

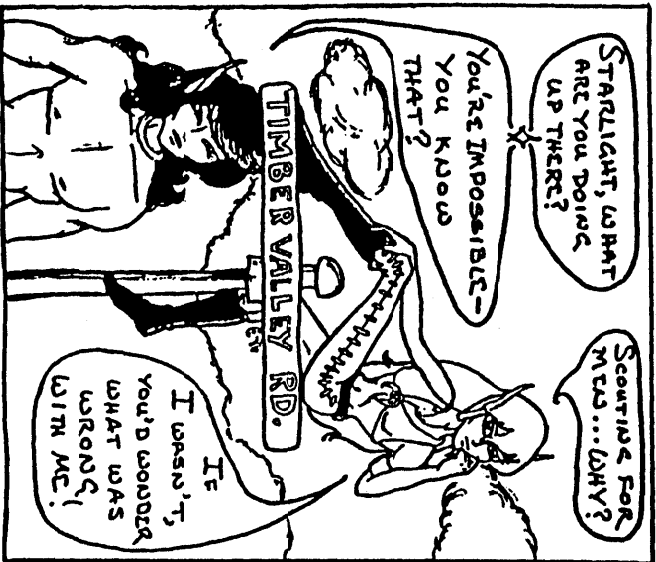
# TIMBERS! 10



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\*\*FIRST CLASS\*\*

TIMBER VALLEY HOLT  
c/o Joanne "Ferret" Papin  
2852 West Henderson  
Chicago IL 60618



STARLIGHT, WHAT  
ARE YOU DOING  
UP THERE?

YOU'RE IMPOSSIBLE-  
YOU KNOW  
THAT?

SCOUTING FOR  
MUD... WHY?

TIMBER VALLEY RD.

IT  
I WASH'T,  
YOU'D WONDER  
WHAT WAS  
WRONG,  
WITH ME!

TO:

You will be due to renew after you  
receive issue # \_\_\_\_\_ of TIMBERS!

## Takin' Care of Business...

**TIMBERS!**, volume 2, number 10, August 1986  
Published quarterly (February, May, August, November) by Timber Valley Holt, a branch of the Nat'l ELQUEST Fan Club. **TIMBERS!** is © copyright 1986 by Timber Valley Holt, all rights remaining with the authors/artists. Material in this newsletter may not be reprinted without permission. Timber Valley Holt does not intend to supercede any previous copyrights held by Wendy & Richard Pini or by WaRP Graphics, but we do intend to thank them (thank you, thank you, thank you) for bringing us ELQUEST!

The Holt address is:

TIMBER VALLEY HOLT  
c/o Joanne "Ferret" Papin  
2852 West Henderson  
Chicago IL 60618

**MEMBERSHIPS:** Yearly memberships & renewals to TWV are \$5 till November 30, when they will raise to \$6. Dues include four issues of **TIMBERS!**, updated timelines, maps of TWV area, and other goodies as we think of them. Make checks or money orders payable to Joanne Papin. Do not send cash through the mails!

**BACK ISSUES:** Prices include postage...  
#1...50¢ #4...75¢ #7...\$1.00  
#2...50¢ #5...\$1.00 #8...\$1.25  
#3...75¢ #6...\$1.25 #9...\$1.00  
#10...\$1.50

**HOLT GUIDE:** Copies of the original Holt Guide are still available for \$1.00. It is extremely out of date, however, and contains much info that has been changed. The new Holt Guide is being worked on now.

**TIMELINE:** The timeline is presently being updated. A mini-timeline is available--send a SASE to TWV.

**MAPS:** There is a new edition of the maps for TWV, the same maps with a new key and a booklet explaining the keys. Send a SASE with a request for the maps if you haven't received your copy--or lost it.

**CHARACTER INFORMATION SHEETS:** Please fill out the new CIS sheets as soon as possible and send them back. If you need additional copies, send me a SASE with a request for them.

**NOTE:** Requests for additional timelines, map sets, CIS sheets, and other reference materials will only be filled if accompanied by a SASE.

**APT CREDITS:**  
Eileen Fryer - cover (Wildwood & tree)  
Stacy Lung - 2, 14-15 (centerfold)  
Nikki Wieleba - 3, 13 (bottom)  
Jennifer Crosby - 4, 6, 8, 9, 11 (top)  
Ted Delorme - 11 (bottom), 13 (top)  
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## Special Thanks To:

Nikki Wieleba, Ann Purtell, Stacy Lung, and Capt. Matt for art, music and staples. (And my mom for not killing me when the typewriter broke the second time!)

**WOODWREATH SEZ...** the "want ads" really work! A new member last issue, she advertized for a family among the TWV natives and now her family reunions look like something thrown by the King family! (Anybody out there old enough to remember the King family? pictured are (top, left to right) Tempest, Woodwreath and Trace; bottom - Wildwood and Duskdew



②

# DOWN IN THE VALLEY

DF 22 HS

(Finally...the editorial page...that means that **TIMBERS!** will get finished before 1990...they'll never believe it!)

