

Fanes of Barovia



Herein lies the ba ly saga, or “saga of the three,” a druidic story about the three fey who, in ancient times, cared for the lands of Barovia and, as a mother loves her own children, nurtured them and their holy fanes, three .

Three Celestial Beings, The Fey Sisters

Before mortals lived in the valley known as Barovia, three celestial beings—the fey sisters—oversaw the flora, fauna, and land. Together in their unity, they were Mother Nature caring for the valley. Each of the fey sisters provided their love and care over the valley in their own ways:

- † The Forest Fey oversaw the plants and animals.
- † The Water Fey oversaw the rain, lakes, and rivers.
- † The Mountain Fey oversaw the land and the earth.

Together they created balance and harmony through the seasons.

When the first people came to the valley, they learned of the three fey. The people respected the fey and saw them as goddesses who took care of the valley. As the people learned to walk in harmony with nature, they formed an order of druids to pay tribute and respect to the natural balance, as the people were guests of the valley and the fey.



The Fanes

Stone Circles

This order of druids created three stone circles, known as Fanes, each representing a fey. The first stone circle was built on the edge of the forest as a tribute to the Forest Fey. Another Fane was built along the river as a tribute to the Water Fey. The third Fane was built on a hill looking toward the grand mountains as a tribute to the Mountain Fey.

During the longest day of summer, the summer solstice, when the sun was at its zenith, the druids arrived at each of the Fanes and laid flowers around the stones and thanked the fey for a wonderful spring. On the longest night, the winter solstice, the druids lit candles and brought fresh, warm loaves of bread as gifts to keep the fey warm during the long winter nights.



Fey Gems

Barovia was a rich and lush fertile mountain valley and was frequently covered with clouds and mists that kept the flora healthy and beautiful. The lack of visibility, however, posed a conundrum for people trying to track the planting season using the sky.

Over time the fey realized the people and their druid order had become part of the cycle of life in the valley. The fey ventured into a mountain full of amber that could harness magic and power. Each fey harvested a shard of amber from the mountain and created a Fey Gem, placing a fair portion of their celestial magic into each gem.

The fey left their gems at their respective Fanes, instructing the druids to bury the gems under the stone circles. During the spring equinox, the summer solstice, the autumnal equinox, and the winter solstice, a glyph would glow at each Fane, informing the druids of when the farmers of Barovia should plant and harvest their crops. The glyphs also indicated when the ranchers should take their herds to the fresh summer pastures, and when to bring them home for the winter.



Gifts to the Feys

For centuries, the people lived in harmony with nature in the valley and felt blessed by the fey. Four times a year, the druids would seek the signs at the Fanes, recite ritual poems, and bear gifts for the fey

- † A Tser flower for the spring equinox
- † A small bunch of Barovian grapes for the summer solstice
- † A bushel of red Barovian apples for the autumnal equinox
- † A loaf of bread made from Barovian wheat for the winter solstice

It was no secret that the fey sisters had a soft spot for newborn babies. They were known to occasionally follow the cries of newborns out of the wilds to visit new mothers in rural areas. Once there, they would fawn over the baby, then wish the mother and child well, leaving them in peace. On rare occasions, if a baby was born in spring, newborn fawns would accompany the fey to visit the newborn babies, strengthening the bond between the people and animals of the valley.



Amber Temple



Centuries drifted by, then without warning, the Dark Powers invaded the valley. The fey and druids fought together against the Dark Powers but could not defeat them. The fey shared with the druids their knowledge of the powerful magic in the mountain of amber. Knowing the amber could harness fey's magic, they wondered whether it could contain the Dark Powers plaguing the valley. The fey and druids collected every ounce of magical amber within the mountain to create a secret temple to imprison the darkness far away from the valley and the people. A young druid, Khazan, became the first custodian of the Amber Temple, keeping the purpose of the temple secret and protecting the valley from the darkness. Khazan learned magic, becoming a great wizard, and trained other druids to become wizards of the secret order protecting the Amber Temple. Khazan eventually returned to the valley, living out his life in his lone tower to study magic and offer his knowledge to those who sought it. The Amber Temple became the greatest secret of the valley. Centuries passed, and the druids and those in the valley forgot about the temple and their brethren, its wizard guardians.

