

Behold the Beholder

Cover Sheet
Adventure by Paul Schmidt

1 Breeze '98 WK to 11 Breeze

Player Characters

Starflower	Mind	Elf	Female	
Kel	Earth	Elf	Female	
Grendel	Mind	Human	Male	
Jedburgh	Namer	Human	Male	
Logan Bury	E&E	Human	Male	
Aqualina	Water	Human	Female	Scribe
Lord Ebonhand	???	Elf	Male	

Plane

Greyhawk/Arth

Places Visited

Greyhawk City

Fagrin

Crom Hills

Lon

Principle NPCs

Lawfakir - a powerful mage in Greyhawk City

Lord Fagrin

Ignatous Nobnose - a gmone guide.

Mission

To investigate a portal down a mine shaft.

Behold the Beholder

Aqualina

1 Breeze

It was the beginning of Breeze when Starflower announced she was looking for a party to do a mapping expedition in a plane called Greyhawk. I figured this may well be my last opportunity for adventure before motherhood so I decided to go. So, after getting a Lesser Enchantment off Glod, I went in search of my fellow adventurers.

They turned out to be:

Starflower - 6'4" female elf of severe demeanour with long auburn hair, silvery blue eyes and fair skin. She was in pearly grey plate armour and carrying two tulwars. She's a Mind Mage and has 'other' skills. Currently she was seeking her Ranger Mastery.

Kel - 6' tall, very thin female elf wearing bronze scale armour. She's an Earth mage.

Grendel - 5'9" human male with white streaked red hair wearing black leather. He's a Mind mage.

Jedburgh - 6' tall 240lb human male wearing red scale armour and carrying a hand/half sword and shield. He's a fighter/namer.

Logan - 6'1" lanky male human wearing fine clothes and carrying a rather nice looking staff. He warned us not to touch it - apparently it bites. He's an E&E and also a Baron of Newhaven.

I'm Aqualina, 5'1" human female from Pasifika with light brown skin and hip length dark hair. I was wearing my krakenskin armour and carrying a new tulwar. I'm a Water mage and troubadour. I'm also four months pregnant and it's starting to show.

Starflower led us down into Seagate and into a side street called Dead End Alley. When we reached the end a dark portal opened up in the wall. At the same time Starflower's bracelet fissioned until there were enough of them for one each.

We stepped out of the portal and into another dead end alley. Here it was dark and very foggy, much like Seacroft when Kryan is practising magic. Starflower then guided us to the steps of an ornate building. This, she said, was the residence of Mr Lawfakir. On the steps was standing a 6' tall male elf who introduced himself as Lord Ebonhand and told us he was a seasoned warrior/mage. He was to join our party.

Lawfakir's dwarf servant let us into the house, and we followed him down a corridor. For some strange reason Kel was leaving dark footprints on the floor. At the other end was Lawfakir's library. Lawfakir was there seated at a desk. Behind him, shelves stretched out seemingly to infinity.

Lawfakir told us that there was a problem and we would be the people to deal to it. Apparently Scratch, a rather uncouth Guild member, had stolen something from somewhere, taken it somewhere else and activated it. In the process he released something that should not have been released. We were asked to investigate the area and maybe (a) deal to what had been released and

(b) find Scratch. Another Guild member, Bart Toadswart, was an innocent accomplice of Scratch.

Lawfakir then looked oddly at Kel and asked to speak with her privately. When we were allowed back Lawfakir told us that we needed to stay for a week as Kel had a requirement to visit a temple. During that time I looked for an armourer that could design armour that I could use in human or mer form.

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When Kel returned we noticed she had white hair. Also she wasn't leaving footprints on Lawfakir's floor. Lawfakir had also obtained more information on what had happened. Apparently, somehow, Scratch had opened a portal to somewhere that used to be part of Greyhawk and may be again since, at the moment, six planes were in the final stages of coalescing. Currently the mana flowing out of the portal was green with a tinge of white. Lawfakir wanted to know if this portal offered any threat.

He could send us most of the way by magic so we headed out of town to a druidal grove just outside of town. Once there Kel cast Armour of Earths on us and Lawfakir lent us amulets that would make any one spell cast on us permanent. I think all of us elected that the spell nominated would be the armour. After that we stepped into the stone circle, Lawfakir chanted and we appeared on a road.

Nearby was a hill upon which major construction was being done. A large walled castle by the look of it. More like a walled town. At the moment a deep moat was being built around it as well. Asking one of the locals told us that this was Fagrin.

We went there and met the local lord, Lord Fagrin. He was a tall muscular elf - a 'meat and potatoes' elf according to someone. At the moment he was negotiating with Callas, another Guild member who had recently acquired land on his borders. The problem area was on that border in the Crom Hills and a local guide, a gnome called Ignatous Nobnose, was assigned to take us there.

Kel had a talk to a couple of the hunting wolves and managed to get two to accompany her. Meanwhile Ebonhand suggested we get horses so I requested one that I could ride bareback. Ebonhand believed that I'd be better off with saddle and stirrups but complied with my request. So we rode off. Late that afternoon we arrived at a small fort, near the border, at a spur road. At the end of that was a village where we stayed for the night.

