spiritual realm (a subplane within the ritualist's mind) do not cause their body in the physical world to move or act in any discernible way. Barring use of the *Sending* spell or similar magics, the ritualist cannot communicate with their companions in the circle beyond. The ritualist cannot return to the physical world unless they complete the consecration ritual, become unconscious, or die.

The ghostly flames within the *Bowl of the Seeker* flow outward, forming a nimbus of blazing, silver-white fire around the ritualist. For the duration of the ritual, the ritualist gains 100 temporary hit points, which coexist across the spiritual and physical realms. Each time the ritualist takes

damage—in either the spiritual or physical realm—this nimbus grows dimmer and the ritualist's body grows progressively paler and more sickly. If these temporary hit points are reduced to 0, the ritualist dies and their spirit is lost within the mists until they are resurrected or reincarnated. Non-hostile creatures can touch the ritualist through these protective flames without harm.

To the perspective of any creature in the physical world, the ritualist's body remains alive, yet perfectly still for the duration of these visions. While the ritualist's mind remains in the spiritual realm, their body is sheathed in a faint silver mist—a protective shell that obstructs malevolent forces.

The raven guides the ritualist to the place where the wall of fog has parted, revealing a simple dirt path that plunges into its ghostly depths. If the ritualist attempts to depart Yester Hill in any direction other than by the path through the fog, the Barovian mists descend to obstruct their path, punishing the ritualist with exhaustion and misdirection as usual.

Hostile Spirits

Shortly after the ritualist enters the spiritual realm, any creature in the physical world notices the following:

Spiraling wisps of thick, black smoke billow up from the black cairns that ring the hill's multiple terraces, rising up toward the thunderclouds that hang above the hilltop. The clouds grow in size and darkness, thunder rumbling with distant malice. The air crackles with ozone and apprehension—and then a cacophonous symphony of lightning bolts strikes the ring of boulders arounds you.

When the bolts' white glare fades from

your vision, a sea of roiling black mist has covered the hilltop around you. Its mass bubbles and shifts with the silhouettes of warriors bearing spears, axes, and bows, their eyes red with ill will.

Before them all stands a smoky silhouette of a tall, broad-shouldered man whose dark hair extends past his waist. A pair of blood-red handprints shimmer across his chest, and he carries a long spear that drips with black smoke.

"I had hoped it would not come to this," he rumbles. "But the curse upon our place of rest demands our defiance. Cease your mission and go in peace—or your friend will perish."

Any characters who have previously met Kavan's spirit recognize the chieftain's voice and silhouette. Death has mellowed Kavan's spirit, opening his eyes to the harm he dealt in life. He bears the characters and their mission no ill will, but a fell curse placed upon his grave and those of his ancestors compels them to obstruct the consecration ritual. So long as Strahd—the "Lord of Shadows"—controls the power of the Mountain Fane, the spirits of the Mountain Folk buried here are bound to oppose any who seeks to reconsecrate it.

In their current form, neither Kavan nor his fellow spirits can be harmed or affected by weaponry, magic, or other abilities (such as *Turn Undead*). He makes no effort to harm the characters, and is glad to speak with them.

When Kavan senses that the ritualist has passed into the Wall of Fog ("the Whispering Wall") in the spiritual realm, he offers the characters an opportunity to stand aside, permitting the spirits to end the ritual through the ritualist's death while the other

characters remain unharmed. If declined, Kavan expresses his final condolences:

"Your spirits are strong and true," he says, "and I regret that I must break them—but break them I must. If you will not move aside, then you shall be moved."

He looks upward, to where the eternal dark clouds above Yester Hill crackle with lightning.

"The mountain is the place where the air and earth meet—where the land becomes the rolling thunder," he says. "The Seeker was more than the Lady of Sight—she was the Mistress of Storms. Her Fane remembers that power still.

"If you insist on standing against the storm, then the storm will stand against you—so that what must be done, will be done."

He turns to face the wall of fog and closes his eyes. "The Whispering Wall holds many secrets; some would prefer they lay buried. I can only hope that, should they survive their journey, your companion comes to forgive the misdeeds of my former self. The beast I was has been slain with the penance of time¹—but the curse we bear calls my spear once more to battle. Farewell."

The specters' silhouettes slow, their edges blurring—and then, with a sound like a thunderclap, flow upward into the air, melding together into the dark clouds above. As the wind atop the hill whips into a screaming gale, arcs of crimson lightning leap across and between the clouds, crackling with impending malice.

Any characters in the physical realm have one minute to prepare before the spirits' assault—a skill challenge—begins.

¹ [/u/Infernite583](#)

The skill challenge is separated into four stages. Each stage can only begin when the ritualist begins a new stage of their vision quest. The ritualist cannot proceed from a stage in their vision quest until the corresponding stage in the skill challenge has ended.

Each stage has three complications, and the PCs must face all twelve complications before completing the skill challenge. The base DC for each complication is 18. See [here](#) for more information on how to run skill challenges.

As you run each skill challenge, try to routinely cut back to and away from the ritualist's corresponding quest through the Seeker's visions. Cliffhangers and tense moments make optimal points to "move the camera" away from one group of characters and toward the other.

The Vision Quest

Visions of Spring

In this stage, the characters in the physical realm must defend themselves from the frenzied assaults of the earth around them. When this stage of the skill challenge begins, read:

The dark clouds overhead crackle and rumble with ominous portent. Then—a massive bolt of lightning strikes the earth at the center of the circle, emitting a thunderous wave of force that batters you from all sides. The earth around you begins to pulse, swelling like a boil as the boulders around you tremble and quake.

