

LAST SEND

"Last Send". That's what the heading above reads. In reality, this is my 'last' send as editor of TIMBERS. I appreciate the cards and letters from you, expressing feelings concerning my leaving the editor's seat, and they give me a warmth inside. Thank you, my friends.

But, as I said in the Open Letter in T-7, I am not leaving the holt, just turning over the center seat of the holt to someone else. I will still remain active, but I won't have the time to run the holt as before.

By the time this goes to print, Joanne "Ferret" Papin will have everything concerning Timber Valley in her possession and preparing to put out her first issue in May. I am confident that TIMBERS 9 will be just as good or better as the ones I've put out this last eightseason (two years).

All contributions, renewals, questions, etc. should be sent to her now. Anything sent to me for the holt will be immediately relayed to her, so it would be best to mail it straight to the holt address. It will also save me in extra postage.

I do want to offer my deepest apologies to the members of the Timber Valley Holt for not producing the projects I had promised. In 1984, I had scheduled to put out the Membership Pack, but it didn't show up until the Spring of '85. At the time the Pack came out, I promised a Character Reference Guide before the end of 1985. Well, 1986 has arrived and the CR Guide is still not out. I apologize for this and hope you'll forgive my procrastination.

Being a Holt leader has been fun and I don't regret it one bit. I have made many new friends through this holt and I plan on getting in touch with those who join in the times to come. Many of you have become very special friends to me and I hope I've been a good friend to you as well.

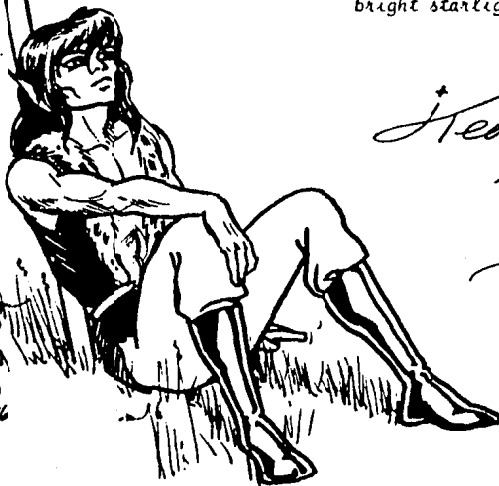
For those two years, you've supported Mooncrest in his endeavors to keeping the holt running smoothly. For the next two or beyond, give Ferret the same such support. Encourage her efforts and help her by backing her up.

Those whom I've kept a close corospondance with will continue on as such as it has in the past. To those whom I've only come into contact briefly, I bid you farewell and good hunting in the times to come.

May the moons illuminate your paths and bright starlights shine upon you all!

*Ked "Mooncrest"
Blair*

TIMBER VALLEY



Crosby '86

TIMBERS 8

Newsletter OF The TIMBER VALLEY HOLT

BRIGHT STARLIGHTS, EVERYONE!

Welcome to TIMBERS 8, the issue that marks the end of two complete years as a holt in the ElfQuest National Fan Club. Two hands-full of newsletters have been printed -- just the right amount for an elf!

During these last two turns of the seasons, our number of members have grown by leaps and bounds as well as the population of Timber Valley. This time, however, we've had a slow season on recruiting new members. Though there is not a large amount to list this time, our Welcome Howl is given just as joyfully to the three who have recently come into our holt. Please welcome them heartily:

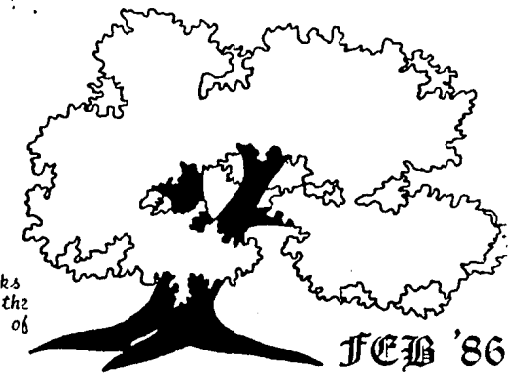
Marcela Fabela Mercedes Fabela Michael Hirtes

And, another has discovered his elfname: David "Farlance" Trimble.

From a very reliable source, it appears as if the postal rates may be going up again fairly soon. With an increase in the postage to send holt material to its members, it would be impossible to maintain at our current \$5 membership. If the rates do go up, sadly, the rate of TUV membership will also have to go up. I have discussed this with Joanne and it seemed to us that \$6 would be the appropriate fee to keep a one year's membership going per member.

Now, no one likes a hike in the fees, including us, but it's what must be done to maintain what we've been putting out. Okay, I see some of you out there with raised hands to ask, "Is there any way to get around this?" It's funny you should ask this because there is such a way around it. The solution is simple and can be explained with one word: Contribute. One major policy we have at Timber Valley is that when someone has printed something in an issue, that person gets that issue FREE since he/she contributed to it. The more you contribute gives you a better chance at getting some of your issues without paying for them. I can think of at least two members of our holt who have sent in quite a lot of material, insuring that they may not have to pay for a renewal for quite some time! Perhaps you could do so also?

(continued on pg 2)



(continued from page 1)

More than anything right now, we need stories. Our files are getting low again, frightfully low, so we need you to get back to work with our elven friends. We need both types of stories: T. Valley Myths and Lifetimes, so put your pen (or your type-keys...) to the paper and contribute. OK? OK.

On the inside of the mailing wrap-around sheet last issue, I had listed a "complete" listing of all the members in the Timber Valley Holt. Well, it seems as if that list wasn't all that complete. After it was printed and mailed out, (naturally), I noticed that two names were inadvertently left out. I apologize for this, for these two are still members. They are:

Ruth Clark Roger Sorensen

Well, that does it for this issue's editorial. Next time, Ferret will be giving her first words to the holt as Timber Valley's new editor. So, without further delay, let's enter into the valley of timbers. . .

Mooncrest

TIMBER VALLEY RD
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The T. Valley Myths:

by Joanne Papin

HOMECOMING

DF 1 HS

Nostrils quivering delicately, the stag tested the air. He could scent nothing out of place, yet still he hesitated before entering the glade. His large upright ears flicked back and forth, listening to the forest sounds. All seemed normal, the night softly alive with its usual rustlings in the undergrowth, the hunting call of an owl, the gentle gurgle of the brook in the clearing before him. Lulled by the lack of threatening scent and by the familiar sounds of the forest night, he stepped daintily into the open.

Snick--snick--snick....

With no discernable pause between them, three arrows buried themselves in the stag's vulnerable points. He shuddered once, then fell, dead from the first of the precisely aimed shafts.

"Ow-ooo..." The mournful call of a wolf pierced the night's calm, coming from within the concealing branches of the tree from which the arrows had been shot.

Ow-ooo...came the distant answer. Ow-OwOOO....

At Dearstalker's reply, Ferret dropped from the tree and approached her kill. The big wolf's howl had told her that he would return at once to share the choice parts of the stag. She was glad to have him back; they had split up after midday to hunt separately and no matter how long they were away from the holt valley, she would never get used to being so alone.

Back in Timber Valley, Ferret had often gone hunting alone--even occasionally on the Upper World plains, though she had been careful to keep that a secret, especially from Mooncrest. But she'd always known that the rest of the holt was near. She had thought to enjoy this extended trip on the Upper World as she had the short hunts, but she'd been wrong. It had been fun at first, but after a time she missed having someone to talk to--even Mooncrest to fight with. And she had discovered no wonders, no strange elves still living out of the valley or trees or plants that were different colors. To be sure, she'd seen some animals that didn't live in the valley, but she'd seen them on the plains of the Grassy Sea before. But the only signs she'd found of other elves had been old, a shape rock or tree here or there. Nothing that had been made within her parents' lifetimes at the least. She was ready to return home--if she could just figure out where home was.

Dearstalker arrived to take her mind from her musings then. She shared the rich liver with her wolf-friend as she sent to tell him of her intention to stay in this clearing for a while--at least till the stag's meat was gone.

[a few days later]

It was time to be moving on, Ferret decided. The stag's carcass had meat for only one meal more and she wanted to return to Timber Valley. And now Ferret knew where Timber Valley was. Though she'd been aware of the directions she travelled during the eight season since leaving the holt, it had been difficult to keep up with all the twists and turns her path had taken. She hadn't been sure where she'd ended up--til now.

After killing the stag, Ferret had been struck by an odd sense of familiarity

to the area. Knowing she'd never been in that part of the forest before, she had searched for the cause of her feeling. First she'd found a tree shaped by elven magic--incredibly old, older even than Timber Valley's Father Tree, with much of the shaping overgrown, but once it had been a hometree. Then she'd found more hometrees, including one that had died and toppled over.