First Kings

When the first kings arrived in Barovia, they brought with them their religion of the Morninglord. Churches were erected, and each king was blessed by the Morninglord to rule over the people. The Morninglord cherished his beautiful sunrises, so he saw to it that the pervasive morning mists of Barovia were regularly burned off. This made the farmers' crops grow stronger and taller, but slowly the native lush plant life of Barovia scorched and withered. Eventually, the people of the villages forgot about the fey and paid their tribute to the king and his Morninglord for safety. They built walls around their villages to protect them from the wilderness, and the Church of the Morninglord preached about the evils of paganism and the fey.

The druids, with their beliefs no longer welcomed in the villages, moved away to a small grove in the far corner of Barovia and left the fledgling kingdom to its own fate forevermore. The druids continued to pay tribute to the fey. The farmers, in secret so as not to disrespect the king and his Morninglord, also paid tribute to the fey, for they knew the fey were the guardians that protected the land and ensured harmony in the valley.

The fey took no interest in the world of mortals who lived behind their walls and prayed to their gods, for the fey were in the valley long before kings arrived and would be in the valley long after the kings were gone.



Great War

A prince arrived in the valley with his army to claim the land as his kingdom. His army was mighty, and his focus and aptitude for battle were great. The war brought destruction to the valley, and for the first time, the fey took notice of the people's destruction upon the land itself.

When the war was over, the prince stood victorious and claimed the land as his own. The fey saw darkness festering in the prince—darkness once thought long forgotten and imprisoned in the Amber Temple. The Morninglord was exiled, and the mists returned to the lands of Barovia with a vengeance. A darkness rolled in and swam in the thick black smoke of war that hung heavy in the Barovian air. A thick mist covered the lands in a cold gray pallor. The mists diminished the magic of the fey and unbalanced their connection to the land and the cycle of life itself.

There was something undefinable about the mists. They seemed to have their own mind. The mist encompassed the valley, and the cycle of life slowed. The budding signs of life in spring were gone, animals were born with hollow eyes of darkness, flowers no longer blossomed, and eggs were black. New horrid creatures emerged from the woods, crops began to rot, and the land turned dark. The signs of darkness assailed the villages too, as babies were born who would not cry or laugh; some believed they were soulless. When the fey discovered this final turn of events, they became deeply disturbed and frantic. Their pleas to higher powers went unanswered. Something was very wrong with the natural order.

The fey believed that the cloud of darkness surrounding the prince gave birth to the terrible mists. It was said that the prince had lost his brother and his true love during the great war. The prince's heart was full of darkness and sorrow and nothing else. He spent extended tracts of time searching for the body of his lost love, and his heart was a bottomless pit of despair. The prince's bearing was such that it affected everything around him. So heavy was the burden of his loss that it cast a great darkness over the land and affected the mists themselves.