This stage has the following three complications:

- **Rockslide.** Boulders tumble from the ring of stone that crests Yester Hill, threatening to crush the characters beneath them. **Penalty.** Each character takes 11 (3d6) bludgeoning damage. **Suggested Skills.** Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Acrobatics).
- **Blighted Roots.** Bleeding roots thrust from the earth, crushing the characters' limbs and piercing the skin of their torsos. **Penalty.** Each character takes 4 (1d6) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. **Suggested Skills.** Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Nature), Wisdom (Medicine), Intelligence (Nature).
- **Devouring Earth.** The soil around the Fane becomes a sinkhole, attempting to crush the characters beneath earth and rubble. **Penalty.** 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage. **Suggested Skills.** Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) [Rope].

While the characters atop Yester Hill wage a physical fight, the ritualist must defend echoes of the original settlers of the Barovian valley. Read:

The dirt path winds through the fog; in the mists, you can see silhouettes, the outlines of events, creatures, and places that once were, that may yet be, or that never were. After several minutes of travel along the path, you step forward once more—

—and emerge into a lush mountain valley.

Acres of beautiful trees climb the slopes of tall, snow-capped peaks. The soil is a

rich, earthy brown, and the sky overhead is painted an immaculate cerulean blue. Through the canopies, you can hear the warbling and chirping of birds, the distant cry of a fox, and the burbling of a nearby brook.

The crunch of boots upon mulch draws your eye to the west. There, stands a small band of human men and women dressed in deerskin hides and wolf pelts. Many among them are clearly weary, their clothes ragged and their figures gaunt. Their gazes are not upon you, now—instead, they watch the treeline warily, bows, spears, and axes at the ready.

One, a tall woman who bears a crown of antlers upon her head, turns toward you and beckons, hefting her battleaxe with a practiced motion. She bears herself with a proud, near-regal stance, but there is a silent plea in her eyes.

“Prepare yourself, friend! The hunters come.” She gestures toward her companions. “I am called Shuka. The Lady of Sight foretold that we would meet a traveller here, beneath the peak of Mount Ghakis—can we count on your aid in this battle?”

In the distance, the howls of a wolfpack ring through the trees—steadily growing closer. The raven caws in defiance and lands atop a branch beside the woman’s shoulder.

The band of fifteen First Folk is led by Shuka, a **berserker**. She is joined by three **tribal warriors**. The three of them are defending twelve weary and wounded **commoners** and four noncombatant children.

The ritualist has two rounds to prepare before the wolves arrive. In that time, Shuka can share the following information:

- The Lady of Sight, whose name is the Seeker, has guided their group to this valley, which they call *Cerunnos*, meaning “Place of Peace.”
- The group has travelled far and long to reach this valley, where the Seeker has told them they may find shelter, peace, and food aplenty—a home and haven for themselves and their descendants..
- The group has only recently entered the valley, but will need to defend their vulnerable kin from the wolves before they can establish camp.

Shuka calls the ritualist “Traveller,” and promises to guide them to their next destination if they protect her people from the attack.

After two rounds, six **wolves** appear from different angles of the forest, aiming to corner the settlers. Both Shuka and each tribal warrior engage a separate wolf. The wolves target weak or vulnerable prey, aiming to knock targets unconscious before dragging them off into the woods for a meal.

To expedite combat, assume the following:

- A **wolf** automatically deals 6 piercing damage to an adjacent **tribal warrior** (11 HP) or an adjacent **commoner** (4 HP) in one round.
- A **tribal warrior** automatically deals 4 piercing damage to an adjacent **wolf** (11 HP) in one round.

- **Shuka** automatically deals 6 slashing damage to an adjacent **wolf** (11 HP) in one round.

One round later, one **dire wolf** emerges from the woods to join the fray. The dire wolf prioritizes larger, stronger targets, and works to cover the smaller wolves' retreat.

If the ritualist successfully defends the First Folk from the wolf attack, Shuka bestows them with a *runestone of spring*: a small, smooth stone carved with a rune that resembles a sprouting flower. She then thanks them for the assistance:

She points into the distance, toward the sound of the bubbling brook. "Travel north from here, until you come to a place where the peaks of two pines touch. Pass between them, and the Lady of Sight will guide you to your next destination."

The raven caws and takes to the air, looking down at you expectantly.

If Shuka is slain, her corpse and any surviving First Folk dissolve into mist, leaving behind the *runestone of spring*. If the runestone is obtained in this way, the rune upon it flickers an angry red. The raven clucks in evident disappointment, but, once the ritualist has taken the runestone, takes to the air and guides the ritualist to the twin peaks alone.

After travelling north for several minutes, soon after fording a small creek, the ritualist finds a place where two conifers growing on opposite slopes of a small gully touch at their peaks. A log is laid across the gully between them, forming the symbol of a triangle.

If the ritualist passes between the trees while carrying the *runestone of spring*, they are taken to the next stage of their journey, the raven following close behind. If Shuka died, they must first make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw before proceeding, taking 35 (10d6) psychic damage from screams of the slaughtered First Folk that echo from the *runestone of spring* on a failure, or half on a success.

Visions of Summer

In this stage, the characters in the physical realm must defend themselves from manifestations of darkness. When this stage of the skill challenge begins, read:

The air grows thick and stale, a hot wind blowing across the hilltop. Your shadows begin to twist and shimmer, as if cast by figures other than your own. A deep miasma settles over the sky, as black as the darkest veil.