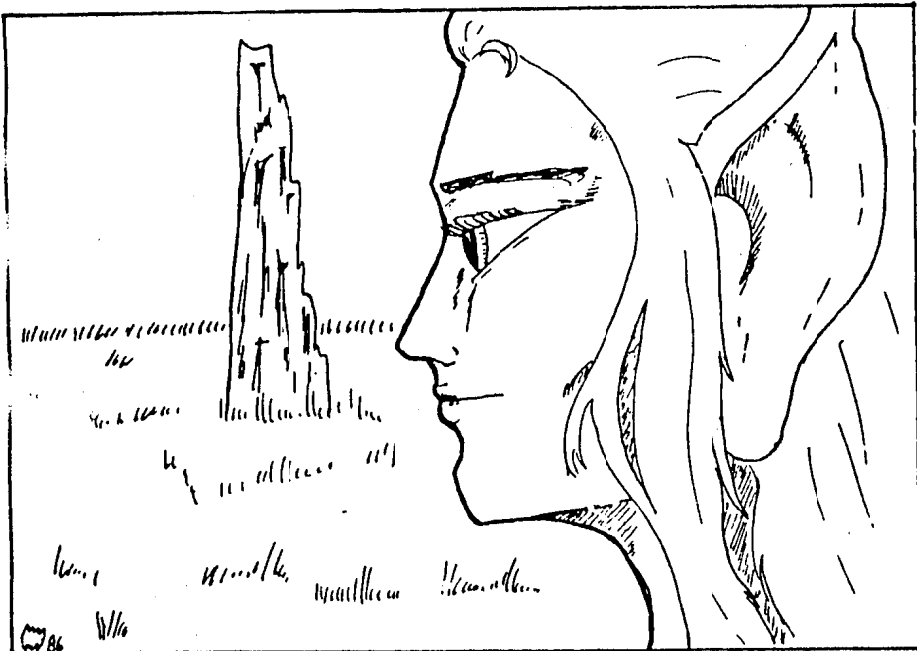
It had been many turns out of living memory since Silverstone had led the tribe from the Holt of Hollow Trees to the safety of Timber Valley, but Ferret was certain these were the Hollow Trees. She'd found the original home of her tribe--and the way home. Memory-sendings and stories handed down through the generations of the Timber Folk traced the way from the Hollow Trees to the Valley--all she had to do now was follow it.

* * *

It didn't take Ferret and Deerstalker long to leave the Great Woods behind for the seemingly endless expanse of the Sea of Grass. Stopping only to hunt, they made it to the Blue River in eight-and-four days of travel. Soon after, while following a herd of what Ferret dubbed "thunder-runners" on the hunt, they moved far enough away from the River to come within sight of the Watchtower -- a pillar of rock shaped out of the plains by a powerful rockshaper during the tribe's flight, to check for pursuit. The sight of the Watchtower gave Ferret an odd feeling. Partly it was relief that she and Deerstalker were going in the right direction, and partly it was awe at the power that had raised the pillar. Could Clearfox or Twill do such as that?

Except for the sight of the Watchtower, the journey downriver was uneventful. Ferret was particularly grateful to have avoided any contact with human tribes. During her travels, she'd seen several human tribes at a distance--they'd all made her homesick for the humans at Timber Valley.

From the drying of the grasses, it was Leaf-Fall when Ferret finally heard the



roaring of the Two Falls. Soon elf and wolf were looking down at the Blue Lake from atop Sheercliff. Of course she was on the wrong side of the valley to reach the Pass easily. With sudden dismay, Ferret realized that she would have to travel almost all the way around the valley before reaching the entrance. Another three or four suns at least!

The journey around the valley seemed to last twice as long as the crossing of the Grassy Sea. As she travelled, Ferret took time occasionally to look over the cliff edge. It was good to see the green of the valley again--at least, the leaves were already turning to other colors with the coming of Leaf-Fall, but some green remained. She'd never realized, though, how different the forest looked on the human's side of the valley.

As Ferret rounded the far end of the valley and neared Sheercliff Pass, she began to realize that something was wrong. She had hunted along the Upper World rim enough to see the erosion of the cliff edge. Sheercliff Pass was different from memory, too, for it had become straighter and less rough. Either it had become suddenly more travelled, or something had cleared it.

The valley floor had changed as well. Trees were uprooted. Mostly saplings, but a few older trees were damaged as well. Fallen trees were buried beneath mounds of dirt overgrown with yellowing grasses. She could see no seedlings taller than her ankle--this Hot-Time's growth, but none older. Dead branches were wedged between trees and rocks all around, a few still hung from their trees by strips of bark or splinters of wood.

Sensing his elf-friend's unease, Deerstalker pushed his head against her with a quiet whine. The wolf's touch seemed to break through Ferret's sudden torpor. She vaulted to his back, urging him in the direction of the holt with fear-edged sending.

* * *

Hatfeather! Sister, answer me! As they had gotten nearer the holt, Ferret had begun to call her parents. Their lack of response had increased her fear and now there was a ragged edge of panic in her sending as she called to her sister.

...Ferret? Wha--? Faintly, she 'heard' the reply. Was her sister hurt? **Aw, let me sleep. It's still daylight! That was much stronger and sounded quite normal. Realizing she might have been panicking 'or nothing, Ferret allowed Deerstalker to slow his pace. She was about to send to Hatfeather again when her sister's sending burst back upon her.

**Ferret! you're back!! Where have you been--you missed everything--where are you? Before she could reply, Nightstep broke in.

Ferret. You've returned--we had stopped hoping. The chief's sending seemed strained. **We will prepare a welcome for you. Much has happened while you were away.**

**What has happened? What's wrong here? Ferret sent after the chief, but he didn't reply. Again worried, she urged Deerstalker to move faster.

A shrill whistle cut through the forest before her. A moment later, Hatfeather appeared, her red hair blazing as brightly as ever. Deerstalker stopped at a thought from his rider, who then slid down to face her sister.

"What happened?" Ferret eyed Hatfeather cautiously. Could she trust her to give an unexaggerated version of the story?

Hatfeather's huge purple eyes widened with sudden tears. "Oh, Ferret--it was horrible. The water was all around us." Dramatically, she flung her arms to emphasize her words. "We had to run for the Pass--many didn't make it. Mother and Father..." suddenly she buried her face in her hands. "I saw them," she whispered. She continued, her voice regaining volume. "They never had a chance. The wall of water hit and swept them away. I...reached for them..." here, she lifted her face and half-extended her hands "...but they were too far away. I felt their cries in

my mind, then they were gone." She slumped to the ground, face still in hands. "No one saw what happened to Twig." she whispered again, referring to their younger brother. "It was as though the water swallowed him."

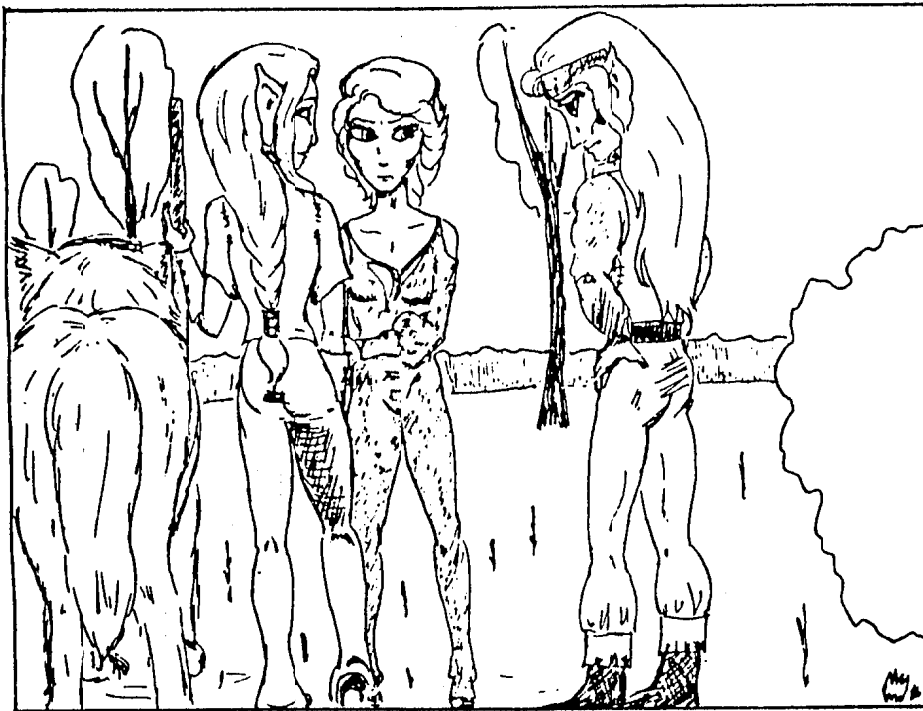
As Hatfeather spoke, Ferret bit back a cry of horror. Their parents and brother! Her legs felt weak and she clung to Deerstalker to keep from falling. "How many others?" she asked, her voice a barely audible croak.

