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# Curse of Strahd: Reloaded

A Campaign Guide by /u/DragnaCarta

## Chapter 7: Yester Hill

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## Ch. 7: Yester Hill

### **Strands of Fate: Hooks to Yester Hill**

**A Martikov's Plea:** If the PCs previously cleared the Wizard of Wines winery of blights and druids, Davian Martikov asks them to retrieve the stolen wine gem taken by the druids to Yester Hill, making it clear that Barovia's wine trade and the family's livelihood will die if the gem is lost.

**Treasures of the Tarokka:** If Madam Eva's Tarokka reading suggested that one of the fated treasures lies beneath the roots of the Gulthias Tree, the PCs can find it here, following the directions of the Martikovs or one of Vallaki's wolf hunters, Szoldar and Yevgeni.

**Cleansing the Fanes:** If the PCs have discovered the ancient druidic runes in the Swamp Fane (Berez), or Forest Fane (Old Bonegrinder), or if they've learned of the nature of the Fanes from Elder Ormir in Yaedrag (near Tsolenka Pass), they may decide to journey to Yester Hill in order to reconsecrate the Mountain Fane there.

## Areas of the Hill

### Y1. Trail

#### The Seeker's Shrine

This small stone shrine was constructed centuries ago just beside the path that winds up Yester Hill, built as a monument to a great chief of the druidic society now known as the Forest People. That chief's spirit, a ghost named Kavan the Bloodsinger, still lingers within the stones

erected to his memory, his soul tormented by the fate that has befallen his people.

*At the base of the terraced hill sits a [small ring of standing slabs of stone](#), each slab no taller than three feet in height. A thick carpet of moss rolls over the earth here, clinging to the sides of a trio of carved obelisk-like slabs before bubbling over the sides of a terraced cobblestone shrine three layers tall. At the center of the shrine stands a single stone slab, its smooth face washed clean by millenia of wind and water, save for a myriad of carved symbols and runes. A single raven rests upon the slab, and caws mockingly as you approach.*

Each of the "obelisk" slabs bears one of three carvings honoring the *Rozana*, the Ladies of the Fanes: the Eye of the Seeker; the Tree of the Weaver; or the Wolf of the Huntress. The central slab contains the following passage, written in druidic runes: *"Here lies Kavan the Bloodsinger. May his spirit guide us through the trials of the Ladies Three."* It stands above the engraved image of a long spear whose carved tip drips with blood.

If the PCs move to pass the shrine by, and have previously rescued the Wizard of Wines from its blight infestation, read the following:

*You hear a whisper, a deep voice carried on the wind.*

*"Long have I waited," it says, "for ones who are worthy. Approach my monument, such that I may look upon you."*

## The Chieftain's Spirit

The raven atop the monument is a spy for the Keepers of the Feather, but also a servant of the Ladies of the Fanes. Its feathers are tipped with tufts of white, and it can also be found at the Swamp and Forest Fanes and Jeny Greenteeth's hut off the western Svalich Road. If the PCs have previously saved the Wizard of Wines from the druids' invasion, this messenger, called Stribog by those that know it, has already impressed Kavan with stories of their bravery and prowess.

Should the PCs approach the monument after hearing Kavan's message, the **ghost** of the chieftain's spirit appears to them: a tall, broad-shouldered, well-muscled man with long, dark hair, and a pair of bloody handprints upon his chest. One of his eyes is missing, and he bears a gaping, ragged socket in the place where it once rested. He carries the ghostly image of his spear, *Bloodsinger*, and has a proud, solemn countenance.

Kavan greets the PCs warmly, and thanks them for their service to the disciples of the *Rozana*, which he soon clarifies to be the Martikov clan. He does not reveal their nature as wereravens, but does reveal that Davian Martikov and his kin serve the legacy of the Ladies Three, a trio of archfey-like entities that once ruled the land of Barovia. He can also share with the PCs the following information:

- The nation of Barovia was once called "Cerunnos" by the druids, but was renamed "Delmor" when invaded by a race of Men called Delmoreans ruled by a cruel tyrant named King Dostron the Hellborn,

and again renamed as "Barovia" when Strahd's forces invaded.