This stage has the following three complications:

- **Shadow's Vengeance.** The characters' shadows move of their own volition, closing cold, crushing fingers around their owners' throats. **Penalty.** Each character takes 4 (1d6) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. **Suggested Skills.** Intelligence (Arcana), Wisdom (Religion). **Suggested Spells.** *Light*. **Suggested Features.** Turn Undead.
- **Whispers of Despair.** Ethereal voices manifest around the characters, whispering their secret insecurities, delivering prophecies of failure, and encouraging them to give in to despair. **Penalty.** Each

character takes 8 (3d4) psychic damage. **Suggested Skills.** Charisma (Performance), Charisma (Persuasion), Wisdom (Insight).

- **Tendrils of Mist.** Tendrils of dark mist rise from the earth, draining the characters' life force. **Penalty.** 11 (3d6) necrotic damage **Suggested Skills.** Intelligence (Arcana). **Suggested Spells.** *Shape Water*, *Gust of Wind*.

Meanwhile, in the spiritual realm, the ritualist must help Forest Folk prisoners escape the captivity of a bloodthirsty Mountain Folk chieftain—Kavan. As they proceed through their vision, read:

You step into a tall, rectangular tent built of tough hides and thick, hardy logs. The air is hot and acrid, and black smoke billows up through a hole in the roof from a stone-ringed bonfire that blazes merrily at the center of the tent. A tall throne built of wood, thatch, and bramble looks down over the fire from a mount of earth, its arms, back, and seat stained with dried blood.

Kneeling around the fire, their arms bound behind their backs, mouths gagged with strips of cloth, are six humans of similar appearance to Shuka's people, wearing tattered rags and furs. One looks up toward you, eyes wide and pleading.

Above you, the raven perches atop a tentpost, watching you with great interest.

The humans are six Forest Folk **berserkers**. Each has one hit point remaining and four levels of exhaustion. If freed, they thank their savior and share the following information:

- They are prisoners of war, taken captive by the forces of Kavan, the Blood-Drinker, a ruthless chieftain who seeks to unite the peoples of the Balinok Mountains through conquest.
- Kavan sleeps during the day and hunts at night, drinking the blood of his prey. He amuses himself by chasing exhausted captives through the Svalich Woods, then impaling them with his magical blood-stained spear.
- Kavan is currently out hunting with his companions, which is why the tent's interior is unguarded. However, he will soon return, and select one of them as his prey.
- The settlement beyond the tent is heavily guarded; if the prisoners are to escape, it must be done without raising the alarm. (The prisoners have no knowledge of the camp's layout or the nature of any specific defenses).

The prisoners appear to recognize the ritualist, calling them "Traveller." They share openly their belief that the ritualist's destination lies beyond the eastern edge of camp, at a place where the blades of two spears meet, and promise to guide the ritualist there if freed.

The flaps to the prisoners' tent are painted with large red handprints. (The prisoners can inform the ritualist that the throne belongs to Kavan, and the bloody handprints are his symbol).

The settlement beyond the tent is regularly patrolled. To escape without notice, the ritualist must make consecutive Stealth checks to bypass the three following

obstacles: a pair of watchful **druids** beside a pair of bonfires; a pack of twelve trained **wolves** fighting over scraps behind a pile of stacked logs; and a patrolling druidic golem built of twigs, lichens, and earth, its “skin” stained red with blood and its body powered by a glowing, red, rune-carved crystal embedded within its forehead. The DC for the check begins at 12 and increases by 2 for each success. (If the ritualist makes clever decisions or casts relevant spells, they may make these checks with advantage).

The first time that the ritualist fails a Stealth check, the camp is roused to attack and the ritualist must guide the prisoners through a brief skill challenge (skipping any complications that have previously been avoided). This skill challenge has the following three complications:

- **The Druids.** Grasping weeds and vines sprout from the ground at the druids’ command, entwining around the prisoners’ limbs. **Penalty.** 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. **Suggested Skills.** Wisdom (Survival), Intelligence (Nature). **Suggested Spells.** *Produce Flame*, *Cloud of Daggers*, *Scorching Ray*.
- **The Wolfpack.** The wolves move to obstruct the prisoners’ path, clawing and biting at any who come near. **Penalty.** 10 (4d4) piercing damage. **Suggested Skills.** Wisdom (Animal Handling), Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Acrobatics).
- **The Golem.** The construct looms over the prisoners, readying a mighty blow. **Penalty.** 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage. **Suggested Skills.** Strength (Athletics), Intelligence (Arcana). **Suggested**

Spells. *Mage Hand* (to remove its power crystal), *Telekinesis* (to remove its power crystal), *Entangle*.

Unlike an ordinary skill challenge, the ritualist is the only Active PC and can act multiple rounds in a row. On each failure, two of the six Forest Folk prisoners are killed by arrows, spears, and magical flames. If the ritualist successfully completes the skill challenge, they and any surviving prisoners escape Kavan’s camp.

Upon reaching the eastern boundary of the camp, the ritualist can clearly see a pair of spears planted in the ground at an angle, their blades meeting in the center and forming the rough shape of a triangle with the ground.

If any Forest Folk prisoners successfully escape, they present the ritualist with a *runestone of Summer*, a small, smooth stone carved with a rune that resembles a sunburst. They then thank the ritualist for their assistance and depart.

As the ritualist approaches the spears, a massive, bulky silhouette appears from the west: a broad-shouldered human man—Kavan—whose face and chest are marked with elegant splatters of blood. A shard of amber stone that glints with a crimson light can clearly be seen tied to a cord that rests against his chest. As the ritualist steps through the spears, Kavan roars in rage and defiance before hurling his *blood spear*, a long wooden spear wrapped in bloodstained leather and tipped at both ends with rough, jagged blades of obsidian. The ritualist must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw to avoid Kavan’s attack, taking 2d6 piercing damage plus 2d6 necrotic damage on a failure.