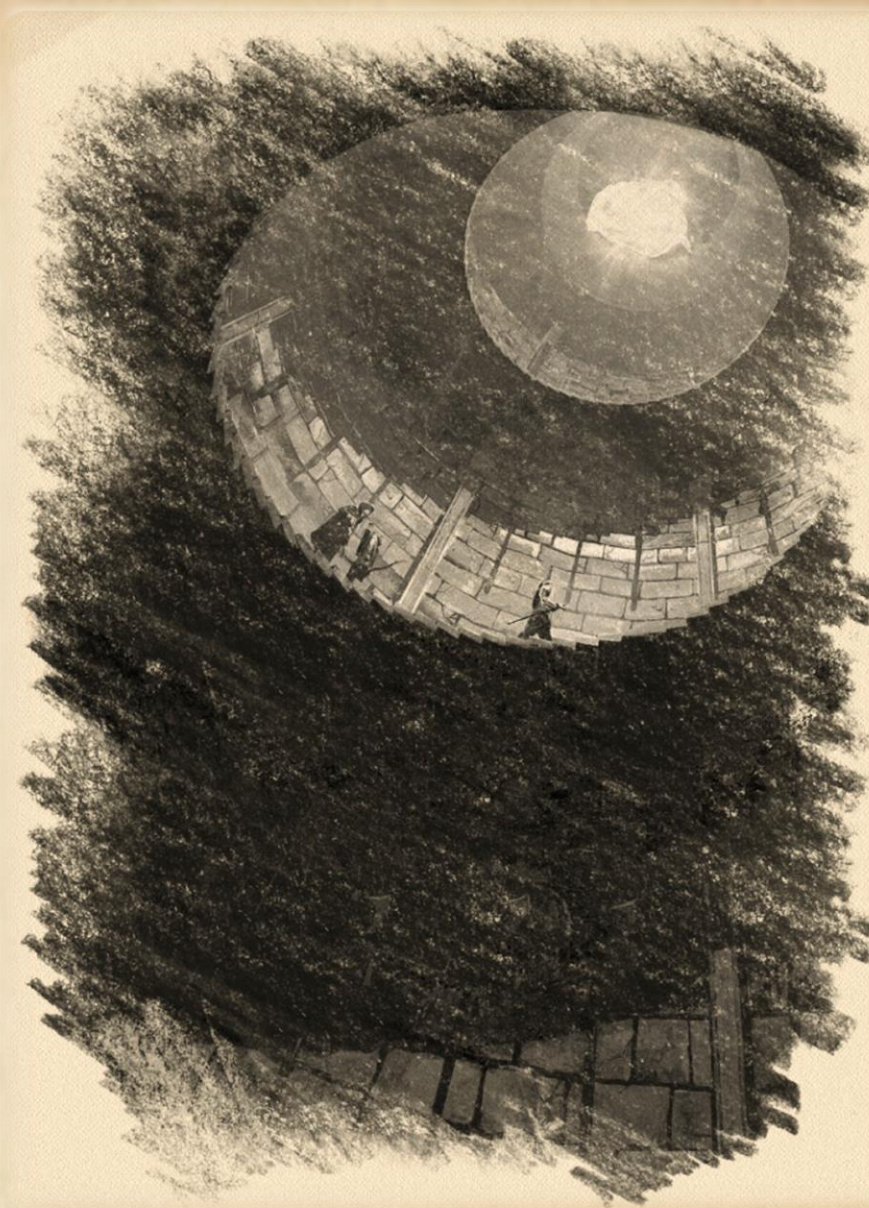


Heart of Sorrow

The fey believed they needed to restore the prince's heart and lift the darkness that surrounded him to heal the mists that blanketed the valley and strangled the life of the land itself. The fey broke their gems in half and used some of their remaining power to meld three halves into a great artifact and form the Heart of Sorrow. The fey poured their love of life and the valley into the gem and empowered it to absorb the sorrow and darkness from the heart of the prince.

The Water Fey took human form and traveled to the prince's castle to bring him this great gift. The Water Fey explained that the prince's heavy heart perverted the mists that covered the land with darkness. With the Heart of Sorrow drawing out the anguish of his lost love, the prince would be free of the despair and remorse that shackled him, restoring the land and his kingdom. The prince was pleased with the gift and the magical power of the Heart of Sorrow, invigorating him with unbridled zeal for a new cause.

The prince had heard of the fabled fey and had paid them no mind during the great war, thinking them only a myth. However, upon learning of their power and their gems, he could not let them roam free. He imprisoned the Water Fey and ordered his minions to desecrate the Fanes, find the other halves of the three gems, and capture the fey.