Uh...hi, guys! There was this flood and (no, that won't work)...I had the newsletter done and my cat ate it! (uh-uh)...well, okay, okay...the truth.

I got a job. (Yeah!) And, together with the most hectic social period I've had in years (the month of August for most other people), I had almost no spare time to pay attention to TWV and I'm sorry. All jokes aside, my typewriter did break down (twice) and the newsletter (including this editorial) is being almost entirely typed on loaners. But the good news includes: My schedule is straightening out and--with a little help from my friends--**TIMBERS!** it will be finished on schedule; my new job means that I can finally buy a computer/word processor and get the extended timeline and the long-awaited Character Reference Guide done (thanks to those who've sent CISs in--but I'm still missing some...); and I'll be back on letter writing schedule in the next week or two. For those who haven't heard from me recently, don't fear--my backed up mail dates back two months or more right now. My answers may be shorter than usual, but you'll be getting something soon.

On a happier note, I'd like to welcome the new members who've joined since **TIMBERS!** 9. A long howl of welcome for Linda Gerhardt, Linda Payne, Terrie Smith, Dale Allen, and Gary Milsten. And does anybody know if Melody Luke had her baby yet?

The biggest news out, of course, is the soon to be released **SEIGE OF BLUE MOUNTAIN** the new **ELQUEST** mini-series. Eight issues, featuring the original wolf-riders, Dewshine's baby, Winnowill, and Two-Edge. Latest word on the shipping date is late October--right around the corner and a happy Hallowe'en to you, too!

Cons...we'll definitely be at WindyCon ("we" is me, Nikki, Stacy Lung, Bill Nichols, Alan Gillispie, Laurel Guglin, Diana & Dave Stein, Melissa Van Houten, Melissa Ackroyd-Livingston, Ann Purtell, Dave Trimble, Laura Craig, anybody else?) November 14 through 16 at the Hyatt Regency Woodfield. (WindyCon XIII / PO Box 432 / Chicago IL 60690 / \$15 through November 1). Also look for us at Capricon, hopefully Media-West Con, New-Fangled Contraction, Babel Con, and maybe one or two others. (Send me a SASE and I'll send you what details I have.)

And speaking of SASEs...a SASE is a Self-Addressed, Stamped Envelope. They are the greatest invention in the world for people who run large corresponding clubs (like TWV). Whenever you can, send me a SASE with your letter. If that's not possible, try to send me a couple stamps. In fact...I don't mind if you just send a stamp or two--that'll save you some postage, too.

In order to print a story in **TIMBERS!**, I must receive it AT LEAST 3 to 6 months ahead of time, for purposes of editing, character approval, illustration, etc. The only person who gets to cut this deadline short is me--and I will make exceptions under certain circumstances. Artwork should be done with black ink on white paper. Guidelines for stories and artwork are available. SASE me.

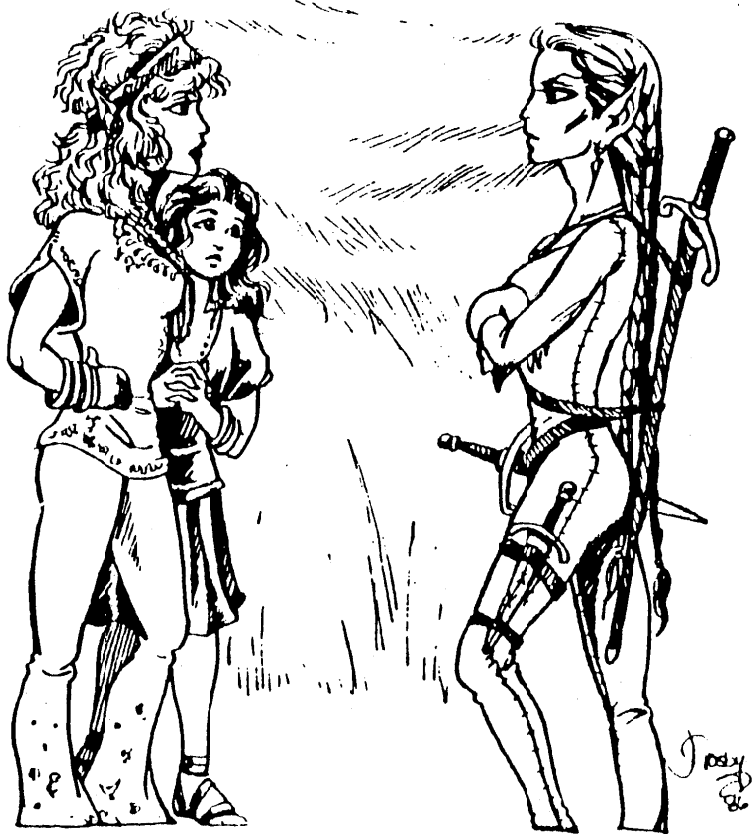
③



# HOME IS WHERE -THE-HEART-IS

DEZO (HT)

BY Melissa "SHRIKE" Ackroyd-Livingston



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DF 20 HS

I knew we would have to go out there sooner or later, but I would never have admitted it in an eight of eights.

