



# SACRIFICE IN THE SANCTUM

A DUET 5E ADVENTURE



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# Sacrifice in the Sanctum

## A Duet Adventure for PCs of levels 6-7



### Introduction

In this one-player, one-GM adventure, the player character (PC) and their companions embark on a rescue and recovery mission. This adventure takes place in the world of Azuria to the east of the continent of Tor'stre Vahn in the magical and wondrous Elven Realms.

A powerful elven druid contracts the party to find out what happened to the agents she sent to recover an important spell component of great cultural significance. On the way they meet Kote, another elven druid trapped in his Wild Shape by a curse. They next encounter the terrible, corrupting evil of the Faunjin in a sacred grove and must prevent the summoning of the goakfolk's fell god. And finally, the party must contend with forces external to these magical forests that would reap the Realms' most wondrous creatures for the forces' own gain.

Key questions for the PC...

- Will they offer their aid to Kote, who has little enough to give them in return and may even

require the sacrifice of a powerful magical item of value?

- How will they stop the Faunjin and disrupt the ritual? How will they overcome the demon to acquire the reagent from the guardian of the sacred grove?
- When faced with an expeditious end to conflict through violence, or the more fraught path of reconciliation through persuasion, which will the PC choose?

This module is scaled for PCs of levels 6-7 and can conclude with their leveling up at the end of this milestone adventure. If you prefer to run the adventure outside the world of Azuria, we suggest that you set the adventure in your world's great forests or those places frequented by elves and the fae folk.

### How to Use this Adventure

Monsters or creatures using **stat blocks in bold** can be found in the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Systems Reference Document. New monsters and creatures unique to this publication are found in Appendix A.

Appendix B includes additional worldbuilding information to deepen the immersion of your adventure. Appendix C contains the maps for the adventure.

Text box example: Text that appears in a box like this may be read aloud, paraphrased, or omitted as you prefer. It is intended to help describe scenarios and environments.

### Sidebar example

Text that appears in sidebars is also optional and/or intended to provide extra background information or lore that may be helpful as you flesh out the adventure.

Creatures with stat blocks appear in **bold**, magic items appear in *italics*.

[GM's note: tips on scale or RP appear in brackets.]

### Adjusting Combat

Regardless of whether you are running this adventure 1-on-1 or for a group, one of the most important roles of the GM is balancing and tweaking encounters to suit the PC. The combat should feel weighty but fun. Some strategies for before the session begins include reducing or raising hit points or changing the number of combatants or, during combat, making adjustments as needed.

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For more information and resources about playing this one-on-one style, please see [dndduet.com](http://dndduet.com).

## Adventure Premise

In the high courts of the Elven Realms, the giving and spending of favors is the surest way to accomplish one's ends. The mighty First Druid Leafbright is in need of one such favor. She is in the midst of a complex ritual that requires the addition of a most sacred and difficult-to-obtain component, a Shard of wood from a fae-blessed alderwood tree. She sent a party of her trusted agents, a rough and tumble band of sprites called the Thornseekers, to a hidden grove not one day's journey away that should have contained such a tree. Unfortunately, they have not returned.

She tasks the party with finding out what happened to her Thornseekers and bringing her the Shard. The party must navigate the terrific and treacherous woods to the hidden grove using a magical map powered by one of the druid's memories. On the way, they encounter a mysterious and clearly magical midnight panther, one of many potentially frightful experiences in such an eldritch place. The panther is actually a druid named Kote who promises to aid the party in return for their help in resolving his condition. Finally arriving at Symosa's Sanctum, the party is immediately ambushed by the Thornseekers, who mistake the party for Faunjin reinforcements.

These tenacious sprites are on edge having been trapped in a stalemate just outside the sanctum with a vicious band of Faunjin (goatfolk). The Thornseekers have managed to keep the cultists trapped in the grove and prevented other Faunjin from reinforcing them but have lost several of their warriors and have even had a pair captured. They fear for the terrible fate of their friends who were not killed outright.

The party penetrates the desecrated grove and endures several confrontations with the zealous Faunjin before entering the innermost sanctum and the site of a horrifying ritual that threatens to tear the Elven Realms asunder. Should the party overcome their confrontation with the Great Baa's minions, they will not only secure the Shard and the favor of their patron but also a weapon of terrible power and the burden of deciding to keep it for themselves or to assist a scorned lover.

## The Faunjin

Hundreds of years ago, Khazrati Hefblood, an ambitious (if overeager) wizard sought imprudently to end all conflicts by breeding a perfect weapon of war. The result of his arcane experimentation was the Faunjin, a part-goat, part-human, part-demon abomination.

Khazrati was only the first of the Faunjin's victims. Their ruthlessness combined with their unnaturally rapid reproduction and maturation made for a quick and bloody rise in the ranks of the worst problems facing the Realms, let alone Tor'stre Vahn. Faunjin society, if one is being generous with the word, is primarily communal in nature. The fractious marauders are often splintering and forming groups, following one leader for a time before quickly abandoning them once the wind changes.

