

Varkhul

Crown of the Blood Eclipse



KILLER BEE

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VARKHUL

Crown of the Blood Eclipse

Before dawn can rise, the night must bleed.

SYSTEM COMPATIBILITY

Compatible with fifth edition using material from SRD 5.1 and SRD 5.2.1.

Compatibility with Pathfinder Second Edition requires Pathfinder Second Edition from Paizo Inc. See paizo.com/pathfinder to learn more about Pathfinder. Paizo Inc. does not guarantee compatibility, and does not endorse this product.

PUBLISHER

Killer Bee Press
Adventure for 4-6 adventurers, levels 7-10
Serious gothic war horror • 10-14 hours / 3-4 sessions



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A War Against the Coming Night



Gravenmoor at the Red Bells

The vale is already beginning to fall when the heroes arrive.

ADVENTURE AT A GLANCE

Party: 4–6 adventurers, levels 7–10

Playtime: 10–14 hours / 3–4 sessions

Tone: serious, challenging, relentless

Systems: 5E SRD 5.1/5.2.1 and Pathfinder Second Edition

SPOILER-FREE PREMISE

An ancient vampire warlord has awakened beneath Dreadhold Veyr. Seven bloodlines are being hunted, a red eclipse grows each night, and the heroes must discover why before the vale loses the sun.

CORE EXPERIENCE

- Gothic war horror: disciplined undead forces, siege pressure, and brutal choices.
- Investigation with momentum: failed checks create costs rather than dead ends.
- Vampire politics: a dangerous rival court can become an ally of convenience.
- Multi-objective boss fight: Varkhul is strongest while the Blood Mirrors remain active.
- Tragic history: he once saved the vale. That does not excuse what he has become.



The Red Bells

The bells ring with no hands. The raiders want one survivor.



"THE DAIN HEIR BREATHES. THE DAIN HEIR BLEEDS. THE DAIN HEIR DOES NOT DIE."

THE MOMENT THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

At sunset every bell in Saint Orra's Sanctuary begins ringing at once, though the tower is empty. Gravenmoor's western gate is burning. Three corpses in the nave open their eyes. Then black-armored raiders break through the doors - not to slaughter the refugees, but to seize archivist **Aster Dain** alive.

NO SAFE NEUTRALITY

Why the heroes act: They are already inside the collapsing defense line when the attack begins. Captain Seraphine Vale asks them to hold the sanctuary long enough to evacuate civilians, while Aster is singled out by name. Leaving means abandoning hundreds of trapped refugees - and the only road out is already under assault.

WHAT THEY BELIEVE

What they think: A vampire lord has returned and his soldiers are collecting important captives as food or hostages. The sanctuary assault looks like a brutal feeding raid with one unusually valuable target.

THE HIDDEN TRUTH

What is really happening: Every captive descends from one of the Seven who imprisoned Varkhul. Their blood powers the Crown of the Blood Eclipse. Six bloodlines are already in his hands. Aster is the seventh and final heir.

THE STAKES

Why it cannot be ignored: If Aster is taken and the ritual completes, sunlight over Kharov Vale becomes permanent red twilight. Varkhul's undead army can march without fear of day, settlements are offered submission or destruction, and the siege becomes an occupation.

Alternate entry points: Ashen Watch contract • missing bloodline heir • cursed founder relic • military commission to hold Gravenmoor until dawn.



When the Bells Bleed

The Sanctuary Under Siege



The Sanctuary Under Siege

Opening combat and civilian-protection encounter.

PURPOSE

Protect Aster, reveal that the attackers want an abduction rather than a massacre, and establish the adventure clock.

ENCOUNTER

Level 7: 1 Bloodbound Knight + 1 Vein Stalker
Levels 8-9: 1 Knight + 2 Stalkers
Level 10 / 6 PCs: 2 Knights + 2 Stalkers
Attackers withdraw once Aster escapes, is captured, or most of their force is defeated.

ENVIRONMENT

Burning pitch crashes through the roof on round 3. Characters can fight, protect refugees, extinguish fires, or reposition civilians.

CHECK

5E DC: 14

Pathfinder Second Edition DC: standard for party level.

Failure still helps, but costs position, time, or safety.