If the final Forest Folk are slain, their corpses dissolve into mist, leaving behind the *runestone of summer*. If the runestone is obtained in this way, the rune upon it flickers an angry red. Once the ritualist has taken the runestone, the raven guides them to the twin spears alone.

If the ritualist passes between the spears, they are taken to the next stage of their journey, the raven following close behind. If all of the prisoners were killed, they must first make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw before proceeding, taking 35 (10d6) psychic damage from screams of the slaughtered Forest Folk that echo from the *runestone of summer* on a failure or half on a success.

Visions of Autumn

In this stage, the characters in the physical realm must defend themselves from a stirring psychic storm. When this stage of the skill challenge begins, read:

The wind turns cold and picks up speed, howling like a banshee as it cuts across the peak. The dead grass atop the hilltop whips and swirls, driven into a frenzied dance as the gale comes to a crescendo and the dark clouds above spiral and roil.

This stage has the following three complications:

- **Maelstrom's Grasp.** A howling gale hurls the characters through the air, slashing with razorlike currents.
Penalty. 7 (2d6) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage.
Suggested Skills. Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) [Rope].

- **Whispers of Fear.** Ethereal voices manifest around the characters, whispering their secret fears, delivering prophecies of torment and agony, and encouraging them to surrender for the sake of their sanity.
Penalty. 10 (4d4) psychic damage.
Suggested Skills. Charisma (Performance), Charisma (Persuasion), Wisdom (Insight).
- **Flood of Shadow.** Tidal waves of twisting shadow rise on the edges of the stone circle, threatening to crash over the characters below.
Penalty. 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d6) necrotic damage.
Suggested Spells. *Light, Mold Earth, Gust of Wind, Wall of Stone.*

Meanwhile, in the spiritual realm, the ritualist must help a Forest Folk child escape harm at the hands of invading soldiers. As they proceed through their vision, read:

You emerge onto a grey, fog-choked battlefield. The earth is grey as ash, and the air is thick with the stench of copper and rot. The ground nearby is littered with bodies—most wearing leathers and hides, but some wearing chain mail and steel plate, with devil-horned helms. Nearby, the charred and tattered husks of tents and scattered battlements litter the field.

You hear the flap of wings as the raven settles atop a pile of bodies, its dark eyes mournful. From nearby, beyond the edge of a trench gouged from the earth, you hear the sound of a young child sobbing.

In the distance, through the mists, you hear the sound of clinking chainmail and the metallic screech of blades against scabbards. A man's voice echoes through the fog: "You hear that?"

A woman's voice answers, hard and cruel. "Sounds like we've got a survivor! Maybe this backwater valley has more of those forest-dwellers than we thought."

Another voice: "Word is, King Dostron's giving two silver pieces for each head he can stick on a pike. Spread out, lads—see if you can find it!" He's met by a chorus of harsh, drunken laughter, and the sound of more than a dozen sets of metal boots clinking across the wasteland.

The voices in the fog serve King Dostron the Hellborn, a recent conqueror of the Balinok Mountains and the valley within them. They include one **veteran** and twelve **guards**.

The sobbing comes from a human noncombatant child with one hit point named Magda. She clutches the corpse of her mother, which holds a spear in one hand and bears multiple arrow wounds across the torso. Magda cries and pleads for her mother to wake and flee with her, drawing the soldiers' attention closer.

A *calm emotions* spell quells Magda's anguish for the duration of the spell (no saving throws required). The ritualist can also try to calm Magda using intimidation, or by offering her hope or comfort (real or otherwise). The ritualist must make a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation, Persuasion, or Deception) check, as appropriate. If the check succeeds, Magda remains silent and the soldiers depart.

The ritualist can also attempt to defeat the soldiers, however; at least two soldiers each round attempt to attack Magda with thrown spears. If the ritualist attempts to take Magda and flee without the use of magic or

another ability enhancing their retreat, they are detected and swiftly cornered by the soldiers.

If Magda is calmed or the soldiers are slain or escaped, Magda presents the ritualist with a *runestone of autumn*, a small, smooth stone carved with a rune that resembles a falling leaf. Magda then points the ritualist toward their next destination:

The child points shyly toward a pile of bodies to the south and whispers: "Look for the three who watch the sky, Traveller—they will show you the path ahead." She squeezes your hand and then flees into the mists.

If the ritualist investigates the pile of bodies, they soon find a trio of corpses laid on their backs, their eyes open toward the grey sky above. Their bloodied forms lie in the rough shape of a triangle around an empty grave.

If Magda is killed, her body and the soldiers dissolve into mist, leaving behind the *runestone of autumn*. If the runestone is obtained in this way, the rune upon it flickers an angry red. Once the ritualist has taken the runestone, the raven guides them to the grave alone.

If the ritualist lies down in the grave, they are taken to the next stage of their journey, the raven following close behind. If Magda died, they must first make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw before proceeding, taking 35 (10d6) psychic damage from the sounds of Magda's terrified screams that echo from the *runestone of autumn* on a failure or half on a success

Vision of Winter

In this stage, the characters in the physical realm must defend themselves from an unearthly icy tempest. When this stage of the skill challenge begins, read:

Your breath turns to mist as the temperature drops precipitously, small crystals of frost spiderwebbing across the dead earth around you. A chill wind blows, bringing icy mist and frozen droplets that stick to your exposed flesh.