## Adventure Hooks

There are several ways you might lead your player into the adventure:

- The party's patron sends them to Leafbright with the understanding that doing a favor for her moves them closer to accomplishing their goals.
- One amongst the party has suffered a terrible curse from a prankster pixie. The only way to remove it and stop them from hiccupping (all Stealth check rolled with disadvantage, naturally) is to procure the aid of a powerful druid. Rumor has it that Leafbright may help for a favor in kind.
- The party's contacts or adventurer's guild puts them onto a job. Their notice reads: *Brave adventurers needed to decipher a disappearance most impactful. Great rewards can be yours. Seek out the First Druid Leafbright in the Silver Spire of Thyles Thamor.*

## Adventure Background

One of the more successful leaders of the Faunjin in their short but bloody history is Gut-horn the Seer, so called for his visions of a great and terrible reckoning brought about by the summoning of a demon, the Great Baa. Dwelling inside the fae-blessed alderwood is a dryad named Symosa, Gut-horn's target. He and his cult have seized the grove of the fae-blessed alderwood and intend to use its guardian's grisly demise as the catalyst for their ritual of desecration, opening the path to the Great Baa.

As the cult was preparing their ritual, Lady Leafbright's Thornseekers arrived at the grove and immediately engaged in a pitched battle to expel the foul interlopers. In the chaos, the Faunjin captured

two of their number and pushed the Thornseekers back to the entrance of the grove. For the last two days the parties have been at a stalemate. The Thornseekers have not managed to get into the grove to clear out the invaders, but they have managed to prevent anyone else from going in. The Faer Folk carry a well-deserved suspicion of outsiders that the party will have to overcome to accomplish their goal.

*More details about the Faer folk of Azuria can be found in Appendix B.*



## Part One: Seek and Find

In the center Thyles Thamor, First Druid Leafbright welcomes the adventurers into her treetop study and sends them on a task most dire.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Intricately woven living branches and vines comprise not only the floor and ceiling, but also the furniture and scroll shelves in this opulent chamber. The room offers a breath-taking view of the rest of the great elven city of Thyles Thamor. A tall, slender elven druid gracefully rises to greet you. With a gesture from her hand, new growth blossoms forth in the middle of the room creating an intimate, living seating area for your meeting.

### First Druid Leafbright's Information

The druid has the following information to share with the party if they are interested in assisting with the acquisition of the ritual component and discovering what became of the Thornseekers:

- Word of the party's previous deeds has reached her in her time of need. One of her tasks as First Druid is to shepherd the recently departed over the threshold of this life to the next. To ease the passage, she must conduct a sacred ritual requiring fae-blessed alderwood as a key component.
- Acquiring this important component is difficult and dangerous and has for many years been the task of a specially formed band, called the Thornseekers. These brave fae risk their lives to make sure that those holding society together have the rare ingredients they require for their magic workings.
- The Thornseekers were headed to a blessed grove, Symosa's Sanctum, but are late in returning and time is running short to complete the ritual.
- In exchange for their help, she offers the party access to her magical services, including one-time access to her ability to cast *reincarnate*.

At GM's discretion, sweeten the deal as fits your table's need and composition.

A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check allows the PC to notice that Leafbright seems rather drained or worried. If asked respectfully, the druid shares that the demands on her magics have of late been compounded by her concerns for the Elven Realms as a whole.

Additionally, she recently gave up the painful memory of a faithless lover in order to make a *map of memory* (Appendix A). Though she doesn't remember her former lover, she cannot shake the feeling that, recently, something is missing from her life.

### The Elven Realms

The Elven Realms of Azuria are a place of luscious plant growth, freely wondering Faer folk, and three remarkable elven cities: Thyles Thamor (an elegant treetop settlement near the center of the Realms), Invae Alinor (a stone city carved into a cave system along the southern coast), and Shade Rest (home to a mix of underelves and overland elves in the north of the Realms on the other side of a myconid forest).

Despite its many natural beauties and unique species, in recent years the Realms have faced myriad compounding

problems. In the south a band of religious zealots have seized power of Invae Alinor, the important trade hub that connects the Realms to the rest of Azuria. In the west on the border with Andel'ce Hevra, disturbing reports are beginning to emerge of an influx of werewolves. Compounding these ills, the unity of the Council of Seven in Thyles Thamor has never been so fragile.

Leafbright provides the party with a *map of memory* (Appendix A) and her assurance that it can help them reach Symosa's Sanctum. If the PC questions her about it, she explains that creating a memory map exacts a price from the creator but, after it has been made, the map can be used to guide others to a particular site as known by the map's creator. Provided there are no major complications, the party can reach the Sanctum in one day on foot.