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The next morning we went into the hills and reached an old mine entrance with mana waves pouring out of it mostly green and white but with an occasional pulse of black. Somewhere down there was the portal. Logan did a Wizard's Eye and discovered that someone had set up a barricade inside the entrance where it was dark. Meanwhile Starflower cast a Mind Speech and picked up a lot of background chattering.

Kel discovered some humanoid tracks going into the mine just as Logan spotted some hooded entities wearing bloodstained robes behind the barricade. I used my ocular and detected a warded area in front of the barricade. Logan then Quickened us while Kel summoned an elemental. Logan then tried sleeping the two entities. One disappeared but the other had some sort of controlled rage. Once Jedburgh removed the ward he charged in. Starflower stopped the controlled rage

allowing Logan to sleep it. Jedburgh demolished the barricade and brought out the sleeping entities. Both were wearing robes of Iuz. Just then another wave of black mana belched out of the mine and the elemental's eyes glowed red. Kel quickly dispelled it.

So we went forward and passed through the gate. On the other side we were in an underground tunnel. It seemed that we were a long way underground. Up ahead we could see a reddish glow ahead. I could also sense a large body of water somewhere ahead.

Finally we reached a large gallery with several tunnels leading off it and molten lava below. Logan had already seen, using witchsight, some sort of orange magical line leading from the ward down into the depths. It was this we were following. So we made our way along. Suddenly we felt that we were being watched. Also the mana flow was becoming more grey. It looked like there was a black domain forming ahead of us.

We kept moving even though our vision was failing. Something was affecting our lights. Up ahead a large cavern contained the remains of a building made of iron. Between us and that was a ravine with molten lava flowing five feet below.

Kel used a Wall of Stone to bridge the gap then started to cross. Halfway across small skeletal hands emerged from the edge of the Wall and tried to pull her off. Jedburgh rushed in and started smashing hands while I raced up and managed to loop a rope around her shoulders, just as Logan levitated Kel. The rest of us crossed while Jedburgh and Starflower held off the hands.

Just then the Wall collapsed, just as the rest of us got clear, and Jedburgh dropped towards the lava. Logan was able to levitate him but not before one foot contacted the lava and was badly burnt. I pulled Kel in, followed by Jedburgh, and both levitates were Counterspelled.

While the others did what they could for Jedburgh's cooked foot, I gave a six point Restorative to Kel and a three pointer to Logan. Just then the surroundings seemed to shimmer as the terrain set in. Now we could see a heavily fortified building with the gate smashed in. Looking at the tracks we determined that quite a few people had been here recently. So we cautiously went through the gate.

On the other side lay several bodies. All of them were very old. Mana was already beginning to collect around the bones. On the other side of this courtyard was an inner wall through which a hole had been bored through. Someone described it a permanent Tunnelling. On the other side were more bodies. It looked like they died fighting. A fresh body, dressed in Iuz robes, had the lower half completely missing, like it had just vanished. Time since death was one hour. Whatever had done this was still around.

Just then Grendel told us he felt some magic impact. All of us were feeling more paranoid as we followed the tracks. Just then all the magics on us, including our Witchsights, shut down plunging us into darkness. It only lasted a split second but it felt a lot longer.

The next thing I remember was that the others were clustered around a badly injured Kel and there was blood on my tulwar. Apparently I had suddenly turned and attacked her with no provocation. I didn't remember anything like that and neither did Collage. Kel was still suspicious as I pushed a Healing potion in her direction, muttering something about checking it for poison later.

Starflower detected a mind nearby so I threw up a fog. Since everyone had a Waterbreathing spell on, they could see through it. Then the mind vanished. Just in case I was suddenly compelled to strike someone else, I peacebonded my tulwar and prepared a net instead.

Lightning flashed out at us. Starflower was wearing what looked like an animal horn and used that to absorb the bolt and shoot it straight back. The strike was snuffed out halfway there. We then started heading towards the centre of the complex. Just then a rend appeared on Starflower and it went utterly dark. I could hear the wolves going for something. Even when the lights came back all we could see was an indistinct shape. I tried throwing my net at it but missed. In mid-flight, it glowed, changed course, and landed on Starflower who began attacking Ebonhand. Just then some shadowy entities seeped into my cloak and I was suddenly being strangled. I was soon able to get it off and it drifted away. My attempt to snatch it from the air failed. I could only watch as it disappeared from sight with a growing grief and anger. I just hoped Collage would be okay.

Finally we reached the centre. There was a portal with green/white mana flowing out of it and into the black mana all around. Runes on the portal spelt Arth. The Plane of Destination of the portal was also Arth. Starflower was able to determine that whatever had controlled the portal was on the other side of it.

We stepped through and found ourselves in more mine workings. A couple of minutes later we were under the open sky again. Less than an hours walk brought us to a druid's grove where we discovered some dead bodies on the ground. They had been brutally murdered and their aura told us they were locals. Starflower used a Finding spell to find the controlling item or person which indicated it was further along the road. The wolves picked up the scent of the murderer which was also going down the road. So that's where we went.