The plains stretched away in their dizzying monotony, empty of tree or stone, only wave upon wave of thigh-high grass bending under the slight breeze. The sky was bare, cloudless, far away as the High Ones themselves, enclosing emptiness. It was...horrible. Terrifying. But that, too, I would never have confessed to anyone for my life.

But fortunately there were two whom I did not need to tell. They knew my insane fear of open places as well as their own fears, as well as they knew my soul name. They were as sisters to me, and their concern was infuriating.

"We'll be with you the whole time," Oriole reminded me with a hopeful look, as if those words could save the world. She was always the optimist, even in the direst of dilemmas.

"That will only help for a small while," I said tightly. "And it will take more than a small while to cross that...that...waste!"

"The plains are not a waste," Woodblaze pointed out wearily, tired of the same old argument. She squeezed her daughter's hand comfortingly. I had been gruffer to the child than I'd intended, but it didn't matter. She was used to me. "We don't have any choice, Shrike, and you know it. Each day we delay here at the edge of the forest those bloody humans come closer--"

"Our trail out there will be a hundredfold more obvious than it is here!" I exploded, backed into an imaginary corner. "They want nothing less than our ears skewered on a roasting-stick, and they won't stop at a sea of grass to get them!"

"It was your idea to steal food from their camp," said Oriole quietly.

"Hush, Oriole, there wasn't anything else we could do in a situation like that," Woodblaze reprimanded her. "The only thing we can hope is for those humans to out-smart themselves. They'll know that going out on to the plains would be the most foolish thing we could do, and look for us elsewhere. We can cover our trail."

"Or I could fight them," I put in sourly.

"Neither of us doubts your fighting abilities," she replied gently, "but there are just too many of them. It would be suicide to do anything else."

I contemplated this, groping desperately for some new argument, however unreasonable. I couldn't go out there--I couldn't--but I had to. It was a matter of life or death....

"No," I said aloud. I wanted them to hear this. "Death or sanity. If it were myself, alone, I would choose death." I finally turned from where I had been standing rigidly at the forest's edge, and faced them. "But the decision is not mine to make. We leave by sunhigh." Refusing to meet their eyes, I quickly began to shove our supplies into my carryall. If I was going to get it over with, I was going to get it over with now. They said nothing, knowing not to when I was in one of my bullheaded moods.

The only one who could not understand this was Steelbender, of course. Or perhaps he did understand but refused to allow it. I know very little of animals' ways, still less of the loyalty of the dog-kind, even though I am bonded to one. At any rate, he whined plaintively and pushed his nose into my hand. Of course there was no choice but to scratch his large, sensitive ears and send comforting thoughts to calm his confused, vaguely worried mind. A coyote is a good friend; he may not have the power of his kindred, the wolves, but he has the same compassion.

True to my word, we departed from the shelter of the forest just as the sun had reached the very center of the sky. Oriole walked on one side of me, carrying her rabbit friend Dapple in an open satchel on her back. Woodblaze was on the other, her squirrel Scampnut riding securely enough on her shoulder. It had taken some time for me to teach Steelbender the difference between those two and any other animals--to his mind, if it was smaller than he was and it moved, it was food. He trotted ahead, occasionally vanishing in the long grass to seek out some little animal whose scent he'd caught. He never came back with anything in his mouth, but looked as satisfied as if he had killed a brightfeather.

I took little notice of my bond-friend's antics, of course. I was too busy keeping a grip on my rationality. My mind seemed to expand, trying to encompass the infinity of my surroundings. Failing that, it began to collapse, folding inward, trying to escape the feeling of vulnerability, the nakedness...smaller...smaller, like one of the grass-mice Steelbender was endeavoring to catch...so small as to be hidden amongst the blades of grass, protected from the nothing of the open sky...but I couldn't escape...endless reaching upward, outward, racing, diffusing, each heart-beat extended into a thousand....

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I screamed. There was no holding it back for much longer, and although the only emotion I have ever been loathe to show is fear, fear seemed only a small fraction of the encroaching madness. But even the scream was lost in the void, echoing silently through space, useless, heard by none save myself.

Or so I thought. Somewhere in the midst of my private bedlam was a voice, a mental voice calling me. Soon another joined it, a younger and more inexperienced one.

\*\*Iela! Iela, come back! Don't let go! IELA!\*\*\*

I was conscious of hands holding me, laying me down. (Had I fainted? How embarrassing!) There seemed somehow to be too many, but I didn't pay much attention to that. In the state I was in, I was likely to imagine just about anything, multiple-limbed companions being no exception. I tried to clear my mind and answer their anxiety-ridden sendings.

\*\*\*Braha? Leeral?\*\*\*

Amazingly, I heard voices--real ones this time, not the thought-voices of sendings.

"Mighty High Ones, she's all right! She's all right!"

Had I actually regained enough sanity to hear, or was this another delusion caused by my unnatural and irrational fear of open places? I had to chance it and find out. I opened my mouth, or imagined I did, and tried to speak. My throat was cracked and aching from the scream and it wasn't easy, but I managed one word at least. "Wh...where...?"