"What do you care? You weren't here--you left them--us--to explore the Upper World." Mooncrest had emerged from the forest behind Hatfeather. "Was it worth it? Did you see what you went to see?" There was a leaden quality to his voice, as though he had no real conviction to his words.

"That will be more than enough." Another elf had followed Mooncrest. Ferret recognized Two Star gratefully. Normally, the elder annoyed her with his--to her--air of self-importance, but right now, she was glad of his steady manner. "Hatfeather's story was essentially correct--many died during the flood, including your parents. And no one knows what happened to Twig. He may be dead...or maybe not." He shrugged. "I'm sorry." He was aware of this cub's antagonism toward him. It confused him, but he didn't hold it against her. Perhaps someday....

At Two Star's words, Mooncrest had turned angrily. Now, he stalked back into the woods, heading away from the holt. Hatfeather had watched the exchange between her sister, the elder, and Mooncrest with curiosity, her tragic air shed as quickly as it had been assumed. Now she jumped to her feet and explained to Ferret, "Newfur was killed by the humans--" she stopped as Two Star cleared his throat. "Alright. She was drowned by a watersnake before the flood. But Clearfox and Dewdrop were both killed by humans before the flood."

"By the High Ones...how many have died while I was gone?" Ferret felt as though she were in a nightmare.



"Too many. But Twill and Dawnwatch's child was born, right after you left. They call him Season. They survived the flood, as did Freshwind, Goldenbraid, Grassy, Foxvine, Trace..." As they walked to the holt, Two Star continued to fill in the details of what happened while Ferret was gone from the holt.

As Nightstep had promised, a welcome party was waiting back at the holt. There was a feast of fish, meat, and Leaf-Fall fruit, and many joyous tears and hugs for the returned Ferret. Those who wouldn't be joining the night's hunting sampled from Foxvine's dreamberries.

Ferret was shocked by how few of the Timber Folk were left after the flood, and also by the damage that had been done to both the Thorn Barrier and the home trees. Silverleaf and Nightway, the treeshapeers, looked even more exhausted than the others in the tribe--Ferret wondered how much damage had already been repaired in the season and more since the flood if this much still remained. No wonder they looked tired.

Before the hunters left, they howled, in memory of those who had died in the Death Flood and from other causes. And they howled for new life, Season. And they howled for Ferret's return.

Mooncrest didn't return to the holt until the howl, and then he remained stiff and aloof from Ferret. As the last of the howl sounded, she approached him hesitantly. "They told me about Newfur. I'm so sorry. You and I have our differences, but we both loved her."

With a muffled sob, Mooncrest's defenses crumbled. He hugged Ferret tightly, whispering, "I--it wasn't your fault. I'm glad you've returned safe." Turning away, he ran to join those who were leaving for the hunt.

No! -Nightstep's send interrupted her wistful sigh. **You've just returned. Tomorrow, join the hunt. Tonight, rest. My orders.** Reluctantly, she nodded to show her compliance, then turned to find her parents' hometree. Mooncrest may have forgiven her--perhaps--but she could not forgive herself. How could she have left the valley--they had needed everyone. She sat at the base of the hometree, back braced against its trunk, thinking how best to make up for her desertion.

What a big sigh! Ferret looked up, startled. Trace stood before her, his dark eyes seemingly serious for once.

"Not now, Trace. I'm not in the mood." What she remembered most about the younger elf was his love of pranks and parties. She wasn't in the mood for his brand of flippancy now. In the past, she remembered also, the only reason Trace had ever talked with her was when he'd tried to involve her in the planning of one of his elaborate capers.

"Be fair now. I lost my family in the flood too." She double-taked, again seeing the serious look in his eyes. "I just wanted to say...there was nothing you could have done. Except maybe died like the others. Now you can help with the cleanup," he made a face, "You know, the best part." Against her will, Ferret giggled. He smiled back encouragingly at her. "That's it. We've had enough of the long faces--you can't help by feeling guilty. And you already helped Mooncrest--the only thing that hurt him as bad as Newfur dying was when we had to wait on the Upper World for the flood waters to go down. He didn't eat for days--Two Star finally had to strongarm him into it. Of course, if nightway gets her way, he'll be a lot better off..."

Swept along on the tide of Trace's patter, Ferret found herself nodding with him despite the ache of sorrow she felt. "What way is that?" she heard herself ask.

"Well, so far, he's the only one who doesn't consider the two of them lovers. But it's getting close." He smiled then and his eyes twinkled. "And speaking of getting close..."

"Yes?" He couldn't be about to suggest--but this was Trace, after all.

"Well, it occurred to me that you might not want to share a tree with Hatfeather. I've heard the two of you in a bramble. And..." he tried to look soulful

and came quite close to succeeding, "I'm all alone."

"What a shame..." she answered softly, indulging him.

"Uh-huh. Of course, this would be a temporary arrangement," he added hastily.

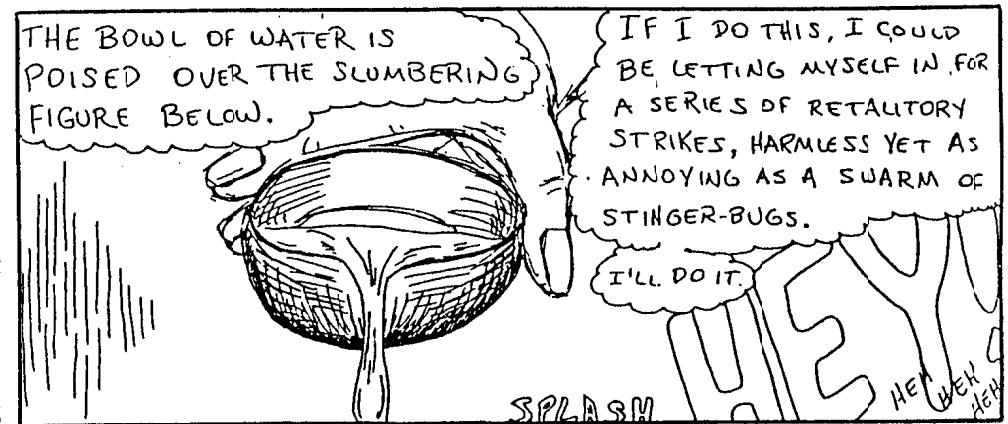
"Until you get settled back into holt routine." Again he smiled.

"Well...my sister and I get along fine, thank you. And we're the only family we've got now." For a moment, she almost let the sadness back. Pushing it back firmly, she struggled to retain the light mood Trace'd established. "But there is something about your offer. Alright, Trace. Show me this hometree of which you speak." She held out her hand and he pulled her up--into his arms.

"Who said anything about a hometree?" he murmured, looking up. Ferret was half-a-hand taller, but that didn't really matter for anything important. At her raised eyebrows he laughed. "Just kidding. C'mon."

Arms around each other's waists, they walked toward Trace's hometree. For a little while at least, Ferret could forget what had happened.

2



Timber Info:

MAGICAL TALENTS (POWERS):

Archer (m) - Airwalker
Big Axe (m) - Watermover (telekinetic)
Blackfire (m) - Firestarter
Bounce (f) - Weak sender, weak levitator
Darkgem (f) - Finding
Dawncaller (f) - Firestarter
Dazzler (m) - Keen eyesight
Golderbraid (f) - Healer
Greeneyes (f) - Healer, strong sending
Hatfeather (f) - Strong sender
Larkspur (f) - Healer
Longknife (m) - Control stare
Nightway (f) - Treeshaper
Redlace (m) - Levitator
Sharp Eye (m) - Very keen eyesight
Silverhair (m) - Strong sender
Silverleaf (f) - Treeshaper
Skytreader (m) - Airwalker
Softwill (f) - Keen eyesight
Tempest (f) - Airwalker
Trace (m) - Finding
Twill (m) - Rockshaper
Whitetale (f) - Rockshaper
Wildwood (f) - Minor Treeshaping
Woodblaze (f) - Firestarter

LIST OF NATIVE TIMBER FOLK (CURRENT):

Darkgem (f)
Dawnwatch (f)
Dazzler (m)
Duskdew (f)
Ferret (f)
Foxvine (m)
Freshwind (f)
Goldenbraid (f)
Grassy (m)
Hatfeather (f)
Jasper (m)
Mooncrest (m)
Nightstep (m)
Nightway (f)
Quicksilver (m)
Redlace (m)
Reed (m)
Sandstorm (f)
Season (m)
Silverhair (m)
Silverleaf (f)
Skyflame (m)
Softwill (f)
Starling (f)
Tempest (f)
Trace (m)
Trilight (m)
Twill (m)
Two Star (m)
Violet (f)
Wavesong (f)
Wildwood (f)
Windrace (m)

LIFETIMES

by Teresa Arellanes

DF 4 (WF)

**** The...the clouds are falling apart!****

Greeneyes ran through the darkened forest, unmindful in her panic of the dead underbrush she crashed into, not even noticing when thorns caught at her clothes or twigs tangled in her free-flowing hair. All that mattered to her was reaching her love-mate, LongKnife, before the world came to a close. Leaping over a small forever-green plant with the last burst of speed she could muster, Greeneyes didn't bother to look and see what was on the other side of the bush. She cried out in surprise when she ran into something, but it did not stop her terror-filled flight.