This stage has the following three complications:

- **Frozen Wind.** A chill wind rises atop the hill, blistering the characters' skin and threatening frostbite. **Penalty.** 14 (3d8) cold damage. **Suggested Skills.** Wisdom (Survival). **Suggested Spells.** *Produce Flame*, *Prestidigitation*, *Scorching Ray*.
- **Prison of Frost.** Veins of ice spring from the frozen ground, forming plates of frost that lock the characters in a frozen shell. **Penalty.** 11 (3d6) cold damage. **Suggested Skills.** Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Survival).
- **Storm of Hail.** Jagged hailstones the size of fists rain down upon the characters. **Penalty.** 4 (1d6) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) cold damage. **Suggested Spells.** *Shape Water*, *Shield*, *Scorching Ray*.

Meanwhile, in the spiritual realm, the ritualist must convince a Forest Folk elder to avoid giving Strahd his loyalty. As the ritualist proceeds through their vision, read:

Your eyes flicker open, and you find

yourself once more in the shallow grave, the earthen walls rising on either side—but the sky overhead has changed to a purple-grey hue, snowflakes falling gently from the clouds above.

As you pull yourself up, you hear cold snow crunching beneath your weight, and find yourself at the edge of a wintry forest grove, surrounded by evergreens weighed down by icicles. Nearby, a frozen waterfall spills forth from a cavern at the base of a nearby hill, the water's surface glittering like diamonds as its icy tendrils pass beneath a snow-dusted cliff.

Three figures stand at the western edge of the grove, dressed in hides and furs. Their faces are worn with age, and their eyes are tired—but each figure's gaze holds an edge of steely determination.

They stand across from a man: tall, and dressed in an elegant crimson cloak whose shoulders fall over a gleaming breastplate wrought of burgundy-stained steel and inlaid with patterns in the shape of golden wings. He bears a black widow's peak, and a pair of piercing, familiar eyes. Yet his irises are black, not deadly crimson; the tips of his ears are rounded, not pointed; his skin bears a healthy tone; and the flash of his bared teeth betrays no evidence of fangs.

When Strahd von Zarovich begins to speak, he sounds nearly bored, but the tone of his voice betrays an unmistakable hunger. "Your goddess must be impressed with the fealty you show her memory, but you cannot hide her power from me forever. What good is a dead goddess who abandoned your people to the mercy of outsiders, when a future king and protector stands before you? King Dostron's tyranny left your ancestors broken and lost; my rule shall raise you up to the power and status you deserve. Tell me where I can find the Seeker's Eye, and so master the power of her Fane, and

I shall grant the servants of the Lady of Sight the same protection I have granted the two other tribes.”

The three figures before him exchange silent glances. Then, one, a tall woman wearing a wolf’s pelt, speaks.

“Our people have suffered long enough under the boot of those beyond the valley. A gale of vengeance brews among our tents—if this outsider would help us take back what is ours, I would stand with him.”

The second figure, a pale-faced individual wearing the antlers of an elk and leaning against a spear, speaks next.

“You speak of storms, Ragna, but the First Folk have suffered the tempest for too long.” They shake their head. “Yet our proud people have been worn thin from centuries of cruelty. If this outsider offers sanctuary and the chance to rebuild what has been broken, I would receive his offer.”

The third figure, a wizened man whose hair is decorated with black feathers, gives a crackling bark of laughter. “An intriguing concept, Tove. That may be so for the Wind-Callers and Spear-Bearers—but the minds of the Sky-Seers are not yet made up. This stranger’s stone fortress has scarce been raised upon the Pillarstone to the east, and we have received no visions of the Seeker’s will. He asks much, and our old ways are precious to us.” He bares his teeth and turns his gaze to [the ritualist]. “There is a traveller among us. Let us ask what wisdom they bring from beyond the mountains. Who is this outsider, who comes to us bringing peace wrapped in war? He says he is a conqueror, a prince, and a mage of great wisdom. He has waged war upon the warriors of silver and ranged near the peak of Mount Ghakis. Should we give him what he seeks?”

The figures are:

- Ragna, the head of the druid caste of the Tribe of the Seeker (Wind-Callers). Warlike and vengeful.
- Tove, the head of the warrior caste of the Tribe of the Seeker (Spear-Bearers). Craves stability.
- Halvar, the head of the oracle caste of the Tribe of the Seeker (Sky-Seers).

The ritualist can attempt to convince Halvar against allying with Strahd. Should they do so, Strahd will offer his own rebuttals, maintaining a cool and confident demeanor at all times. From time to time, Ragna and Tove may also speak up, urging Halvar to accept Strahd’s offer.

Halvar will not accept arguments that rely upon the ritualist’s knowledge of the future, such as Sergei’s death, Strahd’s vampirism, or the ultimate fate of the Forest Folk in Barovia. (If the ritualist attempts to make such arguments, Halvar swiftly rejects them, noting that the Seeker has shared no visions of the stranger’s future—if he is to be judged, it must be on the basis of what he has done and who he is *today*).

Halvar also cannot be swayed by magic or violence. (If the ritualist attacks any other creature while in this vision, including Strahd, the attack has no effect).

Halvar will (without need for an ability check) accept any argument that relies upon Strahd’s base nature or history. This may include references to:

- The dusk elves' slaughter and exile at Strahd's hands.
- Strahd's visit to the Amber Temple—a place of ancient evil—and his pact with the Dark Powers.
- The slaughter of the Order of the Silver Dragon and the desecration of Argynvost's corpse.
- Strahd's meddling in profane magics, such as necromancy.
- Strahd's cruelty; his ambition; his fear of death; and his lust for domination over others.

(Strahd denies or attempts to justify any allegations of wrongdoing or ill character, but Halvar can tell that he's lying).