- A great schism split the Forest People in the wake of Strahd's invasion, in which a group of druids, bitter from centuries of oppression and isolation by the Delmoreans, guided Strahd to their most holy places in the hopes that his patronage would replace the power that they had lost.
- Both sides of the druidic tribes claim the title of Forest People. Those that oppose Strahd name his servants "the Faithless."
- The Faithless have stolen an artifact of great power from the Martikov clan - a large green gem imbued with the power of the Ladies Three.

If Wintersplinter has not yet attacked, Kavan warns the PCs that the Faithless have designs to invoke a ritual of foul blood magic atop the hill that night, likely to strike back against the Martikov clan in retribution for their failed invasion. He informs them that the ritual will begin at Moonrise, and adds that the "whisperings of ravens" have told him that an emissary of the Dark One will be present for this event. If the PCs appear interested in preventing this ritual and night has not yet fallen, Kavan presents them with a choice: Strike in the day, before the ritual has begun; or attack at nightfall, when the shadows can cloak their approach.

The way up the hill is long and taxing, and its trails are patrolled by many warriors of the Faithless. If the PCs are discovered, Kavan warns, the enemy will rouse many to combat, and may slay the PCs or drive them away. If the PCs attack under cover of

night, however, they have a better opportunity of making it to the top, especially as many of the tribe's berserkers will be drawn to the crest of the hill as guardians of the ritual. However, if the PCs wait until nightfall, they risk the ritual's completion.

Kavan does not share any further information until the PCs have disrupted the ritual upon Yester Hill or destroyed Wintersplinter in its approach upon the Wizard of Wines. If Wintersplinter has already destroyed the winery, Kavan solemnly asks the PCs to destroy the Gulthias Tree atop the hill as retribution for the sins of his people.

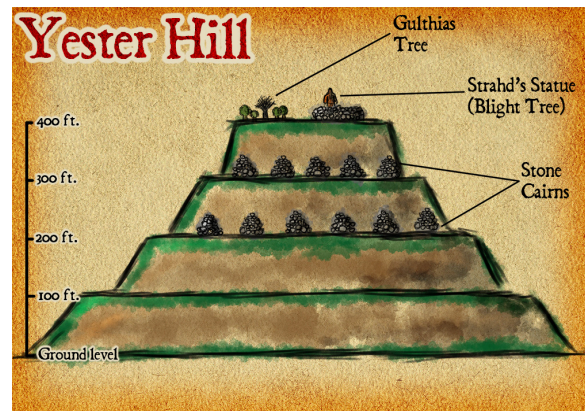
A creature that excavates the area around Kavan's grave finds his bones buried ten feet beneath the central slab. His spear, *Bloodsinger*, however, cannot be found here. It was stolen from his corpse by the future leader of the Faithless when Kavan was buried, and is buried beneath that leader's cairn on the third terrace.

## Geography of the Hill

Yester Hill is a terraced hill of four distinct levels. The trail to the top spirals around the hillside, and is lined by the ring of stone cairns. Each spiral of the trail climbs 100 feet up the hill, and the entire path (1.2 miles) can be traversed at a normal pace in roughly 30 minutes. Additionally, a long and jagged slope of rocky, crumbling stone cuts up the front of the hill at a steep incline (0.1 miles), which can be climbed in just over 5 minutes.<sup>1</sup> Each creature that attempts to ascend the incline must make a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check for each of the

four terraces that they climb, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage on a failure and drawing the attention of any nearby berserker patrols.

The trail is the safer, slower approach, while a creature climbing the rocky slope can be more easily seen by an onlooker peering over the ledge at the top.



Source: [ElvenTower, Chapter 14 - Yester Hill](#)

## Berserker Patrols

The path up Yester Hill is regularly patrolled by a number of druidic guards, which travel in groups of 1d4+1 **berserkers** alongside a single **druid assailant**.