"Hairy trolls' toes, Greeneyes! You could have killed me!" yelled Sandstorm from where she lay sprawled beside Foxvine, both now covered in dirt. The girl shook her fist at the Healer's re-creating backside, and Foxvine grumbled that it was just too cold to have the sleepfurs whisked away that rudely. "She ought to watch where she's going!" Sandstorm complained as she settled back down beside Foxvine.

The holt proper was a dizzy blur to the tiny elf, but she stopped running long enough for her large, green eyes to focus on her love-mate who was across the stream by their hometree. In two quick leaps she was across the holt's brook and one other giant step brought her into LongKnife's arms. Once there where she felt safe, she buried her head in the thick furs that LongKnife wore, and leaned against him, trembling violently.

"Pretty cub, what is it?" the tall hunter quietly asked Greeneyes as he gathered her frail body closer to him. LongKnife had received his love-mate's frantic sending, but could make little sense of what it implied.

Head still buried, the Healer snuggled closer and replied with a small, shaky sending, ****The clouds are falling apart and we're all going to die!**** She flinched when a tiny bit of the clouds landed on her shoulder, and watched the heavens as more drifted down from the dark grey sky above her.

"The clouds are what?! Come sit over here, and tell me what has gotten into you," Gently, LongKnife led his love-mate to the base of their tree, settled down on a root with Greeneyes in his lap, and arranged his fur cloak around them both. His hand brushed against her tear-stained cheek, and he smiled encouragement to her.

****Look at the sky!**** -she sent as she pointed upwards. ****The clouds are falling down all around us!**** Her grand gesture made LongKnife notice that the first snow of White-Fall had begun, and already a thin layer covered the ground. He raised an eyebrow, finally realizing what it could be that had upset Greeneyes so much.

"You've never seen snow before, have you, beloved?" Her wide-eyed stare and the negative shake of her head told LongKnife the whole tale. "It's just very, very cold rain, frozen in the clouds. It happens this time every turn and it lasts for about three moons, just like all the other seasons we have." LongKnife chuckled, the smile extending to include his dark eyes.

****Then we're not all going to die!**** -came the relieved sending from Greeneyes.

"No," LongKnife grinned, "we're not all going to die." He could feel the tension drain from his love-mate, and sense her growing wonderment. Her delight was like that of a cub's, and her first snowfall held her spellbound.

****It doesn't...snow...in Black Rock Holt, but sometimes Fire Mountain would spit out ash and fumes. Is it sort of like that?**** -Greeneyes asked as

she bent to scoop up a handful of the cold, powdery substance and examined it carefully. It melted quickly in her hand, and she retrieved more to replace it. "Something like that," LongKnife agreed.

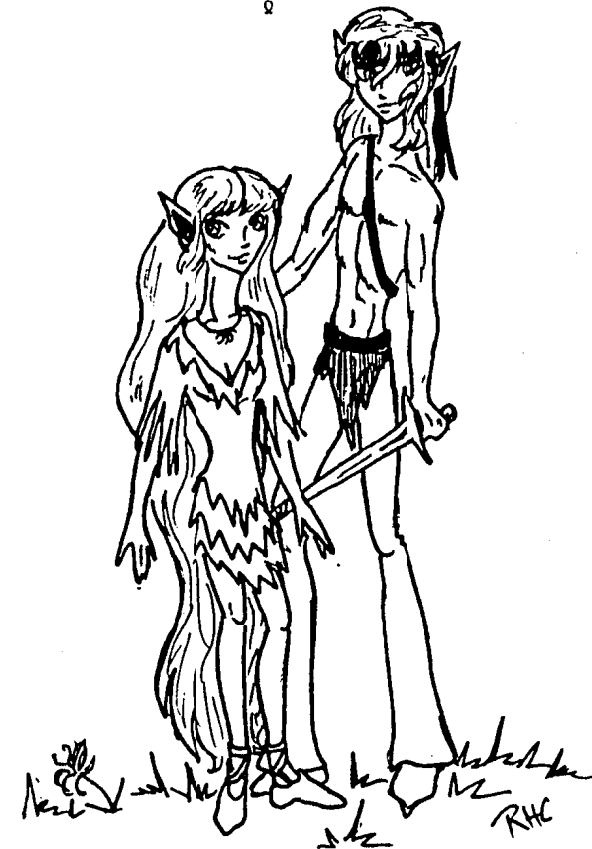
****It's very cold,**** -sent Greeneyes, a mischievous smile on her face as she lovingly twined her arms about LongKnife's neck. Then, almost casually, she dropped a little lump of snow down his shirt and ran!

"You little minx!" yelled LongKnife as he pranced about trying to dislodge the quickly melting lump out from under his furs.

****What will we ever do to keep warm?**** -came Greeneyes' giggled sending from the branch above her victim. After a long, seductive glance at her love-mate, Greeneyes ducked into the hometree's warm interior. LongKnife started after her, but was brought up short by the expression on his chief's face as Nightstep sauntered by. He was smiling.

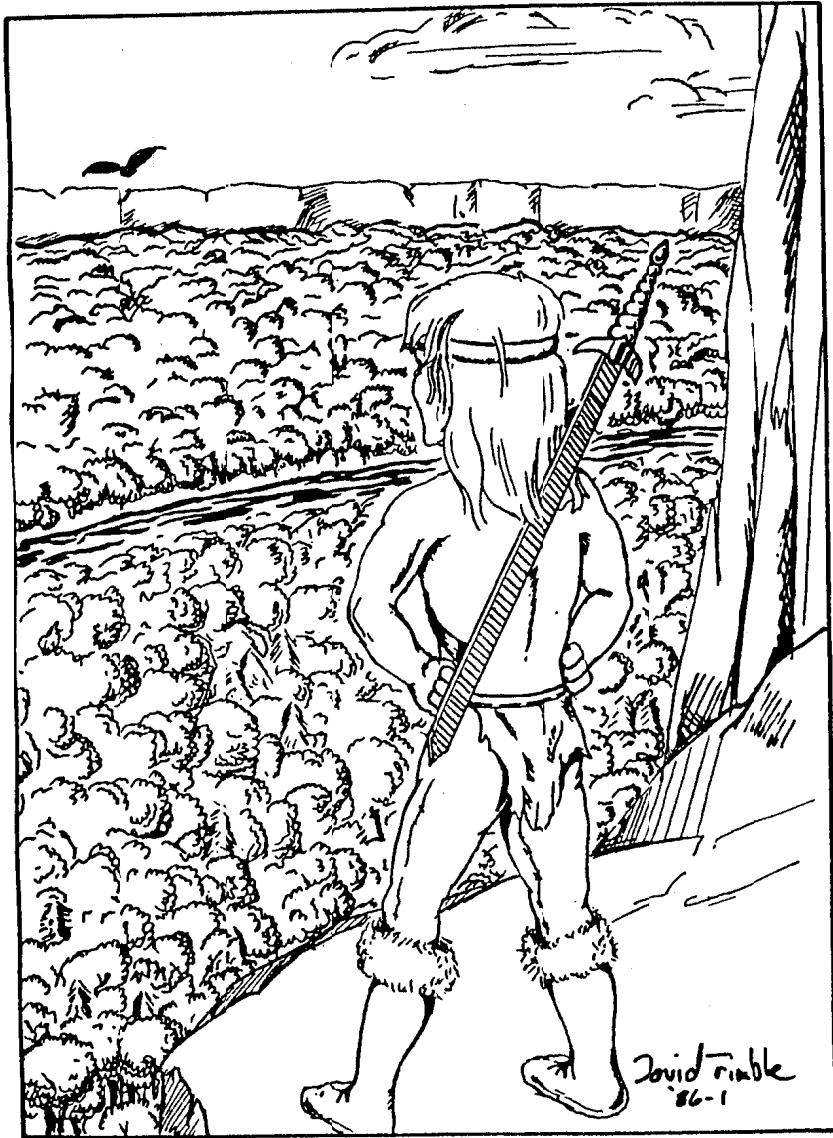
"She learns fast, doesn't she?" commented Nightstep as he headed for his own tree. Though it rarely showed on his face, the chief of the Timber Folk was amused by the antics of his tribe folk.