If Halvar is convinced, read:

Halvar holds up a hand. "Enough," he says—and time in the grove halts.

Ragna and Tove stand as still as statues. Strahd's motion stops as well—though a flicker of crimson fury kindles in his eyes.

Halvar meets your eyes. "It is good to know that the Lady of Sight has born you to us this day—though I fear it has come too late for my companions."

He reaches into his cloak and removes a small statuette depicting a raven carved of black wood. The statuette's form seems to flicker; instead of a carved raven, it occasionally resembles a small, smooth stone carved with a rune that resembles a snowflake, before returning to its original shape. He holds it toward you.

"The outsider shall find the Wind-Callers' or Spear-Bearers' keys sufficient to open his path to the mountain's heart—but so long as mine remains beyond his grasp,

his dominion shall be incomplete. Take it with you to unlock the way—and perhaps one day, its bearers will guide *you* in the war against the Great Shadow."

The statuette is the *runestone of winter*. If the ritualist has previously seen the *totem of wereraven lycanthropy* in the cellar of the Wizard of Wines Winry, they recognize the statuette as a younger version of the same artifact.

Halvar points the PC toward the frozen waterfall nearby, indicating that the final stage of their journey lies in the caverns beyond. If the PC accepts the *runestone of winter* and leaves Halvar behind, they hear the sound of rustling wings behind them. (If they turn around, they see that Halvar is no longer there—only a large, wizened, raven with faded plumage that ascends beyond the forest canopy and soon vanishes from sight).

The hole from which the waterfall originates is three feet high and four feet wide; if the ritualist is Medium-sized, they must crawl on their hands and knees to pass through. On the other side of this cramped, icy tunnel lies a small cavern:

You emerge into a small cavern, your breath misting in the chill air. The icy stream continues to the left, vanishing into a small hole in the wall. Ahead, three stone spikes have been driven into the cavern's side, forming a rough triangle. As you step forward, the spikes shimmer with silver light, the space between them filling with a swirling, ethereal mist that seems to thrum with an eerie, otherworldly power.

Behind you, you hear the fluttering of wings. The raven that's followed you hops

from the tunnel into the cave, looking oddly smug. It clacks its beak and looks expectantly toward the curtain of mist.

If the ritualist fails to convince Halvar after a prolonged period of time, he shakes his head and silently offers them the *runestone of winter*. If the runestone is obtained in this way, the rune upon it flickers an angry red. Once the ritualist has taken the runestone, Halvar, his companions, and Strahd dissolve into mist, and the raven guides the ritualist to the frozen tunnel alone.

If the ritualist steps into the mist, they are taken to the next stage of their journey, the raven following close behind. If the ritualist failed to convince Halvar, they must first make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw before proceeding, taking 35 (10d6) psychic damage from the sound of Strahd's distant laughter that echoes from the *runestone of winter* on a failure or half on a success.

The Seeker's Eye

As the ritualist approaches the heart of the Seeker's power, the spirits in the physical realm manifest more directly. Read:

The sky above Yester Hill boils black, tines of lightning flashing like daggers across the clouds. The wind screams, billowing down in a cyclone of shrieking rage—and leaving, in its wake, six ethereal figures wrought of icy mist. Blood-red runes run across their foglike forms, glimmering with hostile power.

The tallest among them bears a recognizable visage: Kavan. He hefts an ethereal spear that glows with scarlet light and speaks, his deep voice reverberating across the hilltop. "This task brings me no joy—forgive us. But it is time for this trial to come to its end." Behind him, four

ethereal warriors stare grimly forward, tightening their grip on their weapons. Overhead, the storm roils with dark clouds, crackling with great arcs of lightning.

As the PCs roll initiative, the ritualist enters the home of the Seeker's eye. Read:

You step forth from the mist, and emerge—at the western base of Yester Hill.

But it is not the Yester Hill you know. No mold-covered cairns litter its slopes; there is no ring of black stone atop its peak. The copse of dead trees has vanished—and in its place stands an enormous white rowan tree, tall and proud. A spark of brilliant green glints from its upper trunk, at a place where three branches part. The only other structures that remain are the stone megaliths, standing silently from their place atop the hill.

A single dirt path leads to the top of the hill. The raven caws with joy and spreads its wings, gliding through the air toward the peak and occasionally glancing back toward you, as if expecting you to follow. Overhead, grey clouds rumble and stir.

Walls of fog surround this spiritual Yester Hill in every direction; it's clear that the only way forward is up. The path leads directly to the rowan tree atop the hill.

On initiative count 20 of combat, the ritualist can continue their journey. If the ritualist chooses to ascend the hill, read:

As you crest the top of the hill, a visage upon the rowan tree's trunk becomes visible: a woman's outline, carved from the trunk like a masthead. Vines fall from

her head like hair, coiling upon the ground far below. The carving's eyes are closed, but a bright green spark shines from her forehead, beckoning to you. The raven lands upon the carving's massive shoulder and looks up toward the spark, cawing with quiet reverence.

The vines are easily climbed. If the ritualist climbs them, read:

Within the carved woman's forehead lies a small, two-foot-wide hollow bored into the pale wood. The wood within glimmers like moonlight, and a brilliant emerald mote of light hovers at its center, resembling a shimmering eye.

Four pale roots bar the opening to this hollow, a small socket forming in each place where two roots cross. The four sockets depict, respectively, runes resembling a blooming flower; a rising sun; a falling leaf; and a simple snowflake.

A quiet voice calls to you from the light's heart, waiting patiently for an answer.