The first terrace is always patrolled by a lone pair of watchful **berserkers**. For each of the three terraces that the PCs ascend beyond that, roll 1d20. On a roll of 10 or above (if made during the day) or 17 or above (if made during the night), the party encounters a berserker patrol that must be hidden from or fought.

If the PCs are attempting to make their way up the hill with stealth, they notice the sound of an oncoming patrol if any member of the party has a passive Perception of 13 or

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<sup>1</sup> Matt88, [Yester Hill](#)



higher. The PCs may then attempt to conceal themselves among the many stone cairns that ring the ascending trail (if climbing the main path), or by pressing themselves between the stone crags of the rocky scree (if ascending by the steeper slope). They succeed in doing so without rousing suspicion if at least half of the party succeeds at a DC 14 Dexterity (Stealth) check, made with advantage if the check is made at night. Otherwise, the patrol moves to investigate further, and can only be distracted through some manner of spellcraft or other trickery with a successful DC 14 Charisma (Performance) check.

One berserker in each patrol carries with them a large warhorn carved from the antler of an ancient dire elk.<sup>2</sup> When that berserker is reduced to half or fewer hitpoints, they use their action to disengage from battle, retreating 30 feet beyond the front line and raising the horn to their lips. On their next turn, they blow the horn, alerting all other creatures on or near the hill of the party's presence. Once alerted in this way, any other berserker patrols rapidly converge on the party's location, and the DC of any future Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide from these patrols is increased to 17.

The patrols attack all intruders without mercy, and fight to the death. Yester Hill is a sacred place to them, and they do not fear defeat.

## Y2. Berserker Cairns

Buried three feet beneath the soft earth to the north of an indistinct cairn on the third

terrace of Yester Hill is Kavan's Blood Spear, *Bloodsinger*.

## Y3. Druids' Circle



### **Worth a Thousand Words - Map of Druids' Circle**

The /r/CurseOfStrahd subreddit joined together to commission a high-resolution battle-ready map of Area Y3, given that no such map is provided in the module. You can find a ZIP file containing day and night versions of this map [here](#). Those who helped fund this project include @InvaderZim#5121, @BigPapaTn#3201, @Sainon#7087, @Chris#0768 on Discord and /u/SlightestSmile on Reddit. Credit for the map goes to NeutralParty.<sup>3</sup>

The rocks that comprise the druids' circle range from 10 to 15 feet in height, and require a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check to climb. Do note that the lightning from the eternal storm above Yester Hill strikes the tops of these black, slippery boulders, and **not** the stone cairns that ring the path ascending the hill.

Once the winding path around Yester Hill reaches the top, the trail continues for an additional 200 feet before reaching the stone circle. The entrance to the druids' circle is guarded at all times by 5 **berserkers** and 2 **druid assailants**. If the alarm is raised by a berserker patrol lower down the hill, 2 **berserkers** and a single **druid assailant** peel off to investigate the disturbance.

When the PCs enter the circle, read the following:

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<sup>3</sup> [Yester Hill Map Commission & A Subreddit Update](#)

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<sup>2</sup> Matt88, [Yester Hill](#)

*Atop the hill is a wide ring of black boulders and smaller rocks that collectively form a makeshift wall enclosing a field of dead grass. Lightning strikes the edge of the ring from time to time, illuminating a ghastly, fifty-foot-tall statue made of tightly woven twigs and packed with black earth. The packed earth of the ground rises five feet above either side of the winding trail, forming a natural ditch that snakes toward a wide break in the stone ring on the opposite side.*

*To the east side of the ring, rough-cut earthen steps lead up to an array of several large boulders that stand among a patch of bare, muddy earth. To the west side of the ring, a set of dirt stairs halfway down the path ascends to a semicircle of tall standing stones arranged in simple geometric patterns around the enormous wooden statue. To the south, beyond the edge of the ring, a massive dead tree rises above a small thicket of gnarled, grey foliage.*

If the PCs arrive the day of the ritual, six **druid naturalists** and **Svarog, Druid Elder** are meditating in a semicircle around the statue within the array of standing stones to the west. An additional four **druid assailants** are slumbering beneath the loose earth of several shallow graves scattered amongst the muddy boulders to the east.