"That she does, my chief," grinned LongKnife, "that she does." With a mocking bow to Nightstep, LongKnife went after Greeneyes to explore the many possibilities of how to keep warm during White-Fall.



The T. Valley Mythos:

by John Lucy & Ted R Blasingame



STRANGER TO THE VALLEY
DF 2 (GT)

LongKnife was breathing only slightly heavy as he stopped to look around him. The rocky path here was steep and treacherous as it led down to the forest below. His black eyes scanned the morning sky over the valley and finally locked onto a hovering bird far away. The eagle was searching for movement below. If there were any of those cursed five-fingers waiting below, his eagle-friend would find them.

The breeze of this lofty location swirled silky white hair into his eyes, in spite of the headband he wore. His descent along the winding rock-strewn pass was not easy; his headband was soaked with sweat. If he happened to slip on a loose stone, he could easily plummet off the edge, with nothing to stop him but the forest-covered ground below. He wasn't afraid of high places, but the sheer cliff walls on each side made him acutely aware of his position.

A whine behind him diverted his attention away from the eagle. He smiled and knelt down on one knee as a large black wolf with amber eyes padded over to him.

"Don't worry, brother, we'll be down in the forest before long," the elf spoke in a low voice to his lupine escort, "Then we can find fresh meat!" The wolf growled his agreement.

Clad only in breeches, fur-topped boots and his bright green headband, LongKnife started his descent again. Off in the distance, the eagle's cry could be heard.

Redlace locked up casually at the large majestic bird that had just cried out. He didn't give it much thought, however, as he was thirsty and was just about to reach the river. For two days, he and Bluesong had been idly wandering through the valley. He had several favorite spots near the south end and had taken time to go there. His blueish-grey wolf-friend didn't mind these trips, for she loved the hunts they went on just as much as the elf.

Redlace smiled serenely as they rounded a small embankment and saw the river. They were just a little ways downstream of the Bend. Now would be a good time to get a drink and wash himself; his clothing was dirty, so he figured on washing them too.

Redlace climbed down from Bluesong's back and began removing his clothing. Once done, he knelt on the bank and cupped water to his thirsty mouth. Then, with graceful movement, he lowered himself into the cold forest river. He submerged fully, but shot his head up quickly.

With a mild curse, he reached up and pulled off the dark green headband that he'd forgotten to remove. He threw it up on the bank next to the rest of his garments. Neither he nor Bluesong noticed that the majestic eagle was watching them from slow lazy circles high above them.

The sun had travelled only slightly across the sky by the time LongKnife and his lupine companion reached the valley floor. A sudden flapping of wings heralded the arrival of the eagle. Juggling more from the actions of the bird, rather than from actual communication, LongKnife deduced that someone had been sighted. Whether it was human or something else, he wasn't sure. With a direct sending to the bird's mind, LongKnife gave an order which the bird understood. They had used this method countless times in the past, so the eagle knew what to do. Taking to the air again, it headed towards the sighted figure.

LongKnife climbed atop the black wolf and followed the direction of the feathered scout, riding cautiously silent through the woods. Though he knew it was still quite

a ways to whomever he was heading for. the white-haired elf drew a long slender sword from the sheath slung across his back. He held it ready with practiced ease.

The warmth of the midday sun abated somewhat as he passed into the shadows of the forest. All his senses were alert, for an enemy could hide anywhere in these woods.

Longknife quietly scratched the wolf between his ears as they rode, and glanced up through the treetops. The eagle was hovering in the warm air currents above the valley. The elf noted the direction the bird was facing and corrected his bearing to match it.

From the top of a large dense tree, Redlace watched the eagle idly as he rested on a large tree bough. Bluesong was somewhere below, sniffing out the trail of some small creature that had passed this area not long ago.

Redlace was a little curious about the eagle. Eagles were rarely seen over the valley, so it suddenly held his interest. He watched its graceful riding of the thermals and noted its beauty. It was at this time that he started thinking about that grand bird.

Timber Valley was of a fairly good size, he knew. But for a valley of its size, why was the bird always stationed in this general area? In fact, it had been within his sight nearly all day. Redlace sat up slowly and looked really hard at the eagle. He wished he'd had Softwill's "hawk" eyes to see the bird more closely.

He didn't usually give himself over to paranoia, but something didn't seem right. He tested the scents on the light breeze, but didn't pick up anything threatening. He didn't relax his guard, however. Several moments passed before the red-haired elf decided that nothing was really out of place.

Then suddenly, Redlace heard the simultaneous crackling of ground debris under heavy footsteps and a low throated growl.

Bluesong, quiet! Hide! -he sent to the wolf. The growling stopped, but the footsteps continued. Redlace nearly jumped out into open air the next moment, for the eagle swooped down near him, letting out a loud shriek. He cursed to himself and plucked his bow and quiver from the branch they'd been hanging from. An arrow was nocked as he readied himself for the intruder he'd suspected was nearby. The scent was now unmistakable.

Just below the tree he was in, a figure stepped cautiously through the shadows. A hand accidentally passed into a ray of sunlight, revealing the number of fingers attached to it. Five!

Redlace didn't recognize the human below, but then again, he didn't know them all by sight like Grassy and Mooncrest did.

Looking deep into the shadows, a glint off of polished bone told him the human carried a spear. When an elf or human crossed over the river into the other's territory, it meant a forbidden trespassing, which usually resulted in a suddenly short lifespan for the intruder. Redlace drew the bowstring to his cheek and prepared to release the deadly shaft.

But, before he had time to ever think of loosing the arrow, a fierce yell erupted from the woods with a white-haired elf and a large black wolf. The human's face filled with fear, but natural reaction caused him to throw his spear at his attacker.

Although only tipped with a sharpened bone, the pike was sharp enough to cause damage. It struck and penetrated the elf's right leg just above the knee. The white-haired elf stumbled, but determination kept him from falling. He brandished the long razor-sharp blade and swung it in a wide arc, putting all his strength behind it.

Redlace saw the human's throat turn instant crimson as the sword tip sliced through it. A muffled scream gurgled from the human as he toppled backward. The other elf staggered and leaned against the tree's massive trunk and gritted his teeth together in pain. The spear still protruded from his leg and the weight of the shaft was causing more damage. Slowly, he lowered himself to the ground.



For a moment, all Redlace could do was stare. He had never seen this elf before! He couldn't believe it. For over four thousand years, no one had ever seen another elf in the valley who wasn't born to the Timber Folk!

His whirling thoughts were interrupted by sending from the stranger,

While you're staring at me, you may notice that I'm wounded. I could use your assistance if you'd come down here!

Redlace gulped down his surprise and worked his way to the ground. There was no time for introductions between them -- the stranger's leg was bleeding freely. The spear had been thrown hard at close range, so it would take more than Redlace's help to get it out without ripping the stranger's leg to shreds. He worked quickly to stop the bleeding and used his headband as a tourniquet.

The weight of the pikestaff was making the wound worse than the initial attack. The stranger seemed to be doing all right, but every now and then he'd clench his teeth and groan lowly. Redlace wasn't about to pull the spear point from the wound, so he tried to break off the handle; the wood was too strong, so he decided to use his talent.

He wasn't able to lift anything larger than himself, but Redlace did have the He lifted it just enough to keep the

ability to levitate the staff without problem. weight from making more damage.

Though it took tremendous concentration, he managed to send for help while holding the spear suspended. **Hatfeather!** -he sent, knowing she was one of the strongest senders in the tribe, **Hatfeather, this is Redlace. I need your help!**

A familiar sending touched him a moment later, **What is it, Redlace?*

I need you to send Goldenbraid, Two Star and Nightstep to a place just south of the Bend. Hurry, Hatfeather, we need them! Especially the Healer! The stranger was looking at him oddly. "I was sending for a Healer." he explained.

**Redlace, what's wrong? What's happened?*

Tell that there's a badly wounded elf down here and it's not me. He needs their help as quickly as possible!

**An elf...? Who is it?*

He's a stranger -- he is not from Timber Valley!

There was silence for a few moments before he 'heard' from her again. **They're on their way. Goldenbraid says to make him comfortable -- it'll take a little for them to get there.** Then she added, **An elf not of our folk! I want to tell you that he's caused quite a stir in the Holt!**

Well, -Redlace replied, **just have them get here as soon as they can.**

After breaking contact, he looked back to the stranger. "Do you have a name? Mine's Redlace."

The stranger to the valley stared at him with those pitch black eyes. Redlace had never seen eyes that black before -- not even Nightway's. He couldn't tell where the pupils ended. The stranger seemed to be sizing him up before answering.

"My name is LongKnife and his name is Manslayer," he indicated a large black wolf hat had just come out of the brush with Bluesong trailing along. Manslayer laid down next to his elf-friend as Bluesong padded over to sniff around the dead human's body. LongKnife looked at the other elf's green and black garments. "Do you live here, in his valley?"