The mote of light (the "Seeker's Eye") cannot be damaged. If the ritualist places the four runestones in their corresponding sockets, the roots disentangle themselves, allowing access to the hollow beyond.

If the ritualist then removes the Seeker's Eye from the trunk, read:

The tiny star dances in your palm, a blazing spark that sings with life and light. The air around it comes alive with sudden fire, viridian embers that dance across your palm and wrist. For a moment, you see and hear flashes of figures, landscapes, and stories yet to come, your mind's eye expanding with each

reverberating note.

And then—the ground beneath you rumbles. You see the standing stones around the Fane tremble and shake; one structure collapses, forming the shape of a triangle that fills with wisping fog.

In the distance, a deep, hateful roar shakes the fog and earth. Heeding its call, the four mud-brown vines around you come to life, contorting and lashing like whips toward your legs and torso. Below you, the earth bubbles and lurches, swelling upward like a geyser of muddy sludge.

The Battle for the Fane

In the physical realm, the PCs defending the ritualist are attacked by **Kavan**, **Warlord Bloodsinger** and four **Balinok axewraiths**. Meanwhile, in the spiritual realm, the ritualist is attacked by four **creeping vines** and one **mudwater geyser**. (The ritualist begins combat twenty feet above the ground and flanked by vines on all sides, with the geyser ten feet below). Have all creatures roll initiative. You can use [this map of Yester Hill](#) to represent the battle in the physical realm.

During this time, a dark storm rages above the physical Yester Hill. While the storm lasts, on initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Kavan can take one of the following lair options (Kavan can't use the same effect two rounds in a row):

- **Spring.** An echoing thunderclap causes the earth to tremble. Each creature within 30 feet of Kavan must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
- **Summer.** A bolt of lightning flashes down from the storm to a point

Kavan can see within 100 feet of him. Each creature within 5 feet of that point must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 17 (3d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

- **Autumn.** Kavan chooses a point he can see within 100 feet of him. A line of strong wind 30 feet long and 10 feet blasts from that point in a direction he chooses until the end of his turn. Each creature that starts its turn in the line must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pushed 60 feet away from that point in a direction following the line. The gust disperses gas or vapor, and it extinguishes all flames in the area.
- **Winter.** Icy winds sweep across the hilltop. Each creature within 100 feet of Kavan must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 9 (2d8) cold damage. A creature that takes damage in this way has its speed reduced by 10 feet until the end of its next turn.

BALINOK AXEWRAITH

Medium undead, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (hide armor)

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +6, Wis +5, Cha +4

Skills Perception +5

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, unconscious

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Druidic

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the axewraith can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The axewraith makes three attacks with its greataxe.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 3) force damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 3) force damage.

KAVAN, WARLORD BLOODSINGER

Medium undead, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (hide armor)

Hit Points 127 (15d8 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +8, Wis +6, Cha +7

Skills Perception +6

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, unconscious

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Druidic

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Legendary Resistance (1/Day). If Kavan fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Reckless. At the start of his turn, Kavan can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Turning Defiance. Kavan and any axewraith within 30 feet of him have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kavan makes three weapon attacks.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of Kavan's choice that is within 30 feet of him and aware of him must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Kavan's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Blood Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d8 + 6) necrotic damage. If this attack reduces the target to 0 hit points, Kavan gains 2d6 temporary hit points.

Blood Spear (Thrown). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 4) necrotic damage. Whether the attack hits or misses, the spear then returns to Kavan's hand.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Kavan can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Kavan regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. Kavan moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Blood Spear. Kavan makes one melee attack with his *blood spear*.

Frightful Presence (Costs 2 Actions). Kavan uses his frightful presence ability.

MUDWATER GEYSER

Large elemental, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (8d10 + 32)

Speed 30 ft., swim 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistances acid; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Freeze. If the mudwater geyser takes cold damage, it partially freezes, reducing its speed by 20 feet until the end of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Churn. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the geyser's space. *Hit:* The target takes 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If it is Large or smaller, it must also make a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and unable to breathe unless it can breathe water. If the saving throw is successful, the target is pushed out of the geyser's space.

The geyser can grapple one Large creature or up to two Medium or smaller creatures at one time. At the start of each of the geyser's turns, each target grappled by it takes 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. A creature within 5 feet of the geyser can pull a creature or object out of it by taking an action to make a DC 14 Strength check and succeeding.

On initiative count 10 of the first round and each round thereafter, the raven flies toward the ritualist, its claws outstretched toward the Seeker's Eye. It caws with panic, and the ritualist can hear the Eye's song change to a pleading, eager tone. The Eye tugs toward the raven's claws, as if eager to be released toward it.

If the ritualist fails to release the Eye, the vines and geyser continue their lethal assault. If the ritualist successfully escapes the attack and returns to the spiritual version of the Mountain Fane, they find there a collapsed trio of megaliths that have formed the shape of a triangle; a misty

CREeping VINE <i>Large plant, unaligned</i>					
Armor Class 13 (natural armor) Hit Points 68 (8d10 + 24) Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.					
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)
Damage Resistances cold, fire Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion, prone Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 10 Languages — Challenge 2 (450 XP)					
False Appearance. While the creeping vine remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal plant.					
ACTIONS					
Constrict. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +6 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. <i>Hit:</i> The target takes 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage and it is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and it takes 11 (2d6) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of its turns. The vine can constrict only one target at a time.					

portal lies between them. If the ritualist passes through this portal, they are returned to their body in the physical realm.

If the ritualist releases the Eye, read:

The mote of light springs from your grasp, whirling through the air until it meets the raven's outstretched claws. The distant abomination roars with impotent rage.