Fey Exodus

A wereraven in raven form sat in the window of the castle, overhearing what took place between the prince and the Water Fey. The wereraven flew faster than the prince's orders traveled and warned the other two fey sisters and the druids about the prince's dark plans.



The Mountain and Forest Fey dug up their gems, and together went to the Fane of the Water Fey on the shores of the river near Berez. But the prince's minions had already desecrated the Fane, and the blue gem was missing. Fearing the blue gem had fallen into the hands of the dark prince who had imprisoned their sister, the fey needed aid, but the villagers of Barovia no longer believed in the fey. For generations they had worshiped the Morninglord and paid tribute to their new lord of Barovia, the dark prince.

Their sister locked away and their Fanes desecrated, the fey sisters hid the two remaining gems. The Forest Fey entrusted her green gem with the wereravens, who had proven themselves to be honorable and loyal. The Mountain Fey entrusted her red gem with the old wizard who lived in the tower, whom she had come to know and trust.

Their next steps seemed more difficult than their dwindling powers could bear; they needed to obtain the blue gem, rescue the Water Fey, and restore the destroyed Fane. Only then could the three fey and their gems be brought together to defeat the dark prince. They needed to find others who were trustworthy and strong enough to face the dark prince and his minions. There was no one in the valley who they could turn to, and they would have to find truly powerful and stout rebels to aid them. The fey would hide from the dark prince and his minions until they could find agents strong enough to resist the prince, then deputize them to aid them in their battle against the corrupt master tactician.

The Forest Fey transformed into a human and lived among the people of Vallaki. She keeps her eyes and ears open, looking for those who could provide aid and watching those who served the dark prince. The Mountain Fey disappeared in search of those brave enough to aid them and face the dark prince.



Baba Lysaga

The dark prince underestimated the power of the Water Fey. She escaped her prison and, during her escape through the catacombs, found the skull of a great dragon she once knew, the dragon Argynvost. She used her remaining magic to cast a powerful spell of flying on the skull and sat upon it, flying from the castle to warn her sisters.

When she arrived, her sisters had vanished, the Fanes were desecrated and destroyed, and the gems were gone. She searched the forests and mountains, but to no avail.

When the dark prince learned the Water Fey had escaped and taken the skull of his adversary, Argynvost, he became filled with rage. He called upon dark magic to lay waste to the village on the river, Berez, whose people had paid homage to the Water Fey. The destruction of Berez was a clear warning to all Barovians: the fey were enemies of the dark prince. Any village that prayed, paid tribute, or honored a fey would be destroyed. Berez fell into ruin, and the surrounding area became a swamp. The dark prince, in his cruelty, cursed the Water Fey to become the Swamp Fey, so that only the nasty creatures that inhabited the swamp would pay homage to her.



The cursed Swamp Fey returned to her Fane and the ruins of Berez that lay in the swamp. She grew bitter and angry, but without her gem and her sisters, she had little power.

She traveled into the mountains to the Amber Temple and sought out the Dark Powers imprisoned there, hoping they might empower her to defeat the dark prince and restore the valley.

As she scoured the catacombs of the temple and the caverns of amber, she became corrupted by the Dark Powers. Her body twisted and contorted as she made pacts with the Dark Powers the valley had long forgotten. The Swamp Fey emerged from the Amber Temple even more grotesque, now deformed by the twisted influence of the Dark Powers.

She returned to the swamp ruins of Berez and practiced her newfound dark magic powers, creating creatures of darkness and frog people known as the bullywug to serve her. She made pacts with witches and swamp hags, her spies in Barovia. Other dark creatures roam the swamps, some having run afoul of her dark experiments. Some believe she is raising an army of swamp creatures to destroy the dark prince and the villages of mortals, whom she blames for all that has happened.

The Swamp Fey, it is believed, has taken the name Baba Lysaga with fiendish pride.