"Did you hear that? She said something! Did you--"

"Yes, yes I did...Shrike, open your eyes, sister. We're off the plains now, you're safe, open your eyes, open your eyes...."

I did as Woodblaze told me.

Trees.

Great evergreen trees, soaring to heights of twice-eight-and-four elves. Carpeting the forest floor with needles, shielding from the sky with boughs, close, comforting.

I never thought I would be so glad to see trees.

Mind spinning crazily from an ordeal that seemed to take but moments and had taken much longer in reality, I surveyed the ring of faces around me.

I arrived at the decision that I had not yet fully regained all my senses. Otherwise, why else would there be four strange elves in addition to my beloved soul-sisters?

I concentrated on them, trying to make them go away. There were two with blazing red hair, one male and one female--if they had stood with the sun directly behind them it would seem as though their heads were afire. There was one with deep blue eyes, wearing a brown tunic and a shortsword tucked in her belt. She had her hands on my forehead, gazing intently down at me, and I realized that if not for the healing energy streaming from those hands I might not have regained my grasp on reality.

I shifted my eyes, somewhat painfully, to the fourth. Or rather, what was strapped to his back. I had never seen such fine workmanship in an axe...they were

perhaps some of the most difficult weapons to

make properly, besides crossbows, and I'd

spent many a sleepless hour beating and

melting and trying again...I never

could get the cursed things right. Especially the double-headed type.

Suddenly, for no particular reason, it struck me as foolish to forge

such a beautiful and effective

weapon from something as soft as...

"Silver?" I said weakly. "What

dolt made that thing out of silver?"

Oriole laughed at the axe-

bearer's consternation and turred

to the one who had healed me. "She's

fine, Goldenbraid. You don't need

to do that any more. Don't

worry, she's always rude like that.

You get used to it!"

I struggled to a sitting

position, unwilling to lie prone

like an infant any longer. I could

get a better look at Woodblaze from



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this vantage point, and what I saw dismayed me. She was relieved, certainly, at my recovery. But there was another emotion underlying the relief...fear? No. Fear was too general a word. Hesitation? Reluctance? Regret? All of these? Yes, and something I couldn't name. Poor Woodblaze, I thought, these are real elves, too real, and she is positive that they will reject her. I cursed her tribe of origin, those who had exiled her because of her once-uncontrollable talent of firestarting; and the tribe that was home to Oriole's father who had turned her out simply because she was not one of them. I had done this many times before, but never so vehemently as now. Both holts had alienated her, and she bore the marks of that alienation even now. Poor Woodblaze.

The one with the silver axe spoke. "I'll go keep a lookout. You never know when those double-crossing humans will decide to take advantage of us...."

As he stood, the red-haired female scrambled to her feet and grasped his arm. "I'll come with you," she said eagerly with an inviting tug at the bottom of his tunic.

He seemed undecided for a moment, then gave his consent. "All right, Hatfeather, but this isn't a game. We're in dangerous territory." Hatfeather merely winked, flipped up the hood of her green vest to conceal her flaming mane, and followed him into the trees.

High Ones preserve us, I thought, I haven't seen such a blatant flirt since... since...well, no sense in thinking about my erstwhile tribe. They were a thing of the past, and what should be concerning me is the present.

I blinked. The two had vanished among the trees, without any sign of their passing. I admired that; anyone who could move without making their presence known was in a good position to learn things. It had taken me many a turn to perfect such skills.

Finally deciding I had complete control over myself, I stood and brushed myself off. Noticing they had removed all but the smallest of my weapons (probably to make me more comfortable), I began to strap them in their proper places. It may sound strange, but I feel naked without at least a longsword across my back.

"They say we've come to a halt, Shrike," Woodblaze said quietly. She still had that almost imperceptible air of sadness about her.

"They have? Good." I feigned nonchalance. If Woodblaze knew I was worried about her she would pretend that nothing was the matter. "Perhaps we might stay for a day or so?" I asked the two remaining elves. "We have been traveling without rest for several moons." I did not voice the fact that I was going to try, yet again, to get Woodblaze to accustom herself to others of her kind. I didn't intend to be a nomad forever, and I believe Oriole agrees with me, that her mother's fear of not being accepted is unhealthy.

"Certainly," said the male with a sly grin. Was he trying to pull the same thing that...what was her name?...Hatfeather had? I wondered if they were related in some way. "I don't see why our chief wouldn't let you stay as long as you like. High Ones know we've plenty of elves in the Valley who were wanderers once; there's no reason not to welcome more."

My ears pricked up at one of his words. "Valley? We're in a valley?"

"Oh yes, we didn't tell you!" Oriole said excitedly. She stroked Dapple's head (he was in her arms now) while she talked. "Woodblaze and I had just about given up, you were whimpering and stumbling so badly with your eyes shut like you were walking in your sleep, when suddenly we saw this valley! The plains around it are so flat and its sides are so steep that you couldn't even see it from a distance, but anyway we got hopeful because a valley is closed in so we hurried you over to its edge and it took us so long to find a safe way down but we finally did and we took you into the woods--aren't they pretty?--and Woodblaze thought she felt a sending so we both sent and sent and then Goldenbraid and Big Axe and Redlace and Hatfeather came and they had been out hunting and Goldenbraid's a healer and she saved you!" Looking quite proud of herself for not pausing once during her narration, Oriole replaced Dapple in his traveling pouch and threw her small arms around my waist. "I'm so glad," she added in earnest.

