

The Quest for Father Rowan's Holy Symbol

Cover Sheet

Adventure by Paul Schmidt

25 Snow '97 WK - 30 Ice '97 WK

Player Characters

Father Rowan	Wiccan	Male	Human	
T'ana Starflower	Mind	Female	Elf/Weredrake	
Griffin Pinefeller	Non-mage	Male	Human	
Phaeton D'Tama	Solar	Male	Human	Scribe

Plane

A combination of: Greyhawk, Lyonesse, Escore, Tolmar, Waterdeep

Places Visited

Greyhawk City
Verbonc
The 'Sea of Trees'
The land of Simbuljami
Chandl
Moleg

Employer

Father Rowan

Principle NPCs encountered

Mr Lawfakir - a very powerful mage
Duke James of Verbonc
Caren - a knight

Mission

To recover Father Rowan's lost holy symbol

The Quest for Father Rowan's Holy Symbol

Day 1 (25th Snow)

It was a quiet day at the Guild when I was approached by Starflower. Apparently Father Rowan had lost his Holy Symbol off-plane during their last adventure and was assembling a team to help him find it. So, having nothing better to do, I volunteered.

The party turned out to be the following: Father Rowan, Phaeton, Pinefeller and Starflower.

Research and interviews with the party members who had already been there revealed the following:

Evil has latitude of action

Good has the ability to raise heros

Mana has morality: white (good), green (nature), black (evil).

Black opposes white/green. While and green can co-exist.

Most white and black areas are small, green can be large.

Most mana is untainted by colour.

People on the moral high ground don't stun.

Before leaving, I purchased two 20pt Healing potions and told the others where I had them - just in case. Once we were ready Father Rowan led the way into the depths of Seagate until we reached a place called Dead End Alley. Which it was. Just then two bracelets appeared, one on Starflower's wrist and the other on Father Rowan's. Then both bracelets fissioned becoming two. It was evident that the extra two were to be handed to Pinefeller and myself.

At the same time the back of the alley dissolved into a whirling vortex which flickered with spots of light. It looked agitated somehow. As a safety precaution, I put Corusades on the party before we stepped through.

We materialised in another deadend alley. It was night time and mist filled the air. Starflower believed we had reached our destination, the City of Greyhawk on the Plane of Greyhawk but I read the nearest aura to determine plane of origin. To my surprise I got five simultaneous names: Lyonesse, Greyhawk, Escore, Tolmar and a fifth I wasn't sure about. Water something I think. So I did it again on another object. The fifth plane was Waterdeep.

Starflower asked a passerby where the Temple of Fhalanghan was but she was very nervous. Instead we headed for the 'Stone Parrot', an inn where the previous party had stayed. Starflower and Father Rowan were recognised by Bolg, the innkeeper as we strolled in.

We got some rooms for the night. While the others went back down for food, I stayed and tried to figure out why five planes were co-existing. Even the wood in the inn floor gave the same answer. All I could think of was either the planes were overlapping or this was some sort of overall shadow-plane.

Day 2

After purification we went down for breakfast then went across town to the residence of a local and powerful mage, a Mr Lawfakir. This was the gentleman that the previous party had rescued. As we progressed, we noticed quite a few bald men in black robes around the place. The passerby that Starflower asked said that they were hunting illegal aliens. Probably wouldn't be wise to be

noticed by them.

We got within a foot of the front door and felt invigorated and refreshed, probably due to the white mana zone we had just walked into. Once we were admitted inside Father Rowan told him the story of the Deck of Many Things and how a bad draw had removed all his items - including his symbol. Then Lawfakir told us that five planes were in the process of coalescing together. Things were still in a state of flux at the moment which explained the odd auras and the portal being agitated - not being able to get a positive lock on a plane. The process should be complete in six months. The Men in Black were members of the Church of the One True God (whose name was Phlotus) and were attempting to ensure that the population stayed illiterate so that they could be more easily controlled.

Finally Lawfakir suggested that we consult his library. The best time to do that was at noon when the planes were at the most stable. So, at noon, we went through a big silver door and were very careful to lock it behind us - just in case something got out. After deciphering the cataloguing system with Starflower's help, as it was using some sort of draconic method, we found the reference to the Deck of Many Things. That led us to a shelf containing 22 identical books - exactly the number of cards in the deck. So, while the rest of us took cover, Starflower drew one which she believed contained the answer. Nothing odd happened so Starflower opened the book. Inside was the answer we sought - a place called Moleg.