Redlace nodded almost absently; those strange black eyes were like deep pools. He had to shake himself to stop staring. At that time, the eagle he'd seen earlier swooped down through the trees and landed on a nearby branch. LongKnife looked up at it and smiled.

"And that," he said, wincing with sudden pain, "is Goldwing, a friend of mine."

When Redlace had looked into the other's eyes, his concentration wavered slightly - the pikestaff moved, causing pain to the stranger. He suddenly realized this and lifted the spear again. He still couldn't believe it, however. It was almost inconceivable to the red-haired elf that there was someone in the valley he didn't know.

"I've never seen you in our valley before." Redlace said as Bluesong came and laid down beside him. "Where did you come from?"

LongKnife looked at his wolf-friend and ran his fingers through the dark fur. "I don't know, actually," he replied, smiling slightly, "I've been wandering around from place to place since I was a child."

Redlace was watching him the way the cubs in the holt listened to Two Star when he told them stories. "What about your parents. . . your tribe?" he asked.

"Killed. All of them." LongKnife said with sudden hatred in his eyes. He pointed at the headless body and sneered. "Slaughtered by his kind!" Then he looked down and spoke a little quieter. "I was too young to really know much about my own people. When the round-ears attacked us, my mother tied me onto the back of one of our wolf-friends, Manslayer's mother, and sent us off running. I never knew the outcome of the attack, but there were so many more of them than there were of us."

He touched a hand to the bright green cloth that he used as a headband. "This is all I have left of my mother. This is what she used to tie me to the wolf. It was hers..."

Redlace had listened in silence. He had gotten over his initial shock at seeing the stranger and started to like him. To help pass the time until the others arrived, and to get LongKnife's mind off his own sorrowful past, Redlace decided to tell him of the Timber Folk.

The sun had nearly disappeared behind the western rim of the valley, which cast grey shadows over the forest. LongKnife and Redlace had talked a great deal while they waited, learning much of one another. Once, Redlace had gone off to find food, for they had gotten hungry, leaving Bluesong behind to watch over the stranger. They had eaten and LongKnife had slept. Redlace was tired too, but his weariness was the result of maintaining the levitation of the pikestaff. LongKnife had to deal with the pain while Redlace had gone hunting, but the stranger survived. Redlace felt drained, but he managed to stay awake.

Now, the two new friends talked again. The glow of the sun on the rim was slowly fading as the evening wore on. "Why is it taking your friends so long to get here?" LongKnife asked in agitation.

Redlace smiled. "When you were up on the rim of the valley, before you descended, did you happen to notice the size of this place?" LongKnife nodded, wondering what he was leading up to. "My holt is located almost all the way to the far end, near the lake. It does take some time to travel the distance."

LongKnife bit on his lower lip. He was starting to get impatient. The red-haired forest elf continued, "But, I've been in contact with them for some time now. They're almost here."

LongKnife had been wanting to know about the individual elves in red-hair's tribe all evening and his host had obliged him with descriptions and send-pictures. The conversation returned to that topic as they waited.

It was only a few moments later that Bluesong's ears pricked up and all heads turned. A lone wolf howled out a special call not far away. Redlace cupped his hands to his mouth and issued out a full-throated call of his own. He turned back to his white-haired friend and smiled. "Be prepared for their shock," he said.

LongKnife looked puzzled and asked, "Why would they be shocked? Have they never seen a wounded elf before?"

Redlace shook his head and chuckled. "It's not your wound," he replied, his eyes glowing in the increasing darkness, "but yourself. As I told you a little while ago, you're the first elf we've seen outside of our own tribe. We didn't know any others existed -- believed ourselves the last of our kind."

Suddenly, Manslayer jumped up and dashed off into the woods growling. Bluesong was fast on his heels. LongKnife looked concerned, but Redlace just smiled. "He's just sensed that Riftweed is nearby."

"Riftweed? Who's he?"

"Our wolves' pack leader. There's going to be a battle of wills between them to see who's the dominant male." As if to accent his words, they heard the snarls and growls of the two large wolves just a short distance away.

"Someone's here." LongKnife stated, testing the scents in the air. Redlace stood up as the party came into view through the trees. The looks of unbelief and awe were in the eyes of nearly all of them. LongKnife smiled weakly and indicated the spear protruding from his right leg; Redlace still had the wooden shaft suspended. "Excuse me if I don't get up," the stranger said.

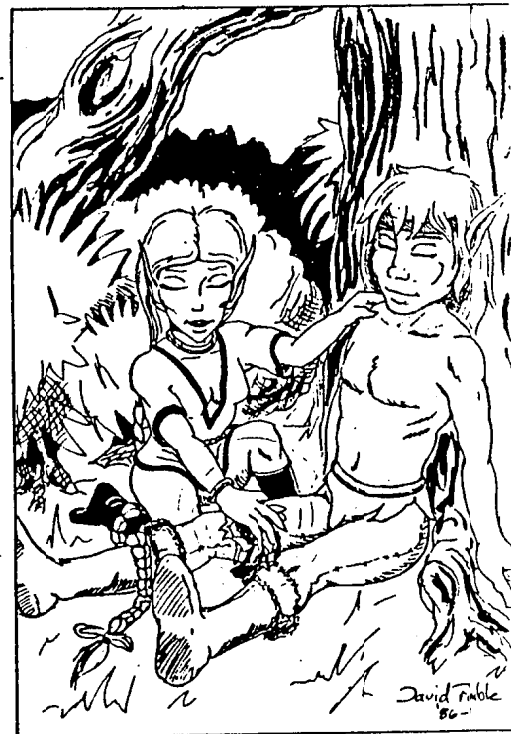
A female with an incredibly long braid of sunny-gold hair nelt at his side. **I am Goldenbraid, a Healer. Try to relax and let me do the work.** Her sending was as soothing as the touch of her hands. Redlace stood beside her, keeping the pikestaff steady. The Healer closed her eyes and entered her talent into the wounded hunter's leg.

The other four who had come with her watched the strange elf intently, as Redlace had done at first. One, a young male with unruly brown hair leaned over to an older male dressed in purple and red. "Where does he come from, I wonder?" Mooncrest whispered.

The elder shook his head of dark grey hair, but didn't say anything. Two Star was keeping his thoughts to himself at this time, it seemed. The leader of the group stood back with arms crossed and a totally unreadable expression on his face. No one else in the group knew it, but the brown-haired chief and the elder Two Star were sending to one another, discussing the situation.

Redlace walked over to Nightstep and presented the human's spear to his chief. "Goldenbraid's just about finished," he said.

Nightstep looked back to the stranger and then back to the red-haired hunter, his brown eyes glowing in the darkness.



**What happened here?*-he asked, indicating the spear. Redlace told him of the circumstances that led to his and Longknife's meeting and much of what the wanderer had told him. All of this was sent as so rot to disturb Goldenbraid's concentration.

**Where is the human?*-Two Star asked.

Downwind of here, by the river: it began to stink, so I dragged it away.

Mooncrest and Nightway had been watching quietly from the side, standing in each other's arms, but alert to the circumstances. Mooncrest looked up when Redlace mentioned the human. **Who was he?*-he asked

Redlace shrugged his shoulders in reply and added, **I don't know them as you do, Mooncrest. But, if you want to have a look, he's over there near the river.** He pointed to the east. Nightway stayed with the group as the curious hunter headed towards Elue River.

Goldenbraid sat back on her legs and sighed. She smiled as her eyes sparkled. "It'll be a little sore for about a day or two, but you're all back together again, Longknife."

Longknife smiled at her and sent a heartfelt thanks. He liked her, in spite of the fact that she'd healed him. She stood up and held out a hand to him to do the same. Several wolves appeared from the brush, one of which was Manslayer, who padded over to his companion. From the tell-tale signs, Riftweed was still the dominant male of the pack. Longknife stroked his wolf's jet-black fur and looked at the elves' leader.

"I don't have anything in which to repay you, but your help is greatly appreciated," he said. Nightstep studied the stranger with a penetrating gaze as Two Star replied.

"We're glad to help any elf, especially one of whom we've never seen," he said, rubbing his fingers through his own wolf-friend's reddish fur.

"Redlace told me that you've never seen any others, outside your own tribe. I can understand your curiosity," Longknife replied.

Nightstep, having formed his opinion of the wanderer, smiled openly -- something he didn't usually do. "Longknife, we extend our arms in friendship. You are welcome to stay with us as long as you wish." Mooncrest heard his chief's words as he returned to the group.

Mooncrest stepped between Nightstep and Longknife, facing the stranger. He then turned toward his chief, but his hazel eyes didn't leave Longknife. "Xinn is the one who was killed. He never hated us, even though he was a roundear."