A blast of power arcs through the raven's form, like a crack of lightning. The air around it kindles to blinding fire, the air glittering with raw potential. The raven's silhouette flickers and begins to *grow*, darkening and yet burning with a deep, ancient flame, a swelling shadow whose cry shakes the earth with defiance and pride—

I REMEMBER, the shadow says, in a voice like swelling thunder. *SHE IS STILL HERE.*

THE WELLSPRING MUST BE FILLED.

Your vision goes white—and your eyes snap open, awoken once more amidst the circle of stones atop Yester Hill.

The ritualist's spirit is then returned to their body, losing any temporary hit points remaining from the ritual.

When the ritualist gives the eye to the raven or passes through the portal between the collapsed megaliths, read:

The mists atop Yester Hill swirl with eerie intent, forming a strange, silver shape across the center of the stone circle—the outline of an eye. At its center, a dark void pulses, an empty socket waiting to be filled.

If the ritualist kept the Seeker's Eye for themselves and places the mote in the dark "socket" at the center of the circle, proceed to "Reconsecration" below.

Otherwise, if the ritualist gave the Eye to the raven, at the end of the following round of combat, read:

An earth-shattering cry splits the air—and, in the sky around Yester Hill, the overcast clouds grow dark and stormy, crackling with emerald lightning.

A vast shadow approaches the hill, its form silhouetted against the snow-capped peak of Mount Ghakis. It swells ever-larger, until its shape blots out the sky. It spreads enormous avian wings, each dark feather as long as a man is tall, and flaps them twice, dispersing the profane storm.

Spirals of viridian sparks dance across its plumage, its black beak glinting like the sharpest of blades. Upon its forehead blazes an eye forged of light: the symbol of the Seeker.

The Roc of Mount Ghakis howls in fury and descends into the melee.

The storm overhead calms, and Kavan may no longer use any lair actions. Have the Roc roll initiative. On its turn, the Roc aids the PCs in their fight against Kavan and his companions. (Kavan and his warriors focus their attacks against this newcomer). While empowered by the Seeker's Eye, the Roc gains the **Magic Weapons** feature (its weapon attacks are magical) and cannot be charmed or frightened.

When the spirits' manifestations have all been destroyed, the Roc gingerly lowers its beak to meet the dark "socket" at the center of the stone circle. When it does, the patterns of light across its body vanish, consolidating into the Seeker's Eye once more.

Reconsecration

When the Seeker's eye is returned to its socket, read:

The silver-white mists blaze with emerald light. The earth seems to shudder, and the dark void, now filled with luminous energy, widens and thins, until a sliver of green light, straight and narrow, stretches across the circle.

Slowly, trembling, the sliver begins to widen along its narrowest axis, spiralling patterns filling the space between its ends. It's an eye—a Titan's eye, widening and searing with unbridled power.

The mists dance and swirl as the eye reaches its widest point. From its edges bursts a pillar of viridian luminescence, shimmering with light and stretching into the heavens.

[To the ritualist] You can see the roots of the mountains—of Mount Ghakis to the South and Mount Baratok to the north—entwining leagues beneath the soil, choked with darkness and ichor. You can feel that dark, hateful thing constricting them: an ash-grey root forged of corruption and baleful pride, now writhing beneath the light of the eye and bleeding black, poisonous ichor as it dies.

You follow it in your mind's eye, a tunnel that runs through the earth for miles and miles—until it reaches a mighty fortress of black stone, of tower spires that pierce the stormy sky, and a pair of familiar burning crimson eyes that bore into your soul.

And then—the eye blinks, and the root is severed from the mountains. Strahd's cry of rage and fury echoes in your ears, and the roots of the mountain *breathe* like a living thing, the miasma within their veins burning away beneath the eye's unblinking gaze.

The sense of Strahd's enraged consciousness vanishes—replaced with a burning warmth that runs from the center of your forehead deep into the very core of your being.

[If the ritualist successfully completed at least three Visions] You hear a voice—a woman's, distant at first—speak proudly: *What once was stolen, I now give freely. Accept my boon, champion of the Mountain Fane.*

[To everyone] As you watch, a small black tattoo in the shape of an eye appears across [the ritualist's] forehead, crackling with residual power.

Overhead, the sky crackles with thunder, and a clean, cool rain begins to fall upon the hilltop. Small, colorful stems and petals push from the ash-grey muck: wildflowers, colored purple and yellow and blue and red, taking their first breaths from between the cracks of the ancient stone circle. For a moment, in the sky far above, the clouds pull back like a veil, the rain pausing as a sky of purest blue gazes down at the hilltop below. There is a moment of calm.

With a thunderclap, the rain stops, and the grey sky returns. But the air is cool and clean, and a gentle breeze whispers across the hilltop. The standing stones glint with an ethereal, mineral shine, and a sense of warmth and peace pervades the circle.

takes three days and nights, and must begin on the night of the winter solstice.

If Kavan or his spirits are still present, they thank the PCs for freeing them from Strahd's will. They vanish into mist, returning to their cairns. Kavan leaves his *blood spear* to the PC most suited to carry on his legacy. At your discretion, Kavan may use the Fane's power to transmute it into the form of a different weapon or give it the statistics of a *javelin of lightning*.

If present, the Rock returns to Mt. Ghakis.

With the Mountain Fane reconsecrated, Strahd loses the benefits of his permanent *nondetection* and *true seeing* spells. If the ritualist successfully completed at least three Visions, they gain this benefit instead for as long as they remain within Barovia.

To desecrate the Fane once more, Strahd must first slay the creature who completed the consecration ritual before performing a new corruption ritual. The corruption ritual