

Hack and Slash Adventure for Fate's Edge: The Crimson Veil

Adventure Overview

Tier: II (Seasoned)

Theme: Ancient conspiracy, forbidden knowledge, and the price of power

Hooks: Missing scholar, haunted ruins, mysterious patron interest

Adventure Synopsis

The party is drawn into a web of ancient secrets when renowned scholar Vex Thorne vanishes while investigating the ruins of Valdris Keep. What begins as a simple search mission becomes a deadly race against time as the party discovers that Thorne uncovered something that powerful forces will kill to keep buried.

Session 1: The Scholar's Last Request

Opening Scene: The Message

Cold Open: The party receives a sealed letter delivered by a nervous courier. The letter, written in Vex Thorne's distinctive hand, contains a desperate plea for help and a cryptic warning about "the crimson veil that hides the truth of the ancient ones."

Key Information:

- Thorne was last seen at the ruins of Valdris Keep
- He mentions a "crimson sigil" and "voices from the deep"
- The letter is dated three days ago
- A strange symbol is drawn in the corner (Ikasha's mark)

Scene 1: Journey to Valdris Keep

Travel Clock: [4] segments

Travel Roles:

- **Guide:** Navigate the treacherous mountain paths
- **Scout:** Watch for bandits and unnatural signs
- **Quartermaster:** Manage supplies in harsh conditions
- **Watch:** Stay alert for supernatural threats

Encounter Seeds:

1. **Bandit Ambush (DV 3)** - Wits + Notice or Melee + Athletics
 - SB: Reinforcements arrive, supplies stolen, party split up
 - Success: Bandits routed
 - Partial: Escape but lose supplies
 - Miss: Captured temporarily
2. **The Whispering Woods (DV 4)** - Wits + Lore or Spirit + Endurance
 - SB: Lose the path, hear disturbing voices, hallucinations
 - Success: Navigate safely
 - Partial: Take longer route
 - Miss: Spend night in woods, gain Shaken condition
3. **Supply Shortage Crisis** - Resource management challenge
 - Party must make difficult choices about rationing
 - Bond-driven decisions can provide bonuses

Scene 2: The Ruins of Valdris Keep**Location Overview:**

Valdris Keep stands as a crumbling testament to a forgotten age. Built into the mountainside, the fortress shows signs of both ancient construction and recent occupation. Strange symbols have been carved into the stone, and an unnatural chill permeates the air.

Key Areas:

1. **The Outer Courtyard**
 - Evidence of recent campfires and supplies
 - Carved symbols matching those in Thorne's letter
 - **Investigation Check (DV 3):** Wits + Investigation
 - Success: Find Thorne's journal fragment
 - Partial: Discover hidden entrance but alert guards
 - Miss: Triggered alarm, hostile forces arrive
2. **The Great Hall**
 - Massive chamber with a dais at the far end
 - Ancient murals depicting ritual sacrifices
 - **Notice Check (DV 4):** Wits + Notice
 - Success: Spot hidden pressure plate
 - Partial: Notice something is wrong but can't identify it
 - Miss: Trigger trap, ceiling begins to collapse
3. **Thorne's Study (Hidden Room)**

- Scholar's makeshift laboratory with books and notes
- Partially burned documents
- **Lore Check (DV 3):** Wits + Lore
 - Success: Decipher key passages about the Crimson Veil ritual
 - Partial: Get general idea but miss crucial details
 - Miss: Documents too damaged, gain only fragments

Scene 3: The Cultists Arrive

Complication Clock: Cultist Arrival [6]

As the party explores the ruins, they attract unwanted attention. Members of the Crimson Veil cult, who have been tracking Thorne's research, arrive to claim what he discovered.

Combat Encounter: Cultist Skirmish

- **Enemies:** 4 Cultists (Cap 1), 1 Cult Leader (Cap 2)
- **Environment:** Crumbling ruins with unstable sections
- **Position:** Start Controlled, shift based on actions
- **Key Tactics:** Cultists fight desperately to protect their secrets

Cultist Stats (Simplified):

- **Cultist:** Melee 2, Body 2, Harm 1
- **Cult Leader:** Melee 3, Body 3, Harm 2, +1 die vs. fear effects

Environmental Hazards:

- **Unstable Ceiling:** When Leash falls on any combatant, rubble falls (Harm 1 to random target)
- **Ancient Glyphs:** Certain areas glow with protective magic when activated

Scene 4: The Crimson Veil Ritual

Climax: The cult leader attempts to complete a ritual using Thorne's research and the party's blood.

Ritual Clock: Crimson Veil Activation [8]

Key Elements:

- **Interrupt the Ritual:** Multiple skill challenges
- **Protect Thorne:** He's found bound but alive
- **Survive Supernatural Forces:** The ritual begins to tear reality

Skill Challenges:

1. **Disrupt the Circle (DV 4):** Body + Athletics or Wits + Tinker
2. **Break Thorne's Bonds (DV 3):** Wits + Tinker or Melee + Athletics
3. **Counter the Summoning (DV 5):** Spirit + Arcana or Presence + Command

Supernatural Complications:

- Reality distortions (Position shifts)
- Manifesting entities (additional combatants)
- Time pressure (clock advances rapidly)

Session 2: The Depths of Valdris**Opening: The Revelation**

The failed ritual has awakened something deeper in the keep. The party discovers that Valdris Keep was built over an ancient prison, and the Crimson Veil cult has been working to free what lies beneath.