Moleg was located somewhat north of our present location. It had been built by the priests of Nerull but they were run out by the Horned Society. Those in turn, were run out by the forces of Iuz ten years ago. Finally with the defeat of Iuz six months ago by the previous party, the Darkness was lifted, and the forces of Good went in and razed the town to the ground. The area around was still a Black domain which would take a long time to fade. Because of the plane coalescing there was a confusing number of safe routes to get there and its exact location was shifting.

It was decided to wait the following day before setting out on our quest. Lawfakir would prepare an invested Friendly Light for us. This was a variant on the Celestial Illumination spell which could only be seen by whom the caster nominated. I nominated the entire party.

Rowan and Starflower decided to check out the residences of their friends from the previous party. They could not find Cuchulain's house, but Yalran's place was inhabited by a large number of children, all of them his, and his formidable wife. While we were there we had the opportunity to interrogate a necromancer they were holding prisoner, under telepathy. We discovered that a necromantic high priestess of Iuz, called Elita, had the symbol and was sacrificing children to it in an attempt to bring back Iuz. There was a hidden temple somewhere in the catacombs under the city. Somewhere under there was another, rival necromantic high priestess called Helaga.

We headed back to Lawfakir's place for dinner. On the way we saw a sign on the wall being hung up by one of those black robed fellows which was an obvious trap for anyone who was literate. So Starflower read it out aloud. The man was obviously annoyed but there wasn't a lot he could do about it.

Day 3

Before we left, Lawfakir gave us a 20pt Greater (permanent while on plane) and the Friendly Fire

investment. I put a Witchsight on myself and we headed out of town. Once we were clear Father Rowan did UnSeens all round while I did Corusades and Wings. Strange thing though. Casting here was safer - no backfires. But there was one major drawback. The highest we could fly was eight feet. It was most disconcerting seeing the ground rushing by, a short distance below.

Because distances were so unsure it was decided not to fly over the bay in case the Wings gave out over water. Instead it was decided to fly along the coast.

Day 10

Finally reached a large city which should have taken us a day or two. I guessed that all distances had been multiplied by five. However the more that the new terrain was flown over and mapped the more it would be locked into place. Inhabitants believed that it had always been like that. The next large city, Verbonc, was only twenty miles away. There had been a forest between the two, but I suppose it's now 'elsewhere'. When we got there we discovered it was a green domain. Lots of grey and high elves were in the streets. Quite a bit of construction was going on. So we went to see Duke James - another person that the party had heard about that would have useful information. He told us that there was a third necromancer wandering around the land near Moleg, a man by the name of Silverburch.

Day 11

The Duke was able to provide us with robes, that looked like necromantic robes worn by the followers of Iuz, before we took off and crossed the river. After a while we reached the edge of a forest. Scaffolding was being built on the edge. The curious thing was that there was a line of sand around the forest.

After landing we went to see the overseer of the construction. He told us that anyone crossing the sand line suddenly convulsed and died. Apparently Yalran had been here, and had rowed out over the treetops. So I did some tests. First off the answer to the question 'Original Plane of Origin' was Lyonesse. Then I asked for a rat, a small cage, and a rope. Once these were provided, I put the rat in the cage, tied the rope to the top of the cage, and threw the cage over the sandline. When I hauled it back in I discovered that the rat had drowned. Fascinating.

As we followed the coastline, the ground below abruptly changed and within minutes we were flying over a desert, one that wasn't on the original map. The original plane of origin was Tolmar. As night fell we were still over desert.

Day 12

That afternoon we spotted a line of camels and prudently decided to avoid them.

Day 13

We discovered small scorpions crawling around our campsite so we made extra sure that there weren't any in our equipment as we broke camp and prepared to leave. After a few hours of flight we could see small foothills. Then, out of the corner of our eyes, we could see something off to our left, shaped like an isosceles triangle, catching the sunlight. So it was decided to have a look. Soon we could see a river ahead with a fertile area on each side. A couple of large pyramids were sited in a spur valley. So we landed at a safe distance and walked in with Corusades activated. A short while later we encountered two of the inhabitants hiding in a patch of reeds. After gaining our trust they led us towards their tent village.