I was unable to hold up my businesslike facade any longer at that point, and returned her embrace. \*\*I'm glad too, Leeral,\*\* I lock-sent to the child. Had I actually come that close to going insane?

I heard Woodblaze saying something to Goldenbraid behind me. I wasn't sure of the exact words, as they were so soft, but I was sure they were thanks of some sort. My cheeks burned. Oriole was entirely correct in saying that I am rude. Well, considering the company I kept for two hundred turns you can hardly fault me.

\*\*Humans!\*\*\*

The sending was from Hatfeather. Goldenbraid and Redlace instantly went tense

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and dove for the underbrush. But my "sisters" and I hadn't ever been under any real threat from human attack--until just before we crossed the plains, of course--and while Woodblaze and Oriole stood petrified I thought only of the fact that I had degraded myself before these strange elves by fainting. Oh yes, I get more bullheaded from a branchman in rut when I'm embarrassed. Let these elves run for their lives, I thought proudly, Shrike will protect her own! I really am a foot at times.

I hissed at my companions to get into hiding, and when I'm in such an aggressive mood they usually obey me. In retrospect, I believe they knew what I was getting myself into, but mutually decided that it was best if I learned my own lesson.

Why else would Oriole have had that pitying look on her face?

So there I was, longsword in hand, and seven humans came bursting into the clearing. I'd wager they'd have passed us right by if Woodblaze and Oriole hadn't made such noise in reaching cover. But find us they did--or rather, find me--and predictably they thought it would be a good idea to skin me alive. I have no knowledge of the human tongue, but their intentions were obvious enough.

I switched into my fighting mode then, and I remember little of what happened next. When I fight, I do not think. My weapon becomes an extension of myself and I simply let it do what it will.

I have never had any training, but I remember Silverbirch, one of the

Elders, saying that I had the potential fighting ability of a great-cat cub. I didn't pay much attention to him, or

anyone else in Fox Hollow Holt for that matter. But he was right, and I don't mind saying it myself. I never was one for modesty.

I do recall flashes of the fight, though, images and sounds as from a dream. Redstream, brightblade, blackterror, whitepain. Not much else. In some ways, I am grateful for that.

When I regained my normal rate of thought there was a gash along my uncovered shoulder, five dead humans on the ground, and no sign of the other two. One of their deaths was not my doing, however. The arrow in his back was fletched with striped feathers. Mine are grey.

I realized abruptly that I was being dragged bodily away from the clearing by Redlace--oh, his arrows matched the one that had killed the human--and Big Axe. I was in no mood to be wrestled around like an untamed grasseater, so I wrenched myself free. That proved to be an abysmal mistake, as the healed wound on my shoulder was still tender. I sometimes wonder, now, why Goldenbraid had bothered to tend it. I don't believe that foolishness is a thing to be rewarded.

"Let go of me, you oafs!" I grated. "I am no cubling to be steered here and there as you wish!"

"But you're hurt and you did a very stupid thing," Woodblaze told me frankly. I hadn't noticed her behind me.

"That you did," Big Axe agreed. "Redlace had to think twice before he stopped that Roundear from backstabbing you. Like it or not, Shrike, we've got a truce with the humans in the Valley and you just broke it. That's not to say that the humans are always true to their word, but we pride ourselves in ours."

"But I thought you said the Valley was divided by a river that neither of you could cross," said Woodblaze. "The trail we found down here is on your side. Those humans should have expected they'd get back as good as they gave!"

"True..." Big Axe looked thoughtful.

"But those were the humans that were following us, weren't they?" Oriole asked softly.

Her mother looked down at her for a moment, then nodded. "You're right, Oriole, they were. I remember the one with the hawk feathers all over his hair."

"So you're not going to get in trouble!" Oriole said happily. Then she added, a bit more hesitantly, "Are you still mad at Shrike?"

"It isn't a question of being 'mad', Oriole, it's a question of safety," Redlace explained. "The humans who attacked us still know we're here, and will almost definitely want revenge."

This sobered Woodblaze's daughter somewhat. "Oh."

Hatfeather snorted. "After the way your blade-happy friend here skewered those four? I highly doubt it."

I glowered at her, but said nothing. She was probably right, though, as humans are notoriously superstitious. If we were lucky, the tribe that had pursued my comrades and I would regard the Valley as a place of misfortune.

"But if it's all right with you," Redlace said dryly, "I'd like to return to the Holt."

"Good idea." Big Axe nodded as he spoke, then unexpectedly let loose with a resounding howl. I felt the hairs on the back of my neck shiver, and wondered what manner of tribe this was. Steelbender's howls are high and plaintive, never so hauntingly resonant...or beautiful...as the one issued by the axe-wielding hunter.