THE CLUE THEY CANNOT MISS

A defeated Bloodbound Knight carries a black iron token with seven depressions. Six hold hardened drops of blood. A folded order reads:

THE DAIN HEIR BREATHES. THE DAIN HEIR BLEEDS. THE DAIN HEIR DOES NOT DIE.

No roll is required. The adventure's core clue survives combat outcomes and keeps the investigation moving.



Bloodbound Knight — 5E (CR 5)



Bloodbound Knight

CORE STATISTICS

Medium Humanoid (blood-sworn), Lawful Evil

Armor Class 18 (black plate) **Hit Points** 102 (12d8 + 48) **Speed** 30 ft.

STR 18 (+4) · **DEX** 13 (+1) · **CON** 18 (+4) · **INT** 11 (+0) · **WIS** 14 (+2) · **CHA** 15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +7, Wis +5

Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +5, Perception +5

Damage Resistances necrotic · **Senses** passive Perception 15

Languages Common plus one regional language

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) · **Proficiency Bonus** +3

TRAITS

Blood Discipline. The knight has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Death Before Dishonor (1/Day). When reduced to 0 hit points, the knight makes a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a success, it drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The knight makes two Black Glaive attacks.

Black Glaive. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

Bloodhook. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage. A Large or smaller target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pulled 10 ft. toward the knight.

BONUS ACTION

Sanguine Rush. The knight moves up to its speed toward a hostile creature it can see. This movement must end closer to that creature.

REACTION

Interpose. When a creature within 5 ft. of the knight is targeted by a melee attack, the knight moves into that creature's space and the creature shifts 5 ft. to an adjacent unoccupied space. The triggering attack is rerolled against the knight's AC. The knight must be able to occupy the ally's space.

TACTICS & MORALE

Knights fight as soldiers. One controls the center aisle with the glaive while another, if present, drives toward Aster. They use Bloodhook to pull protectors away from her and Interpose for Vein Stalkers carrying her toward the exit.

Morale: A Knight withdraws once Aster is beyond the west doors or when three-quarters of the assault force is destroyed. A cornered Knight surrenders only if promised a soldier's execution rather than torture.

Bloodbound Knight — Pathfinder 2E (Creature 8)



Bloodbound Knight

CREATURE LEVEL 8 · CORE STATISTICS

Medium Humanoid

Perception +17; **Skills** Athletics +20, Intimidation +18, Warfare Lore +16

Str +6, Dex +2, Con +5, Int +1, Wis +3, Cha +4

AC 27; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +14, **Will** +17; **HP** 145

Resistance void 5; **Speed** 25 feet

DEFENSE & OFFENSE

Blood Discipline. The knight gains a +2 circumstance bonus to saves against fear.

Melee — Black Glaive +20 (reach 10 feet, sweep), Damage 2d10+10 slashing plus 1d6 void.

Melee — Gauntlet +20 (agile), Damage 2d6+10 bludgeoning.

Bloodhook [two actions]. The knight makes a ranged attack at +18 against a creature within 30 feet. On a hit, the target takes 2d6+10 piercing damage and must attempt a DC 26 Fortitude save. On a failure, it is pulled 10 feet toward the knight; on a critical failure, 15 feet.

MOBILITY & REACTION

Sanguine Rush [one action]. The knight Strides twice. Each Stride must end closer to a visible enemy.

Interpose [reaction]. Trigger: An adjacent ally is targeted by a Strike. Effect: The knight Steps into a legal space adjacent to the ally and becomes the target of the Strike instead. If the knight cannot reach a legal space, the reaction is lost.

ENCOUNTER USE

Level 7 party: 1 Knight + 1 Vein Stalker = 90 XP for four characters; add a Stalker for six characters.

Level 8 party: 1 Knight + 2 Stalkers = 80 XP; for six characters, add a second Knight.

Level 9 party: 2 Knights + 2 Stalkers = 90 XP; add 2 Stalkers for six characters.

Level 10 party: apply the elite adjustment to Knights and Stalkers; 2 elite Knights + 2 elite Stalkers = 90 XP; add a third elite Knight for six characters.

These compositions target a Moderate-to-Severe opening fight. Reduce the count by one Stalker if the party enters already depleted.