About twenty minutes later we exited the green domain surrounding the grove and saw a town in the distance. Four hours later we arrived there and noticed that the walls were odd, made up of some black glossy stone. From people nearby we discovered that the name of the town was Lon and they spoke Alusian Common.

As soon as we entered the town we were accosted by the guards. Starflower tried to explain that we were seeking an escaped murderer to take him, or her, into custody but the guards insisted that we leave our weapons. Finally they summoned an abjurer mage who believed us. From their reactions it was evident that they thought we were looking for Scratch. So the little rodent has been here too.

They gave us an iron key each that would allow us to use our magic here and we continued following the trail. That led us to the centre of town and the keep there. We entered and noted that the trail led to the nearby smithy. There were a group of people gathered around. One was wearing the robes of Iuz and carrying a sword. He was attempting to convince them that he was the rightful heir to the throne since he was carrying the Domainsword. Starflower was accusing him of being a murderer. The situation was looking very doubtful until the Abjurer was summoned. He acted as if he believed the Iuz priest but winked at us. He then told us that a Diviner would be arriving sometime tomorrow to determine the absolute truth of the matter. Meanwhile the Abjurer would lay some very anti-magic wards around the place.

During the night the priest tried to flee by flying out the tower window and thudded into the ground.

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The next morning the Diviner arrived, a Priest of Rao. Logan charmed the Iuz priest and Starflower hypnotised him. Basically he told us everything. The Iuz cult had traded with Scratch. Scratch now had some animating fire. The sword had been found in the ruined temple below. Also down there was a blind beholder. It was probably that which had attacked us. The best strategy for dealing with it was to spread out. Also the Cult of Iuz had a temple in Greyhawk City that no one knew about. He gave us the address, personnel makeup and anything else we asked for. I was taking lots of notes. The Greyhawk authorities would be very interested in this. He even signed them when I asked.

Basically the priest was guilty of very heinous crimes but to test his guilt they used the heated iron bar test. He failed it. I didn't want to witness the execution so I went looking for a new net.

Starflower attempted to find Scratch but failed. Logan tried a Locate but that failed too.

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The next day we travelled back to the mine. I was desperately trying to control my growing grief about the loss of Collage. Once there, I cast Waterbreathings all round before we descended but, to our surprise, there was no portal. Instead the shaft went directly to the steps down to the ruined building. Before we went near it I managed to create a Waters of Strength for Kel and failed four times for Jedburgh. Starflower provided a special herbal tea while Kel did Strengths of Stone all round.

Once powered up we entered the ruins. Logan used a Wizard's Eye and saw the beholder resting with a robe wrapped around it. Suddenly it's eyestalks twitched. It knew we were here.

So we split up. The beholder rose into view and we noticed that it's robe was covered in eyes. It also looked suspiciously like my cloak. Kel got rendered while Jedburgh charged in with his glaive and took damage. Grendel was levitated into the air. Starflower did the same and managed to slice an eyestalk with Severer - the levitation one which sent Grendel plummeting towards the ground. I managed to catch him and partially break his fall. Then I tried getting it with the net and missed.

There wasn't much more I could do as I had no ranged damage spells or ranged weapons. All I could do was watch as the battle raged. Starflower got an arm bitten off, the one holding Monopole. Grendel managed to bury his battleaxe into it's side. I managed to hit it with my tulwar as it levitated itself upwards out of weapon range. It then lunged at Jedburgh and bit at him. Only the lower part of his torso and his legs were protruding from the beholder's mouth.

Grendel managed to put out the central eye while Starflower hit it again. Just then the beholder shimmered and it looked mostly healed. Simultaneously one of Jedburgh's legs dropped down. Kel used a Hands of Earth to grab another eyestalk and pull it out. The other leg fell down.

Suddenly the beholder plummeted out of the sky and squished into the ground. We hacked into it and managed to retrieve the rest of Jedburgh, blind and hairless but still alive. He had Monopole grasped in one hand and had been using it to hack away at the beholder from the inside. Someone tried to regenerate his legs and ended up with goats legs. I retrieved my cloak but it wasn't the same. Collage was still there but she was only a pale imitation of her former self. Also she had company. I wasn't game to wear the cloak so I wrapped it up and stuffed it in my backpack. Maybe Lawfakir can sort this out.

From what we could figure out the beholder was trying to work out some sort of warding rune puzzle. After checking for treasure I went looking for that water source. Turned out to be a two tiny gates to the Elemental Plane of Water that fed a fountain. The gates were set in plaques and were removable.

There was nothing more we could do here so we headed back to Greyhawk and Lawfakir's residence. The notes were turned over to the proper authorities which initiated a purge. He was also able to extract the other spirits out of the cloak and healed up Collage. Through the purge, we were able to obtain a suitable body for Collage, something that was similar to what she had before i.e. long blond hair and very curvaceous. She decided to return to Alusia then head up to the Emerald Islands for a while.

Lawfakir also mentioned that we had found the last of the six planes that were coming together. Originally they had thought there was only five.

I don't know what the others were learning for their rewards but I finally managed to learn a Water Bolt spell. It took nearly two months before I got back to Alusia but it was worth it. At last - a ranged attack.