My skin seemed to crawl off my scalp when I heard the howl answered. Woodblaze looked stunned, and Oriole fascinated. I didn't know what to make of it, until I suddenly realized I had not seen my bond-friend since I passed out. I was afraid for him; he almost never leaves my side.

I soon found out why he had. Four grey wolves, silent as shadows and disconcertingly large (or maybe they just seemed to be), emerged from the dense forest and moved toward the four native elves. One of them noticed us and came over to investigate. I had realized by now, as had Woodblaze and Oriole, that the elves were bonded to them and they would do us no harm. Scampnut and Dapple, however, believed otherwise as is their nature. The squirrel took a leap for a low-hanging branch from which he proceeded to scold us all, and the rabbit froze in Oriole's satchel. The wolves scented him, as they inevitably would, but paid him little heed. Instead they inspected us as Steelbender would any strange elf, examining our scents and sizing us up. This task completed, they returned to their bond-friends.

What happened next, I am not ashamed to admit, came as a surprise. After mounting his lupine friend, Big Axe turned to me and told me to get on. I was not prepared for that. I had ridden grasseaters tamed by my former tribe, but wolves?! There was nothing for it but to obey. I suppressed a grimace and flung one leg over the wolf's back.

At Redlace's direction, Woodblaze did likewise. Goldenbraid lifted Oriole onto Hatfeather's wolf, then mounted her own. At the worried look on Oriole's face, Hatfeather grinned. "Don't worry, Shadowpacer's big enough for us both. But hold on tight anyway."

Once we were situated thus, the three wolves took off. They probably would have been quicker still if not for our extra weight, but the ride was fast enough for me as it was. It was an incredible experience, indescribable...I found myself wondering what it would be like if Steelbender were large enough to ride. Ridiculous, but I thought it nonetheless.

It was obvious to me now why the coyote had deserted me. He had smelled the wolves on their riders, and was frightened away. Animals respect each other's territories to some extent; he was probably

figuring out how to slip past the wolves' guard to return to me. That wouldn't happen; wolves are every bit as clever as their smaller kin. But I was confident I would see him again soon.

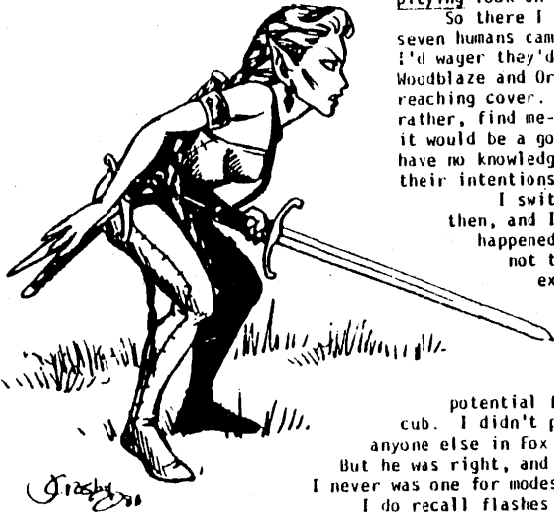
I was aroused from my thoughts by a sending from Hatfeather. \*\*Shrike?\*

I looked sharply over to where her wolf ran abreast of Big Axe's. Her sending was terribly acute; it nearly made my head ache with its intensity. \*\*Yes?\*

\*\*Where the flood did you get all those weapons? You look like a quillpig!\*

\*\*I made them,\*\* I answered shortly.

\*\*...?!...\*



\*\*I spent most of my life in a network of troll caverns, watching and learning,\*\* I explained. \*\*When you want something badly enough, there is little you won't do to get it. True?\*

\*\*Uh...if you say so.\*\* I couldn't see Hatfeather's face, but it was amusing to imagine what it must have looked like just then.

A new mental voice broke into our conversation, Redlace's. \*\*Remind me to introduce you to a certain friend of mine, Shrike. His name's Thunderfoot. You two would get along marvelously together,\*\* he added cryptically.

I didn't bother to wonder who this Thunderfoot character might be, for my mind was instantly occupied with something more demanding.

Such as the wall of thornbushes straight in our path.

I thought I heard Woodblaze gasp, but it was hard to be sure. I was about to cry a warning when we all simultaneously swerved aside and ducked through a concealed opening in the barrier...

...and stopped. It was a holt, unmistakably; I noticed shaped trees here and there and, more apparent, well-worn paths.

"Welcome to Timber Valley Holt," said Redlace.

\* \* \*

I wasn't sure what to make of the Timber Folks' chief, Nightstep. He welcomed us as had the four hunters, but seemed to hold aloof from us at the same time, taking in everything with solemnity. Blast it, I thought, why do all chieftains have to take their positions so cursed seriously? It isn't as if we were going to contaminate his holt with some dread disease!

Oriole was openly enthusiastic, as is her nature, but her mother acted quite the opposite, as is her nature. The sociable Hatfeather introduced us to any elf who happened to come our way as she led us to what she called the "Father Tree". It was difficult to remember all the names. Ivory, a deep red-haired elf with the build of a fighter...I'd have to get to know her!...Windrush, whom Hatfeather said lived up to his nickname "Diver" admirably...Blackfire, who had the same magical talent as Woodblaze...Tempest, who rode the sky like a bird without wings...there were so many of them, such a change from the solitary life with my two sisters of spirit....