If the PCs arrive during the ritual, six **druid naturalists** are performing an arcane chant around the statue while **Svarog, Druid Elder** looks on. Four **druid assailants** are

gathered in defensive formation around the semicircle of standing stones. **Strahd von Zarovich**, mounted on the **nightmare** Bucephalus, looks on from the southern side of the standing stones, while **Anastraya Karelova** stands just beside him. For more information on this ritual, see the *Druids' Ritual* special event below.

If the PCs arrive after the ritual has been completed, day or night, the front of the statue has been torn open, leaving only a hollow shell of thick twigs and brambles behind. If Wintersplinter has not yet been defeated, an enormous dead tree also sits rooted to the ground toward the very center of the ring. This tree is in truth the **tree blight**, Wintersplinter, which animates and attacks any creature that attempts to remove the glowing green gem from its trunk. Three **druid assailants** and three **druid naturalists** can also be found slumbering beneath the loose earth of the shallow graves between the muddy boulders to the east. The druids arise from their sleep and attack any PCs that disturb Wintersplinter, or who pass through the semicircle of standing stones to the western side of the ring.

### **Assailants & Naturalists**

The **druid assailant** has exactly the same statistics of an ordinary druid, but has the following spells prepared:

- Cantrips: *Druidcraft, Thorn Whip, Shillelagh*
- 1st Level: *Earth Tremor, Longstrider, Healing Word, Thunderwave*
- 2nd Level: *Darkvision, Barkskin*

The **druid naturalist** has exactly the same statistics of an ordinary druid, but has the following spells prepared:

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- Cantrips: *Druidcraft*, *Produce Flame*, *Infestation*
- 1st Level: *Faerie Fire*, *Entangle*, *Speak With Animals*, *Fog Cloud*
- 2nd Level: *Spike Growth*, *Moonbeam*

See [here](#) for more information on running the druid assailant or naturalist in combat.

## The Wooden Statue

A creature that approaches the wooden statue of Strahd can clearly see an array of thick, black roots woven around and into its lower half. The roots continue above ground toward the south side of the ring, a tight “wire” of bundled roots five feet across that winds through the southern exit, passes through the grove of dead foliage to the south, and ends at the trunk of the Gulthias tree.

## Y4. Gulthias Tree

If he is not overseeing the ritual in Area Y3 (Druids’ Circle), **Svarog, Druid Elder** can be found within a “cocoon” of interlocking roots and branches approximately halfway (15 feet) up the central trunk of the **Gulthias Tree**. A creature that inspects Svarog’s body finds that the roots of the tree have protruded thousands of tiny black tendrils penetrating Svarog’s skin, drawing sustenance from his blood.

Should the Gulthias Tree be reduced to less than one-third of its hitpoints, it immediately uses its *Blood Drain* legendary action on Svarog, which drains Svarog of his remaining HP and reduces him to a shrivelled corpse.

While he is awake, only Svarog’s torso and lower body are contained within the cocoon, which provides him with an AC of 16. While asleep, his body is withdrawn completely into the cocoon’s interior. He is usually asleep, and awakens on the first round of combat after a creature attacks the Gulthias Tree.

As in the module, the grove of dead foliage is infested with 3 **vine blights**, 6 **needle blights**, and 12 **twig blights**. These blights are replenished by the Gulthias Tree each day at dusk. The dense thicket of gnarled trees and brushwood rises to a height of 20 feet around the Gulthias Tree, obstructing any view of Svarog’s cocoon from the outside of the grove. The vine and twig blights use their False Appearance to blend perfectly with the surrounding foliage, while the needle blights are hidden among the thicket and require a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to detect.

If the Gulthias Tree is reduced to 0 hit points, it seems to be destroyed but isn’t truly dead; it regains 1 hit point every month until it is fully healed. With a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check, a character can determine that the entire stump must be uprooted for the tree to truly die. The Gulthias Tree withers and dies in 3d10 days if a *hallow* spell is cast in its area, and does so immediately if the Mountain Fane below is reconsecrated.