Redlace snorted. "He broke trust with us when he crossed the river. If Longknife hadn't killed him, I would have. Besides, he did throw his spear at Longknife first; that in itself warranted death!"



Nightway moved in behind her lover and put her arms around him in hopes that it would calm him down. It didn't. Mooncrest spoke in a low voice to the red-haired elf, his eyes glowing in narrow slits in the darkness. "It was probably in self-defense." he growled, "Xinn was here to collect certain roots which grow only in a spot near here!"

Two Star stepped forward to stand next to the argumentive hunter. "What makes you think he was here just for roots, lad? These humans are tricky, almost unpredictable." He put a firm hand on his shoulder.

Mooncrest fought control over himself. "I know, because he's done it several times before. I've watched, hidden from his notice, and that's all he's done!"

Nightstep, who had been silent during the argument, crossed his arms. "You let a human pass into our territory and let him live? It seems that Longknife, here, knows more about our penalty for human trespassers than you do." Mooncrest started to speak, but the chief held up a hand. "Don't condemn Longknife for killing a 'passive' human. Xinn did violate the boundary, which is an instant death penalty." Mooncrest was going to protest again, but Nightstep's dark gaze told him he'd better not. He fumed in silence.

"We are the Timber Folk, Longknife, and you are welcome to join us." Nightstep offered again. The white-haired elf smiled.

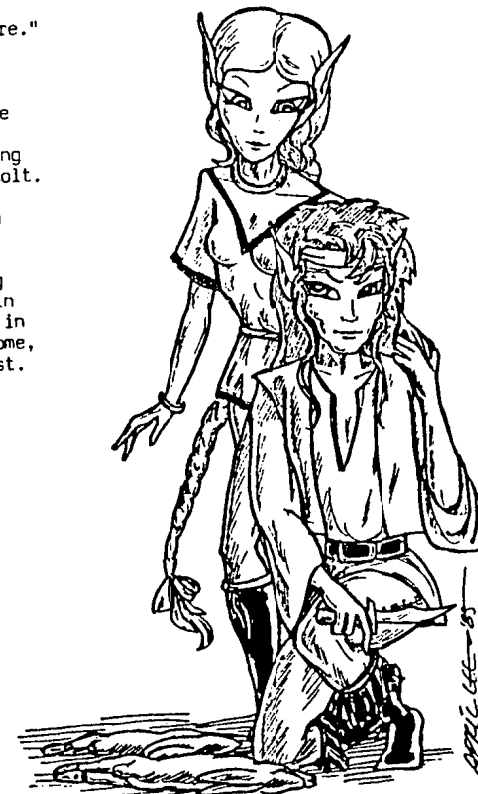
"I believe I will -- for a little while anyway," he answered, "That is, if Mooncrest is willing to let me..." All eyes turned to the elf in question, waiting for an answer. Mooncrest shifted uncomfortably from their gazes and managed to let a smile creep across his lips. He didn't trust the stranger completely, but he was an elf and wouldn't refuse him to stay with them.

"Please, Longknife," he said humbly, "stay with us. I think you'll like it here." Longknife grinned and put a hand on the brown-haired hunter's shoulder.

"Accepted," he said. At this point, each of the small group sent their welcome to him.

Mounting on their wolf-friends' strong backs, the party headed back toward theholt. Many things could be learned from the stranger and in turn they could teach him of life in the valley.

Although they could not know it, Longknife was only the first of wandering elves to discover the valley of timbers in the years ahead. Many others would come in and decide to make Timber Valley their home, living and loving in the lush green forest.



(Goldenbraid & Two Star)

Timber Folk

John Lucy

Name: LongKnife
Soul Name: Onan
Gender: Male
Life/Lovemate: Greeneyes, lovmate.
Animal Friends: "Manslayer", male wolf, pure black. "Goldwing", male bald eagle.
Father: Thornwood
Mother: Clearshine
Sister: --
Brother: --
Other Relations: --
Eyes: Jet black
Hair: White, straight, falls just below shoulders, held out of eyes by a cloth band.
Height: 4'1"
Arrival Date To TV: DF 2 GT
Date Born: -17 HT

Skills: Hunter, fighter, surviving.
Talent: Undeveloped Control Stare.
Weapons Used: Very long twin edged sword, which he keeps strapped across his back.

Clothing: Bright green headband, tan breechcloth, tan breeches, fur vest on occasion, knee-high fur-topped boots (pants tucked into them).

Jewelry: --

Other Information:

LongKnife was orphaned while he was very young when an attack on his holt by humans murdered his tribe. He has almost no memory of his holt and doesn't know that he is the chief's son. The headband he wears is very precious to him, as it is the only thing left to him from his tribe; it belonged to his mother. Redlace, being the first of the Timber Folk to find him in the valley, became best friends with LongKnife. LongKnife was the first elf to be seen in the valley who wasn't native born, since the elves first came into the valley. His arrival stirred up things quite a bit and caused the Timber Folk to realize that there were others outside the valley.



Timber Folk

Ted DeLorme

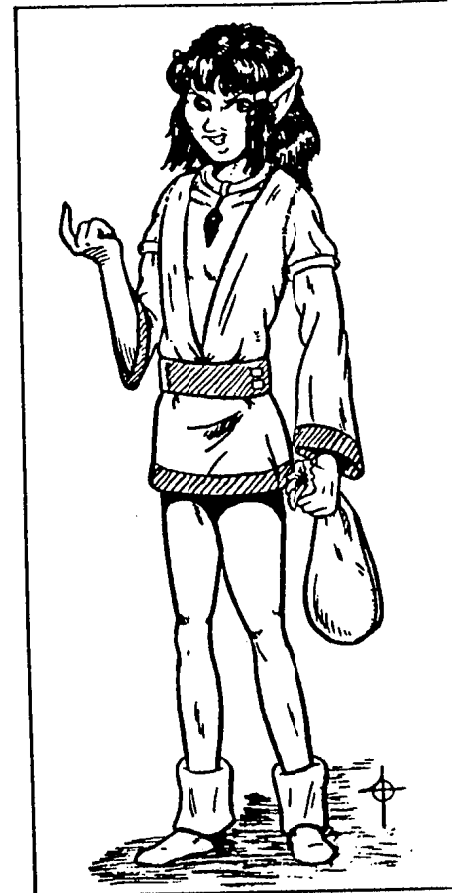
Name: Trace
Soul Name: Habb
Gender: Male
Life/Lovemate: Ferret, lovmate.
Animal Friend: --
Father: Stonehand
Mother: Rabbit
Sister: --
Brother: --
Other Relations: --
Eyes: Dark brown, large.
Hair: Dark brown, worn just below shoulders with bangs and small 'tails' in front of his ears.

Height: 3'9"
Date Born: DF -22 WF
Skills: Good tracker and scout. Fast talker, which is good when trading with trolls.

Talent: Finding
Weapons Used: Dagger or any handy stick.
Clothing: Long sleeved tunic, open to belt, light green with dark green trim at sleeves and hem. Thick brown leather belt and boots. When it's cold, add a dark green hooded cloak with mottle rabbit fur trim.

Jewelry: Gold bands around each bicep, around 'tails' of hair and around neck. From the neck band an irregular flat stone with one side light and the other dark dangles.

Other Information: Trace loves a good prank, but only if much planning goes into it. A fast thinker and talker and a very 'sincere' liar. He's fond of a game involving three nutshells and a small stone. He will bet on just about anything. Often makes decisions by flipping the stone he wears from his neck. When in a fight, he'll try to talk his way out of it first, or use trickery, but when forced, he'll use a stick or dagger. Something of a flirt, though he's never had a "serious" lasting relationship with anyone. Trace is a party animal who enjoys dreenberries, but avoids getting totally sloshed.



Timber Folk

NPC

Name: Windrace
Soul Name: Amai
Gender: Male
Life/Lovemate: --
Animal Friend: "Tamper", female wolf. Cream colored, tan muzzle, ears, tail-tip, and paws. Brown eyes. Eight years old.

Father: Cloudblazer
Mother: Clearfox
Sister: --
Brother: Foxvine
Other Relations: --
Eyes: Blue
Hair: Straight, white, neck-length
Height: 4'1"
Date Born: DF-53 (GT)

Skills: Arrowmaker, hunter, dreamberry-wine maker (and drinker).
Talent: Undeveloped arwalking ability.
Weapons Used: Pikestaff and thin-bladed knife, "Brighter".
Clothing: Fur vest, gold cloth shirt, yellow belt w/gold buckle, brownish-gold breeches with flared bottoms, gold-yellow boots.

Jewelry: Silver chain worn loosely around neck.