And I loved it. I hadn't realized how I missed the company of many other elves, the things to learn from them and do with them. I missed it dearly, and I said so to Woodblaze while we settled into our temporary room in the Father Tree at the center of the holt. Oriole had already gone off exploring.

She looked at me in shock. She had been hunting through her pack for an embroidered cloak she was working on for her daughter. "Shrike...you're not suggesting that we--"

"I most certainly am!" I said vehemently. Instantly I was sorry; she looked like Steelbender after he's been scolded. "Look, I didn't mean to be so harsh," I amended, "but we've been wandering like hermits long enough. You've had two terrible examples of holts to deal with in your past, but this one seems perfectly normal as far as I can see. The elves here bear us no animosity, in fact most were entirely trusting and amicable. I don't see why you treat them as if they were going to turn you out the way those...those..."

Woodblaze sighed. "No need to get worked up, my friend. I think you're angrier at them than I ever was. But I don't think you understand the fact that I like being alone, with just you and Oriole. And it's not just because of my tribe or Oriole's father's."

"Send it," I challenged her grimly. We had passed or traveled through other holts before, and always Woodblaze refused to stay more than one night. I would not allow it to happen again, not now. "I don't believe you."

"Shrike..." She looked pained, and it tore me to go through with it. I had to.

"No," I said between clenched teeth. "I can't let you continue to treat yourself like you're not fit to live among your own people when they are willing to accept you! Send it!"

"You know I wouldn't be able to," she muttered, not meeting my eyes. Then I saw one shining drop of water fall to the sleeping-furs.

I rushed over to embrace her. \*\*I'm sorry, Brahma! I didn't mean to hurt you, I never would want to! I just wanted you to see that our lives with just each other weren't perfect, and they won't be until we learn to live with others as well. Both of us, and Oriole too.\*\*

"Oriole..." Woodblaze's tear-glistening hazel eyes looked worried.

"Have you ever known her not to be happy wherever we went?" I continued.

"Please, Woodblaze, just try it. Just for a little while. If not for yourself, then for me."

10

She sighed again. "No, you're right, Iels. I have been deceiving myself, and you, and Leeral, and it's time I saw the light. It figures that someone else would have to show it to me, though..."

"Oh, will you leave off?" I cried, aggravated. Then, calming down just as quickly, "When will you realize that you are not helpless or worthless or whatever other dung you've got yourself convinced of?"

"Yes, mother," she said with a smirk.

Delighted to see her smiling at last, I forged ahead. "Then shall I ask our new chief if there are any empty treehomes in this holt?"

"Unless you had your heart set on sleeping in those thorns."

I made as if to swat her, but was arrested by Oriole's voice in the doorway. "What are you talking about?"

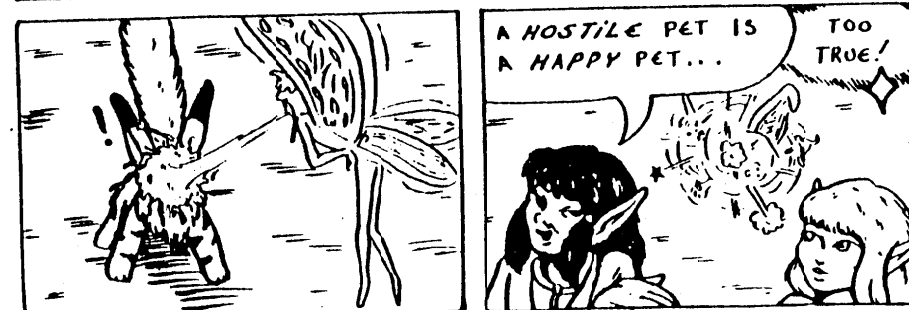
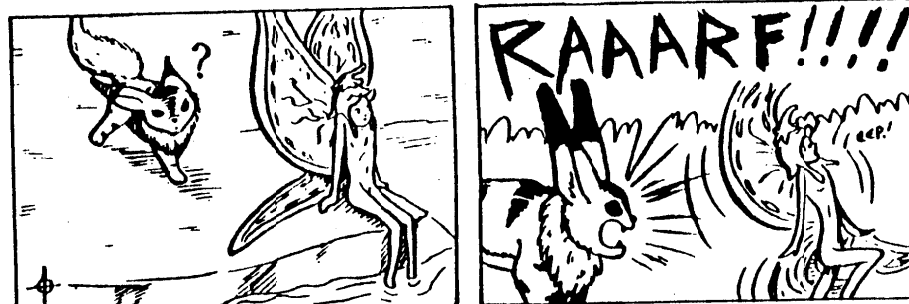
I turned around and asked the child seriously, "What would you say to having Timber Valley as a permanent home?"

The light in her eyes was all the answer I needed.