Once there we were conducted to the largest, most ornate, tent in the place. But, before we entered, we were asked to disarm. It was a local requirement when visiting their leader. And just to enforce it there were two rather large guards with wicked looking large curved swords. We disarmed.

Inside was a rather opulent looking gentleman and more ornately dressed, obviously the local ruler. With him was a smaller, thinner, person, the advisor I presumed.

After a sharing of bread and salt, a ritual of peace-bonding, he welcomed us to the land of Simbuljami. He then told us of evil scorpions in the vicinity, large humanoid type ones that were lurking somewhere near the pyramids. So we made plans to take them out first thing the next morning.

Day 14

So that morning we formed up with the warriors, except Starflower. We figured that, being female, she would be joining the woman warriors. Instead, she was conducted to a spot just outside the ruler's tent. Then the ruler came out followed by the other person. Before we realized what was happening he reached out, and used a silk cord to tie Starflower's right wrist to the chief's right wrist then started chanting. It was then we realised that we were witnessing a marriage ceremony. Starflower tried to protest, saying that she was already married. However that didn't seem to matter. Then, just as she began to shapechange into dragonkin, I dropped a Coruscade spell on her. Both of those effects started to cause pandemonium. By his expression it was evident that the sheik had decided that marrying a weredrake might not be such a good idea after all.

Once everything calmed down, the sheik admitted that the scorpionmen no longer existed, and he was just after Starflower to add her beauty to his collection. Finally we sorted out the mess and left. We diverted briefly to check out a pyramid and climbed up to the top to see just what it was at the top. The top was capped with something shiny which the nature of magic within was Solar.

Day 19

It had taken a while but we finally reached civilisation. Over the last few days, after reaching the coast, the terrain had steadily got greener. The place we landed at was called Veluna.

Day 29

After another long haul we reached Chandl. The walls were still being repaired after the last battle. By now we had come to the conclusion that the landscape had got rather bent and that we needed to go north-east. So we did and soon found the Veng River. Moleg was another 20 miles and the land beyond the river was still held in the grip of evil forces. Over the other side we could see the remains of a small keep and a dock.

So we flew over the river. Halfway across the Starwings started to falter. Pinefeller and I didn't quite make it to the other side before they gave out completely. Something to do with the tainted mana area we had reached I presumed.

On the other side Father Rowan changed into cat form and snuck into the keep. He didn't find anything unusual inside except for a burial mound which was consecrated. Meanwhile I scanned for wards and detected an old, discharged, one along the bank and an active one in the middle of the keep. The nature of the magic within was Alarm. Starflower detected a thread running from

it to somewhere on the other side of the river. We set up a camp for the night nearby.

Sometime during the night we heard the sounds of armoured figures rushing past. Father Rowan called down what he called Divine Retribution and one of them survived. It was a rather large, tough and scorched orc. We captured him and he led us to the rest of his group, a bunch of orcs. Since we were currently dressed in the robes of evil priests, that's what they took us to be and Father Rowan didn't dissuade them of the notion. Instead he called himself Grimfang of the Fires, referred to me as Brother Blood and Starflower as Sister Redemption. Don't think he called Pinefeller anything. The orc leader, Brug, was completely taken in by the deception and his attitude was one of subservience. So Father Rowan suggested that his band check out the keep and they did - at speed.

Day 31

It took us two days to reach Moleg. The place looked completely devastated. The only substantial structure still standing was the cathedral in the centre so we headed for that. The mana was blacker here than it had been outside but it was beginning to fade. All the wards I could detect had been discharged. The altar had a glowing disk above it and radiated an aura of Forbiddance. However we wanted a birds-eye view of the city and headed up to the top of the bell tower. This had to be done with caution as someone had systematically smashed every third step.

Once we got up there we could see a growing darkness over one quarter of the city. Also the bells were magical with the nature being Unholy Chimes. Starflower drew a sketchmap of the city then tried to use her Finding spell to locate Father Rowan's symbol. All she managed to do was to cause the map to burst into flames.

This had taken us a while and we were all rather tired. So we rested and had a cold meal and waited for the sun to set.

After sundown we could hear screaming coming from various directions. Most of it was from the northeast corner where the darkness was.