## It's About the Journey

Wherein the adventurers navigate a dense and magical forest.

In less than a quarter hour outside of the towering treetops of Thyles Thamor, the density and closeness of the forest choke out any indication of civilization. These forests would be impossible to navigate without the aid of Leafbright's magical map that swirls and corrects course as you traverse the forest, showing the way to her lost Thornseekers.

The PC holding the map must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check to read the magical

cartography correctly and prevent the party from getting turned around and wasting time. At GM's discretion, the party may have one of the encounters below with an additional encounter for each failure of the map-reading check.

## Fae Forest Encounters Table

d6	Fae Forest Encounters
1	The party finds themselves walking on a forest floor comprised entirely of sentient mosses that scream and release a <i>poison spray</i> when stepped on. PCs must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to use vines and tree limbs to get across.
2	The party encounters a group of young, inebriated <b>pixies</b> that harangue them with personal insults and challenge them to a battle of song and wits. If the party fails to rise to the occasion, the pixies' insults have the effect of <i>cutting words</i> . The pixies are actually easily impressed and, if engaged with a song, story, or dance and a successful DC 10 Charisma check, they celebrate and put tiny gold crowns on the heads of the party, each worth 20 gp.
3	An angry, high-pitched voice echoes out of the forest ahead. PCs that know Undercommon or Gnomish recognize it as colorful, vulgar cursing. They see an aggravated <b>gnome</b> futilely attempting to pull a unicorn along the path. A DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling or Perception) check clarifies that this not a real unicorn, but a highly annoyed painted donkey with a whittled chair leg tied to its head. Upon seeing the party, the gnome switches into a fawning salesperson, attempting to get the party to buy his unicorn at an exorbitant price.
4	The party glimpses the top of a stone obelisk just off the path. At its base is a kneeling skeleton, its arm stuck deep into a hole in the center of the obelisk. In Elvish, an inscription over the hole reads, "Reach out and touch faith." The skeleton's arm cannot be extricated, but on its other hand is a <i>ring of animal influence</i> .
5	Unless moving with great care, the PC must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be whisked 15 feet into the air by a net trap in the path. The contraption is sophisticated and the netting is resistant to

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	cutting. A DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows the PC to determine that this must be the work of poachers.
6	The party finds a gold coin and about 6 ft. further down the path another, and another, and another until the coins diverge off the path. At the end of acquiring 25gp in this fashion, the party encounters a <b>satyr</b> carefully laying down a gold piece, walking a dozen paces, and laying down another. On seeing the pile of gold in the PC's hands, he is quite upset that his brilliant plan of not getting lost has been thwarted by the party. "What could possess you to pick up gold that doesn't belong to you?" he cries.



## Like a Starry Hole in Reality

The party encounters a potential ally.

As the map shows that you're about halfway to Symosa's Sanctum, you are overcome by the unshakeable sensation of being watched. Every time you whip your head around to catch whatever it is, you find nothing. Turning back to your course, you encounter what first looks like a starry midnight sky calmly licking its massive paw blocking your way forward. In a breath, you realize that you stand before an impossibly large panther with shifting, blinking stars adorning its coat.

This feline is none other than the druid, Kote. He is an unfortunate romantic that ran afoul of First Druid Leafbright when he betrayed her trust in their passionate involvement. She laid a curse upon him such that since he had behaved like an animal, he should stay as one. Kote is now trapped in his panther Wild Shape form. He is adept enough in this shape to be able to communicate. Characters succeeding on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check can discern Kote's cursed status.

### Kote's Gambit

Kote is cautiously optimistic that the party can help him and has the information below to share so long as everyone remains civil. He recognizes the PC as an adventurer and attempts to procure their aid, provided the party does not immediately respond with hostility.

- Kote gestures down the path the party is pursuing, shapes his tail in the form of a question and tilts his head. He warns of dangers ahead and that things in the Elven Realms are not always as they seem. "For instance, I'm not actually a beautiful, starry panther, but a druid in need of assistance."
- He knows that he has been cursed to remain in this present form but doesn't know who did it or why. He needs the PC's help if he is going to find out. *[When Leafbright gave up her memory of their romance, it similarly affected Kote without her knowledge.]*
- There is a fae being in a nearby spring that answers questions, for a price. He asks the party if they have any evil magical weapons that they would be willing to part with.
- At any mention of First Druid Leafbright, he becomes excited and agitated. "Her power is only surpassed by her magnificent beauty. She'd be

## Herald of Baa

Large humanoid (Faunjin), chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 90 (13d8 + 38)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Skills** Deception +7, Insight +6, Perception +6, Stealth +6

**Damage Resistances** lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** frightened

**Senses** passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common, Faunjin, Abyssal

**Challenge** 5 (1800 XP)

**Innate Spellcasting.** The Herald's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *invisibility*, *magic missile*

2/day each: *eyebite*, *ray of enfeeblement*

**Infernal Luck.** The Herald of Baa gets three luck points at the end of a long rest. They may use the luck points to reroll any failed attack or save.