Six feet above the earth on the north side of the Gulthias Tree’s trunk lies a knot of black bark (AC 12, HP 20) that resembles a weeping face. This knot contains the *dagger of the Seeker* (see Area Y6 below).

## GULTHIAS TREE

*Gargantuan plant, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 149 (13d12+65)

**Speed** 0ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	6 (-2)	19 (+4)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	3 (-4)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning and piercing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, psychic

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10

**Languages** Understands Common and Druidic but doesn't speak

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the Gulthias Tree remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a dead tree.

**Summon Blights (Lair Action).** On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Gulthias tree uses a lair action to spawn 1d4 Twig Blights among its roots.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The Gulthias Tree makes 2 attacks with its branches.

**Branch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

**Grasping Root.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature not grappled by the tree. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). The root has AC 16 and can be severed by dealing 6 slashing damage or more to it at once. Cutting the root doesn't hurt the Gulthias Tree, but ends the grapple.

**Frightful Presence (Recharge 5-6).** Red blood oozes from the pores of the Gulthias tree as it releases a low, keening moan. Each creature that is within 30 feet of the Gulthias Tree must succeed on a DC 15 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 the Gulthias Tree's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

### Legendary Actions

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

**Root.** The Gulthias Tree makes one Grasping Root attack.

**Lift.** The Gulthias Tree can use its roots to lift a creature that is currently grappled by it up to 20 ft. into the air.

**Blood Drain.** Black tendrils extend from the roots of the Gulthias Tree and penetrate the skin of a single creature that is currently grappled by it. That creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, that creature takes 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the Gulthias tree regains Hit Points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a Long Rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a mindless Vampire Spawn under the control of Strahd von Zarovich.

## SVAROG, DRUID ELDER

Medium human, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 11 (16 while in his cocoon)

**Hit Points** 39 (7d8 + 7)

**Speed** 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Medicine +6, Nature +4, Perception +6

**Senses** passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common, Druidic

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Spellcasting.** Svarog is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following druid spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): Mold Earth, Infestation, Shillelagh
- 1st Level (4 Slots): Thunderwave, Ice Knife, Entangle, Fog Cloud
- 2nd Level (3 Slots): Moonbeam, Gust of Wind
- 3rd Level (3 Slots): Call Lightning, Plant Growth, Erupting Earth
- 4th Level (1 Slot): Wall of Fire

### Actions

**Quarterstaff.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 3 (1d6 - 1) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage with shillelagh or if wielded with two hands.



### Know the Monsters: Grove of the Gulthias Tree

Neither the blights, Svarog, nor the Gulthias Tree attack intruders that enter the grove without hostile intent. Initiative is only rolled when one or more PCs declare attacks against the tree or any of the lurking blights.

When combat begins, the **twig blights** and **needle blights** attack whichever character is nearest, but have a preference for unarmored and/or ranged combatants. Any blight within the dense thicket surrounding the Gulthias Tree has half cover and a +2 bonus to AC. Meanwhile, the **vine blights** attempt to

entrap any ranged enemies using their *Entangling Plants* action, after which they focus on keeping melee enemies away from the Gulthias Tree by grappling them with the *Constrict* action and dragging them away.

The **Gulthias Tree** prioritizes its own defense over all else. It makes a *Branches* multiattack on each turn, and uses its *Root* and *Lift* legendary actions to seize any melee attacker and haul them high into the air, away from its vulnerable trunk. If injured, the Tree uses its *Blood Drain* legendary action to restore its lost health from any grappled enemy. Once reduced to fewer than one-third of its maximum hit points, if Svarog, Druid Elder is within his cocoon on its trunk and it has no other targets to drain, the Gulthias Tree uses its *Blood Drain* on him, draining all of his hitpoints and rejuvenate its own.