Day 32

We headed out of the central square and made our way towards the north-east quadrant. Shortly we reached a barricade, climbed over that, then made our way down the remains of a street. Just then Pinefeller detected minds to each side. Father Rowan and Starflower went over one side to have a look while Pinefeller took the other. Meanwhile I put up a couple of Walls on each side. Because of the black mana they looked ghastly.

The fighting was fierce, frantic and thankfully brief. I was alarmed to see the number of missing limbs, plainly the work of Starflower's sword, Severer. At the end of it we had a captive. From him we discovered that Elita was in the city looking for renegades. Certain areas had deadfalls that channelled people into the area where she was lurking. Rumour had it that Null was lurking nearby with a band of Undead and Helaga was also in the city.

The black mana kept on rising as we continued on. Shortly we reached the edge of the quarter and discovered that what appeared to be a random heap of rubble was a constructed barricade. Layers of blood were interspersed through it. Bound Earth elements I concluded. As we clambered over it Pinefeller picked up minds nearby, watching the area, obviously guarding. Then we heard the sound of booted feet coming around the corner. We managed to avoid them, then

heard the sounds of whips and screams. That turned out to be some orc overseers of human and elven slaves who were engaged in repairing a wall. A bit further on, some undead were busy at the same task. I counted 60 odd undead, 10 slaves and 6 guards. Invisible threads extended from the undead and converged at a blank spot - an invisible necromancer. Father Rowan blasted the area with a Hellfire then Starflower charged the now visible and very singed necro, hitting him with Monopole. Several small items fell off him in all directions. Meanwhile Pinefeller charged the orcs while I managed to herd the undead into a group and surround them with a Wall.

Again the battle was brief and it wasn't long before the opposition was vanquished. I checked the items that fell off the now unconscious necromancer. Not much was magical but there was a wand that fired bone shards. There was something round the necromancer's neck that had something to do with possession. We assumed that this caused the necro's soul to possess the person who killed him. Hence we requested that the slaves keep him alive, but unconscious, for now.

One of the orcs had been interrogated before being killed and we were told that the barracks and guardhouse were over the crypt. The entrance ways to the crypt were warded. So we headed in, accompanied by two of the ex-slaves: a dwarf, Maris and an human knight, Caren.

After walking twenty minutes or so we reached an area where the walls looked more repaired. Some undead horses were standing around. Then we stepped over a boundary where, on the other side, the mana was very black. We reached a gate to the guardhouse and once we told the guard we were a deputation to see the Lady he flicked blood over us. I suspected that was done so the wards wouldn't trigger on us. Then another guard was assigned to conduct us down to the crypt. As we passed through the barracks we counted eighty beds.

At the other end a large grill blocking the corridor was unlocked with an iron key. On the other side was a set of steps leading downwards. At the bottom we were left with a pasty looking dwarf whose mental state could only be described as controlled rage. We followed the dwarf through a wooden door. This led to a large area in which were standing six stocky giants in plate mail. A small door was built in to the far wall which the dwarf strode up to and banged on it. A female voice on the other end answered and we went in, accompanied by the dwarf.

Inside was an unpleasant looking woman carrying a staff with a skull mounted on it, and six animated suits of armour. It was dark inside so as we entered, I closed the door behind us and filled the area with magical Light. At the same time Pinefeller hit the enraged dwarf while Starflower went for the necromancer. A gem in her staff shattered and her robes shimmered and became more solid. Starflower hit her again and we could hear screams coming from the far side of the wall, the screams of children. She had linked her life to that of those children and there was nothing I could think of in order to prevent their deaths.

The animates also turned to attack us and the others turned to face them. I attempted to throw a Bolt of Starfire at one but what happened was that a dark blob appeared in front of one. Just then a poisonous gas began to issue forth from the mouth of the skull. Starflower was the first affected and she began to shapechange to dragonkin form causing her krakenskin armour to split at the seams.

The gas began to fill the room as a Quickness affected us. I used it to cast a Healing spell on Starflower. Then I noticed that tentacles were coming out of the clot of darkness so I shot at it with another bolt. Both bolt and clot dissipated. Meanwhile Pinefeller hit the dwarf again and he

dropped.