Other Information: Windrace is something of a carouser who occasionally gets carried away and does slight damage, especially after indulging in dreamberries or dreamberry wine (he and Foxvine are the only elves in theholt who know how to brew the wine). He is a fast runner and an excellent swimmer, and is proud of his athletic prowess. He had a childhood rivalry with Twill, because of the rockshaping ability he didn't inherit from his mother. Although he outgrew this attitude in due time, the rivalry endures, in a more mature form, to this day. Windrace is a snappy dresser and likes to keep company with the maidens. He's not ready for a serious commitment, though, and backs off if she gets too close. Because of a dumb stunt he pulled when he was young, and was badly injured, Trillight traded soul-names with him and became soul-brothers. Since his mother was killed by one, he has little love for the round-ears, and is bound to act hostile to any human that strays across the river. He likes to play tricks on the trolls, especially Dripstone. The one aspect of his personality that gets him into the most trouble is his inability to refuse a dare.



Timber Folk

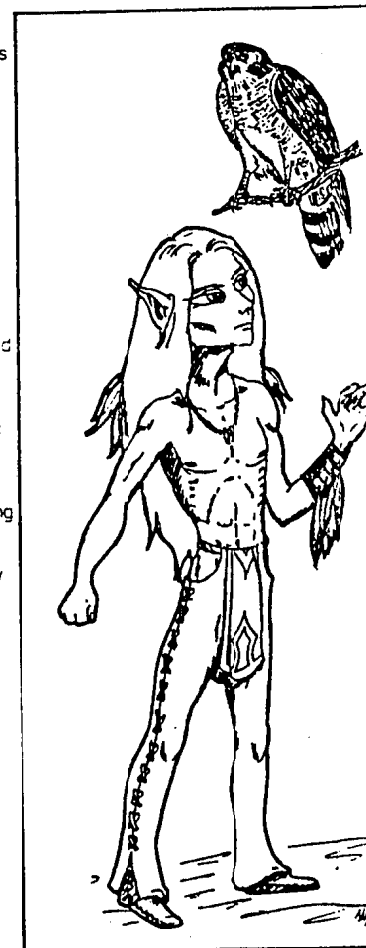
Nikki Wieleba

Name: Nightfire
Soul Name: Akir
Gender: Male
Life/Lovemate: --
Animal Friend: --
Father: Frostfire
Mother: Threeblade
Sister: Windswift, Silvereyes (4 sisters)
Brother: Nighthunter, Shadowseeker, Stormcaller (4 brothers)
Other Relations: Mountainwind (aunt)
Eyes: Pale Blue
Hair: White-blonde, worn straight and hip length. Pulled back from forehead.
Height: 4'2"
Arrival Date to TV: DF 20 (GT)
Date Born: DF -4 (LF)
Skills: Hunting, tracking, and other survival skills
Talent: --
Weapons Used: Bow "Nightslayer". Bone knife "Splinter". Spear. Bolos.

Clothing: Hide chaps and loincloth (chaps and moccasins natural color -- loincloth white with red pattern woven in). Adds fur-lined boots and pullover, a soft leather shirt, and gloves for cold weather.

Jewelry Worn: Bead-and-claw necklace. Occasionally wears weads and feathers in his hair. Metal-bound leather band on left wrist, mounted with feathers.

Other Information: Born to a roving tribe associated with Sea Haven and Grand Oak Holts, a young Nightfire left to explore the world on his own. Though rash and impetuous, he prefers to carefully think out conflicts he may be exposed to. He does not like dreamberries. They have their place, but too many can make for a miserable day or so afterwards. Strong and selfless in helping others, he is trusting of his own kind. Has never seen trolls or preservers on the journey to the valley, though he knows such creatures exist.





Wet Feather & Ferret
Crosby 26 ©

Timber Folk

Melissa Ackroyd-Livingston, Two Campbell Park, Somerville, MA 02144
 Teresa Arellanes, 1269 Mountain View Rd, Santa Barbara, CA 93109
 Mark & Ferri Barnard, 8405 W. Central Apartment #1702, Wichita, KS 67212
 Michelle Benoit, 610 Church Street, Thibodaux, LA 70301
 Ted R Blasingame, PO Box 50186, Midwest City, OK 73140
 PJ Boyd, Random Hall Room 345, 290 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139
 Renne Brock, 308 NE 154th Street, Vancouver, WA 98685
 Ruth Clark, PO Box 1155, Corrales, NM 87048
 Buzz Clore, 9321 Linda Lane
 Jennifer Crosby, PO Box 829, N. San Juan, CA 95960
 Ted Delorme, 300 Sulphur Springs Rd, Apartment S-1, Greenville, SC 29611
 Marcela & Mercedes Fabela, 3228 East 8th, Kansas City, MO 64124
 Eileen Fryer, 294 Main Street, West Orange, NJ 07052
 Alan Gillespie, Lewis Hall #5, Morehead, KY 40351
 Yvonne Gugin, 896 Tarpon SW, Wyoming, MI 49509
 Eon Harry, Random Hall Room 112, 282 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139
 Jennifer Hawthorne, Random Hall Room 345, 290 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139
 Cyndy Haywood, 11380 William, Taylor, MI 48180
 Michael Hirtes, 2623 South 13th Street, Council Bluffs, IA
 Virginia Howard, 322 Page, Apartment C13, Norman, OK 73069
 John Hunter, 119 Briarwood, Moore, OK 73160
 Lauren Janoff, 5518 Pulaski Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144
 Dan Jones, 5200 Pullin Lane, Norman, OK 73069
 April Lee, 25 Tahoe, Irvine, CA 92715
 John Lucy, PO Box 50186, Midwest City, OK 73140
 Melody Luke, 2300 Timberline #137, Grapevine, TX 76051
 Maria Manemann, 3806 Brenda Street, Alexandria, LA 71302
 Marilyn Morey, 5318 Edgewater Drive, Orlando, FL 32810
 Bill Nichols, 122-C Nicholas Street, Elizabethtown, KY 42701
 Karen Ojamaa, 129 Broadway, Keyport, NJ 07735
 Joanne Papin, 2852 West Henderson, Chicago, IL 60618
 Robert Pierce, 10 Oak Street, Murrell's Inlet, SC 29576
 Ann Purtell, 4635 North Mevina, Chicago, IL 60630
 Stewart Robertson, 6521 Old Coach Trail, Washington, MI 48094
 Lisa Ruiz, 89 First Street, Keyport, NJ 07735
 Sharon Jane Smith, 214 Wells Street, Palatka, FL 32077
 Roger Sorensen, 3042 Perry, Wyoming, MI 49509
 Bill Spurlock, 1364 Benning Place Apartment #2, Atlanta, GA 30307
 Diana Stein, 1325 Key West, Troy, MI 48083
 Frank Strom, 81 Sargent Street, Revere, MA 02151
 Sue Tretina, 546 South Ardmore, Villa Park, IL 60181
 David Trimble, 8800 East Harry #910, Wichita, KS 67207
 Melissa Van Houten, 21 Lawrence Street, Hicksville, NY 11801
 David Vargo, 28 Meinzer Street, Avenal, NJ 07001
 Nikki Wieleba, 2852 West Henderson, Chicago, IL 60618
 Sarah Wooten, 1501 Harrah Branch Road, Burnsville, NC 28714

ELFSEARCH
by Teresa Arellanes

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O R E S H W I N D T S N T L
O V N D O H T T R A R E V L I S R E
H C N I A F A E L R E V L I S R E

Find these:

ARCHER	MOONCREST
BIG AXE	MOONWIND
BLACKFIRE	NIGHTFIRE
DAWNCALLER	NIGHTSTEP
DAWNWATCH	NIGHTWAY
DIVER	PEBBLE
DUSKDEW	REDLACE
FERRET	ROGUE
FOXVINE	SEASON
FRESHWIND	SHADOWSTAR
FROST	SILVERHAIR
GOLDENBRAID	SILVERLEAF
GRASSY	SOFTWILL
GREENEYES	STARLING
IVORY	TRILIGHT
LARKSPUR	TWILL
LONGKNIFE	WAVESONG



News And Requests

Here are some news and requests from some of the other Timber Folk that should be known:

- NEWS: Ferret and Hatfeather are sisters. Their parents are Treebeard and Fairhand. They have a brother named Twig.
- NEWS: Trace and Ferret are now lovmates.
- NEWS: Quicksilver and Duskdew are now sharing the same hometres.
- NEWS: LongKnife and Greeneyes will Recognize soon.
- REQUEST: Rogue is looking for a lovmate.

Art By

- MARK BARNARD: 20
- RUTH CLARK: 1, 11
- JENNIFER CROSBY: 24, 28
- TED DELORME: 21
- JIM GORHAM: 2
- APRIL LEE: 19, 27
- BILL NICHOLS: 9, 22
- KAREN OJAMAA: 26
- DAVID TRIMBLE: 12, 15, 17, 18
- NIKKI WIELEBA: 4, 6, 23