**Svarog, Druid Elder** begins combat by casting *Plant Growth* centered on the trunk of the Gulthias Tree, reducing mobility for any creature that wishes to approach. He then alternates between an offensive and defensive strategy, depending on whether an enemy is currently attacking the trunk of the Gulthias Tree. If playing defensively, Svarog uses *Gust of Wind* to push any attackers away from the tree's vulnerable trunk, and then casts *Ice Knife* and *Infestation* to whittle down their health. If playing offensively, Svarog casts *Call Lightning*, whose damage is improved to 4d10 on a failed save due to the stormy conditions of Yester Hill, and uses his action on each subsequent turn to call down a new bolt of lightning.

If his concentration on *Call Lightning* is broken, Svarog casts *Moonbeam*, using his action on each subsequent turn to move it to a new enemy's space. If

reduced below one-half health, Svarog casts *Fog Cloud*, which removes visibility for any PCs, but allows the Gulthias Tree and its blindsight-endowed blights to continue attacking. While *Fog Cloud* is active, Svarog continues to attack enemies using Ice Knife and Infestation. If a PC climbs the trunk or otherwise approaches his cocoon, Svarog attempts to push them away by casting *Thunderwave*.

## Y5. Wall of Fog

Strahd takes Bucephalus to journey toward the Wall of Fog once every two weeks, when a Blood Moon rises over Barovia. As mentioned in the module, he spends the night from dusk till dawn staring into the mists, tantalizing himself with visions of his homeland. If the PCs are looking to infiltrate Castle Ravenloft before their final confrontation with Strahd (e.g., to retrieve a Tarokka item or Argynvost's skull), a number of NPCs can inform them of this event, including: Ezmerelda, Davian Martikov, Rudolph van Richten, Kasimir, Jeny Greenteeth, and Madam Eva.<sup>4</sup>

## Y6. Mountain Fane

[Click here](#) for more information about the Mountain Fane.

## Special Events

### Druids' Ritual

If the PCs assault Yester Hill at night and before Wintersplinter's creation, they arrive at the summit of the Hill just in time to view the druids' ritual in process. No matter the

time the PCs arrive at the entrance to the stone circle, the druids are always exactly 10 turns away from completing the ritual and summoning Wintersplinter.

During the ritual, five **druid naturalists** surround the statue of Strahd within the semicircle of standing stones within the stone circle, chanting in the druidic tongue. Any creature can see a stream of sickly green magic flowing from each chanting druid's staff toward the statue at the center of their circle. Two of these druid naturalists must use their action to continue chanting each round while within the semicircle of standing stones; if, at the end of the druid naturalists' turn, there are fewer than two druids casting the ritual, it is disrupted, Wintersplinter's nascent form crumbles within the statue, and the magic must be begun anew.

Three **druid assailants** flank the standing stones, guarding the naturalists while the ritual is completed. They are joined by **Svarog, Druid Elder**, who is present to oversee the ritual and defend his druids from any interruptions. Watching the ritual from the southern side of the standing stones are **Strahd von Zarovich**, astride his **nightmare** Bucephalus; and his bride **Anastraya Karelava**. Strahd and Anastraya are present as guests, having been invited due to Anastraya's brokerage of the alliance between Svarog and Baba Lysaga. However, Strahd makes no effort to interfere with the PCs' efforts to stop the ritual, and halts Anastraya if she moves to defend the druids, curious to see how events unfold.

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<sup>4</sup> Butlerlog, [CoS Discord Recap: Week of 7/8](#)

## Casting the Ritual

A dim, green glow can be seen surrounding the wooden statue, fueled by the sickly green mana flowing from the druids' staves around it. With each passing round, this aura grows brighter, as the flow of energy can be seen to empower the statue further.<sup>5</sup> The stakes and countdown are made clear to the PCs each round as follows:

R ou nd	Description
1	Svarog, Druid Elder taunts the PCs, declaring that the Chosen (Anastraya) of the Great Shadow (Strahd) has brought his people the power they need to destroy the Betrayers (the Keepers of the Feather).
2	A heavy mist swirls around the chanting druids and the statue, lightly obscuring everything in a 30-foot radius around the statue.
3	The gem within the statue's chest begins to glow a bright green. Svarog declares that the Scion of Gulthias (Wintersplinter) will soon reduce the Winged Betrayers (the Martikovs) to splinters.
4	The sky grows dark as the clouds swell and blacken overhead. A heavy wind begins to blow across the hill as the magic flowing from the druids to the statue redoubles in intensity.
5	The twigs comprising the wooden

	statue begin to swell, twist, and groan. Svarog laughs, commanding Wintersplinter to Grow! Drink! Consume!
6	If he has not already done so, Strahd commands Bucephalus to fly above the battlefield in order to look down upon the statue. Anastraya transforms into a bat and follows him.
7	A massive, dark shape forms within the statue. "Wintersplinter comes!" Svarog roars.
8	The lightning around Yester Hill increases in intensity, striking the stone circle more regularly. Any creature that begins its turn or atop the stone circle, a boulder, a standing stone, or a tree has a 50% chance of being struck by a bolt of lightning. A bolt of lightning lances down toward Strahd, and he deflects it with a lazy wave of his hand.
9	A low cracking and resonant, monstrous roar is audible from the statue as the shape within solidifies. "Wintersplinter is born!" Svarog laughs.
10	Wintersplinter uses its action to burst from the interior of the statue on its turn.



### Know the Monsters - Svarog, Druid Elder

Should the PCs attack while he is overseeing the ritual, Svarog begins combat by casting *Wall of Fire* to block their approach, followed by *Plant Growth*

<sup>5</sup> Matt88, [Yester Hill](#)



and *Erupting Earth* to slow them down. Once all PCs have made it through the Wall, Svarog drops concentration on it and casts *Call Lightning*, whose damage is improved to 4d10 on a failed save due to the stormy conditions of Yester Hill, and uses his action on each subsequent turn to call down a new bolt of lightning. He prioritizes attacking any enemy magic-users, but will redirect his attention if any PC begins attacking or ascending the statue of Strahd.

If his concentration on *Call Lightning* is broken, Svarog casts *Moonbeam*, using his action on each subsequent turn to move it to a new enemy's space. If the druids casting the ritual are reduced to below one-half their numbers, Svarog casts *Fog Cloud*, which removes visibility for the PCs and allows the druids to refocus their efforts on the ritual. While *Fog Cloud* is active, Svarog continues to attack enemies using *Ice Knife* and *Infestation*. If reduced to less than one-half of his maximum hit points, and the ritual is in danger of being disrupted, Svarog casts *Gust of Wind* in effort to keep any melee combatants from reaching the druids.

### After the Ritual

When the ritual has concluded, and Wintersplinter is born, the tree blight immediately begins marching toward the Wizard of Wines winery at Svarog's direction. Using its Huge size, it is able to easily step down one terraced level of Yester Hill on each of its turns before continuing on the northern path.

The druids continue to attack the PCs for as long as they remain at Yester Hill, but make no effort to pursue if the party chases after Wintersplinter.

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If the ritual is disrupted, Strahd descends from Bucephalus and congratulates the PCs on their victory. If they have already dined with him at Castle Ravenloft, he makes some reference to his faith in their abilities and his interest in their future; if they have not already done so, he informs them to expect an invitation from him shortly.

Whether the ritual is disrupted or successfully completed, Strahd then dismisses Anastraya and makes his way atop Bucephalus toward the Wall of Fog, where he proceeds to stare into the mists until dawn. If the PCs approach, Strahd greets them mournfully, and ponders aloud the cruelties of Fate. He then dismisses them, transforming into his mist form if attacked, with Bucephalus departing for the Border Ethereal shortly thereafter.



### Know the Monsters - Wintersplinter

Due to Wintersplinter's blindsight, the **tree blight** will not pursue any PCs or other hostile creatures that flee its 60 ft. radius. On each of its turns while marching toward the Wizard of Wines, it will move its full 30 ft. up the path and use its Multiattack on any nearby hostile creatures. Due to its low intelligence and hulking nature, Wintersplinter makes no effort to target any ranged attackers while melee opponents are nearby; however, if no melee enemies are nearby and it sustains at least 25 damage in a single turn or becomes bloodied, it becomes distracted from its northward path and will pursue any ranged enemies using the Dash action.