Starflower had completed her transition and resumed attacking the necromancer. The necromancer spat something vile at Starflower, who then invoked the name of Hieronious, and the spittle turned into healing wine. Starflower struck again, the necromancer's staff shattered and she collapsed. Starflower ripped open her body, and discovered her heart beating in a transparent ribcage. By now I discovered that a single bolt of Starfire was enough to cause the animated armour to fall apart. Unfortunately the poison was affecting us all badly. I had to use a Healing potion in order to continue casting.

Finally the last opponent was down and I set to work healing my companions with the help of Father Rowan's restoratives. Fortunately the gas had diffused to a non-toxic level so that made things easier. The children's cells were uncovered, but they were too far gone to do anything about. The desk was searched and we found maps of the city, including the catacombs, and assassin's contracts on various people including Null and Cuchulain.

A secret exit led into a tunnel which we headed down. At the other end we could hear muffled banging. Turned out to be three undead extending the tunnel. Starfires and Hellfires soon dealt to them.

Another side branch led us to a temple room. An altar was at the back and behind that was a font full of dark liquid. Several undead were also inside with the Generic True Name of Undead Counsellors. So I put corusades on everyone then set up Walls of Starlights to form a corridor from the door to the altar. The undead completely ignored this. So we went in. The undead ignored us as well.

I counted 22 undead while the others noted that there were 22 seats arranged in two levels facing the altar, 13 along the top, 9 at the bottom. The liquid in the font was dark, thick, gooey, and had all sorts of organic bits in it. I suspected most of it was blood. We had already ascertained that somewhere in here had to be Father Rowan's holy symbol so Starflower reached in and felt around. She found something soft and yielding so she tried to pull it out but discovered it was stuck to the bottom of the font. What I saw of it told me it was an unborn child. So Father Rowan cast Bless the Unborn Child on it. At that moment one of the undead screamed. Meanwhile loud smashing sounds told us that Pinefeller was busy dismantling the altar.

We detected a thread running from the foetus to the affected undead. The other undead were linked to a seat each. Then I noticed a fainter thread running from a seat to the undead linked to the foetus so I concluded that the undead were being relinked from seats to living beings.

By now Pinefeller found a lead coffer inside the altar. Inside the coffer was a hand and a half sword that was made out of congealed blood. It was definitely morally aligned to good. When Pinefeller picked it up he could feel a heartbeat.

Starflower ripped out the embryo, taking it out and some placental tissue with it. The undead screamed again and its thread relinked to the seat. Then she smashed a hole in the side of the font allowing the liquid to drain. At the bottom was Father Rowan's holy symbol which was now 6' wide and very soft and soggy from the absorbed liquid. It was obvious that it was being used to implant life to the developing child. As Starflower removed it the blood drained out and the symbol began to shrink until it was back to palm size.

The aura on the seats told me that if the seat was destroyed then the linked undead would be released. Initially I thought that meant released to attack us, but when one seat was destroyed then the corresponding undead faded away. So we destroyed the lot. I hoped their souls were grateful.

Once that was done we headed back to where we battled the necromancer. The giants were still waiting outside and we figured we would be under attack as soon as we stepped out. Starflower opened hostilities by mental attacking one of them. If it wasn't for Pinefeller managing to control one of them and getting it to attack the others the outcome could have been a lot different. At one stage the giants were throwing pieces of masonry at us - rather large pieces. All us non-combatants were hiding behind the upturned desk. Even with that we were still being hit by rocks. One of them hit the dwarf and crushed him, killing him. There wasn't a lot I could do as the body was too badly damaged.

Finally all the giants were down except the controlled one. As I did what I could, one of my Healing spells backfired and Father Rowan started growing scales. Oops. Then we headed out, with the dwarf's body and got the giant to go in front. After freeing the slaves and collecting the still unconscious necromancer we left the city.

We kept going for the rest of the night and finally reached the small keep at dawn.

Day 33

We sent the giant back to the city then Father Rowan crossed the river to get some help. We waited for the rest of the day.

Day 34

He arrived back with troops and boats and we were conducted over the river. On the way back we met the dwarf's family and handed over the body. The fastest way back to the City of Greyhawk was to use a portal in the Timeless Tree. For some reason Father Rowan was rather reluctant to go. Finally we were escorted there.

Day 36

We went through the portal and ended up in a druid's grove outside the city. Our first stop was to see Lawfakir and report our success. As a reward he taught me three new spells and adaptations to two of my existing ones. Then I received my own Holy Symbol.