**Trampling Charge.** If the Herald of Baa moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the Herald can make one attack with its staff against it as a bonus action.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The acolyte makes two staff bash attacks.

**Staff Bash.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

## Avatar of Baa

If the herald is a cleric-warrior sworn in service to a deity, the avatar is a deity in an incarnated form. Though not as powerful as the full-fledged deity they represent, avatars act with the might and will of the deity they embody, and the longer they remain in the planes of life, the more powerful they become.

In the case of the Avatar of the Great Baa, they crave violence and destruction, everything that makes their people, the Faunjin, feared and reviled across the lands.

## Avatar of Baa

Large demon, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 110 (13d10 + 39)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

**Skills** Deception +7, Insight +6, Perception +6, Stealth +6

**Damage Resistances** lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** frightened

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Abyssal, Faunjin, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 7 (2900 XP)

**Magic Resistance.** The avatar has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Infernal Luck.** The Herald of Baa gets three luck points at the end of a long rest. They may use the luck points to reroll any failed attack or save.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The avatar makes two attacks with the Ram-mer.

**The Ram-mer Swing.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**The Ram-mer Ram.** The demonic hammer has three charges. As an attack, the avatar can expend a charge to make an attack roll with a +7 bonus. On a hit, the target is pushed 10 feet away and takes 2d10 force damage.

## Kote (Wild Druid)

*Chaotic Neutral Male elf*

*In humanoid form he is heavily tattooed with long black hair peppered with white. In panther form he is jet black and starry.*

Kote was never one for the high politics and manners of society in Thyles Thamor, much preferring the company of beasts and the solitude of nature to the celebrations and ceremonies of civilization. That all changed when he chanced across the lovely First Druid Leafbright. A tempestuous, passionate affair started, culminating in accusations of infidelity, feelings of betrayal, and the laying of a curse most punitive.



## Appendix B: Faer Folk of Azuria

### History of the Faer Folk

Though the accounts of fae origins naturally differ between the various races and cultures included in this grouping, most agree that the fae first appeared when the Titan of Nature, Verdigris, split herself in three to form the planes of life. As she did so, Verdigris transformed into three elder fae, each of whom ruled over one of the three resultant planes: Enid (Brightlands), Evelyn (Shadowlands), and Lyric (prime plane – Eldura and then Azuria). Among long-lived cultures graced with long memories, these three are referred to as the Daughters of Verdigris. Each of these three became the reya, or queen, of the fae of their respective realms and, when they passed on from their mortal lives, became goddesses for the fae peoples.

Like Verdigris herself, the three elder fae possessed the ability to replicate aspects of themselves, a process from which their daughters were born. After the three elder fae passed on into the celestial realms, their daughters became the rules of the fae peoples of Azuria.

During Alessandra's rebellion against the titans, the fae of the Shadow- and Brightlands retreated to their

home planes. Alessandra's fury rained hardest over the prime plane (then known as Eldura), destroying all but the best-hidden fae peoples. Their only hope for survival was intermingling among themselves and the Lycan who walked the plane. And from them, the first elves and the merfolk came into being.

### The Fae Races

The divisions that have marked the worlds of Eldura and Azuria from their inception have also led to onomastic disagreements regarding the differentiation between the various members of the fae. The relative lack of fae peoples on the prime plane adds to this confusion, emphasizing the singular expression of narrow communities over the flourishing of adaptive varieties of fae in the Brightlands especially. For simplicity's sake, the following, non-exhaustive list includes the known expressions of fae on the prime plane without the more intricate mingling common to Brightlands communities.

#### The Fae

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Alternatively known as First Fae, this grouping refers to the Brightlands fae and Shadowlands fae and not the fae folk in general. These fae resemble humanoids with upright torsos, two arms, and two legs, though they show greater variety in skin tones and tend to possess wings, either physical or spectral, and some have horns and antlers as well. Like their elven descendants, fae can also bear resemblances or aspects of natural elements, such as skin patterned or textured as bark. Fae ears are large, usually stretching over the top of the fae's head.

#### Brightlands Fae

The Brightlands fae generally live in one of the four seasonal courts in the Brightlands, and their dress and appearance often express the unique characteristics of that court. Fae from the Autumn Court, for example, have skin tones and hair that resemble the color of autumn leaves. Wings are less common among the Brightlands fae than their Shadowlands cousins.

#### Shadowlands Fae

From a culture born out of shadow and mist, these fae learn from an early age to defend themselves and their own. Around one in three of their number possess wings, the spectral variety being more common than feathered wings that remain visible at all times. A fae gar (child) born with physical wings signifies great change afoot and warns the