Scene 1: The Descent**Exploration Clock:** Delving Deeper [6]

The party must navigate the ancient passages beneath the keep, facing both physical challenges and supernatural horrors.

Key Challenges:

1. **The Spiral Staircase (DV 4):** Body + Athletics
 - SB: Steps crumble, party separated, fall damage
2. **The Guardian Statues (DV 5):** Wits + Lore
 - SB: Animated guardians attack, magical barriers activate
3. **The Voice of the Deep (DV 4):** Spirit + Endurance
 - SB: Mind effects, hallucinations, temporary Harm

Scene 2: The Ancient Prison

Location: A vast chamber filled with crystalline structures that hum with otherworldly energy.

Key Discoveries:

- Thorne's complete research notes
- The true nature of the Crimson Veil (a prison seal)
- Evidence of previous attempts to break the seal
- A partially opened portal to another realm

Investigation Challenge (DV 4): Wits + Investigation

- Success: Understand how to reinforce the seal
- Partial: Get partial knowledge, must experiment dangerously
- Miss: Accidentally weaken the seal further

Scene 3: The Prisoner Awakens

Boss Encounter: The partially freed entity begins to manifest, testing the party's resolve and forcing them to make difficult choices.

Combat Stats:

- **The Prisoner:** Cap 4, Harm 3, various supernatural abilities
- **Environmental Effects:** Reality distortions, summoned minions, time loops

Key Mechanics:

- The entity grows stronger as the seal weakens
- Party can choose to reinforce the seal or destroy the entity
- Moral choices affect long-term consequences

Session 3: The Crimson Conspiracy

Opening: The Aftermath

The party's actions in Valdris Keep have consequences that ripple outward. They discover that the Crimson Veil cult is just one branch of a larger organization with influence in nearby settlements.

Scene 1: Return to Civilization

Social Challenge: Convincing authorities of the supernatural threat while dealing with cult infiltration.

Key NPCs:

- **Magistrate Aldric:** Skeptical but fair local authority
- **Sister Miriam:** Local healer who knows more than she lets on
- **Captain Roderick:** Town guard captain with divided loyalties

Social Encounters:

1. **The Magistrate's Audience (DV 4):** Presence + Diplomacy
2. **Gathering Allies (DV 3):** Presence + Command
3. **Exposing the Infiltration (DV 5):** Wits + Insight

Scene 2: The Cult's Stronghold

Location: An abandoned monastery that serves as the cult's regional headquarters.

Infiltration Challenge (DV 4): Stealth + Subterfuge

- **Success:** Gain access without alerting guards
- **Partial:** Get in but must move quickly
- **Miss:** Captured, must escape or negotiate

Key Areas:

1. **The Library:** Contains dangerous knowledge and magical artifacts
2. **The Ritual Chamber:** Where the cult plans their next major ritual
3. **The Prison Cells:** Where they keep unwilling participants

Scene 3: The Final Confrontation

Climactic Battle: The party faces the cult's leadership in a battle that will determine whether the Crimson Veil spreads or is contained.

Major NPCs:

- **High Inquisitor Malachar:** Leader of the local cult branch
- **The Crimson Hand:** Elite cult warriors
- **Summoned Entities:** Supernatural beings bound to the cult's service

Environmental Challenges:

- Active ritual circles that provide benefits to cultists
- Collapsing architecture due to supernatural strain
- Time pressure as the ritual nears completion

Adventure Rewards**Experience Awards**

- **Session 1 Completion:** 8 XP
- **Session 2 Completion:** 8 XP
- **Session 3 Completion:** 10 XP
- **Major Objectives:** +4 XP each
- **Hard Choices:** +2 XP each
- **Discovery:** +2 XP

Treasure and Magic Items

1. **Thorne's Research Notes:** Valuable lore item
2. **Crimson Sigil Pendant:** Minor magical item (+1 to relevant skill checks)
3. **Ancient Blade:** Weapon with special properties against supernatural foes
4. **Protective Ward:** Can be used to reinforce seals
5. **Cultist Cipher:** Allows understanding of cult communications

Story Consequences

- **Patron Attention:** The party's actions may attract the notice of powerful entities
- **Reputation Changes:** How local communities view the party
- **Ongoing Threats:** The Crimson Veil may seek revenge
- **Allies and Enemies:** New relationships formed during the adventure

GM Notes and Variations

Scaling for Different Tiers

- **Tier I:** Reduce enemy capabilities, simplify challenges
- **Tier III:** Add more complex encounters, higher stakes
- **Tier IV+:** Introduce cosmic-level threats, world-changing consequences

Optional Complications

1. **Thorne's Corruption:** The scholar may have been changed by his discoveries
2. **Double Agents:** Some allies may have hidden cult connections
3. **Time Loop:** The ritual creates temporal anomalies
4. **Multiple Realities:** Different versions of events exist simultaneously

Integration with Campaign

This adventure can serve as:

- A standalone story
- The beginning of a larger campaign against supernatural threats
- A character origin story that defines their relationship with power and responsibility
- A gateway to exploring the deeper magic system of Fate's Edge

Key Themes

- **The Price of Knowledge:** Some truths come with terrible costs
- **Power and Corruption:** How far will characters go to protect what they value?
- **Sacrifice and Heroism:** What makes someone a hero in the face of impossible odds?
- **Ancient Secrets:** The past holds both wisdom and danger

This adventure provides a solid foundation for a three-session hack and slash campaign that explores both combat encounters and deeper thematic elements, while giving players meaningful choices that affect the outcome and their characters' development.