## TIMBER-TAILS

WITH THE PETS AND  
BOAD-ANIMALS  
OF TIMBER VALLEY HOLT



FROM AN ORIGINAL CONCEPT BY JOANNE PAPIN

FEATURING CRITTER, PEBBLE, TRACE & GREENEYES

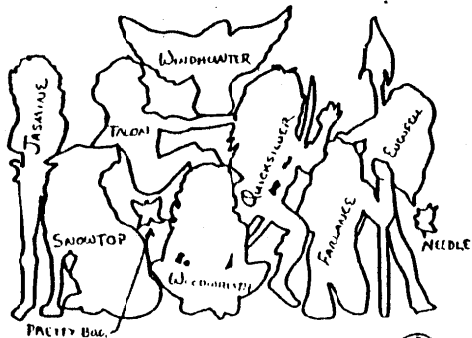
11

# TIMBER FOLK PROFILES

**JASMINE** - Wanderer, originally from far northern wolf-blooded tribe. Left birth-tribe after an unhappy recognition. Socially awkward, appears aloof but is in fact sly, stubborn, self-sufficient, fearless. Dislikes humans and Preservers; finds trolls "stupid but good for a laugh"; loves dreamberries (high tolerance). Huntress, warrior, tracker, fisher, trapper, fletcher, athletic, wood wise. Uses the fang of a long-tooth cat as dagger, also uses bow, spear, hand axe, short sword, crossbow. Clothing is white with violet trim; wears hooded, fur-lined cloak in winter. Friends include Duskdew and Wavesong. Nocturnal.  
 SOUL NAME...Blanc; MAGIC...sending, wolf-bonding  
 BIRTHDATE...DF -248 HS; ARRIVAL DATE...DF 4 HS; TREEHOME...29  
 SEX...female; HT...4'2"; BLD...average, small shoulders; SKIN TONE...pale  
 EYES...green, large, slanted; HAIR...short, blond, curly (flower tucked behind ear)  
 ANIMAL FRIEND...Snowtop (female bond-wolf, pure white, pictured)  
 MATE...RAINWIND (dec/rec); DAUGHTER...Starlight; SISTER...Whitewood  
 CREATIVE CONTROL...Ann Partell

**TALON** - Wanderer, originally from Bear clan. Left birth-tribe to search for his lost love-mate, accompanied by Evenfell and Woodwreath. Moody and changeable, sometimes vague and dreamy, gregarious, a loner. Distrusts humans and trolls; find Preservers a necessary annoyance; likes dreamberries (low tolerance); hates winter, snow and cold; hates pranks. Hunter-forager, tall tale teller, falconer. Prized possession quartz shard short sword; also proficient with bow. Changes clothing style often; wears warmest clothes possible and knee-high white fur boots in winter; has rattler button in left ear and lots of feather ornaments. Diurnal. Friends include Woodwreath, Buckeye, Foxvine, and Ferret.  
 SOUL NAME...Aeir; MAGIC...strong sending, mind stun, animal bonding; glider  
 BIRTHDATE...DF -34 NL; ARRIVAL DATE...DF 22 NL; TREEHOME...26  
 SEX...male; HT...4'4"; BLD...stocky, muscular; SKIN TONE...very tanned  
 EYES...brown, gold flecks; HAIR...brown, thick, wavy, to mid-back with longer braid  
 ANIMAL FRIEND...Windhunter (bond-hawk, male, pictured); "Blueberry" and "Raspberry"  
 (Two Preservers, the first blue and black, the second red and pink--they call themselves Midnight and Crimson; Crimson actually belongs to Greensleeves)  
 LOVEMATE...Greensleeves (missing); AUNT...Evenfell; FAMILY...with Bear clan  
 CREATIVE CONTROL...Ben Thomas

**WOODWREATH** - Wandering native returned! Left Valley to wander (DF -550 HS) and settled with Bear clan; returned to TVM with Talon and Evenfell. Light-humored, lively, playful, young at mind, curious, loaded with common sense. Has "live and let live" attitude about humans; distrusts trolls; likes Preservers, dreamberries, water, and green growing things. Swimmer, diver, fisher, trapper, knowledgeable about plants and Upper World. Uses extra-long (shaped) thorns as daggers, also slings and bone-pointed spear. Clothing is green, tan, and brown; adds layer (fur-lined) in winter. Friends include Evenfell, Hatfeather (soul sister), Talon, Sapphire, Smoke, Two Star, Ferret...very friendly.  
 SOUL NAME...Kitta; MAGIC...strong sending, animal bonding, tree shaper  
 BIRTHDATE...DF -653 LC  
 RETURN DATE...DF 22 NL  
 TREEHOME...14; SEX...female  
 HT...3'10"; BLD...slight, delicate  
 SKIN TONE...light golden tan  
 EYES...amber, ringed with brown  
 HAIR...very curly, coppery-colored, bangs & side curls framing face  
 ANIMAL FRIEND...Pretty But, Preserver, (it, gold body, blue-green wings)  
 LOVEMATE...Nightfire; PAST LM...Two Star  
 NIECES...Duskdew, Wildwood  
 ADOPTED NEPHEW...Irace  
 COUSIN...Tempest (others deceased)  
 CREATIVE CONTROL...Stacy Lung



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key to profile picture pages 14-15

(continued)

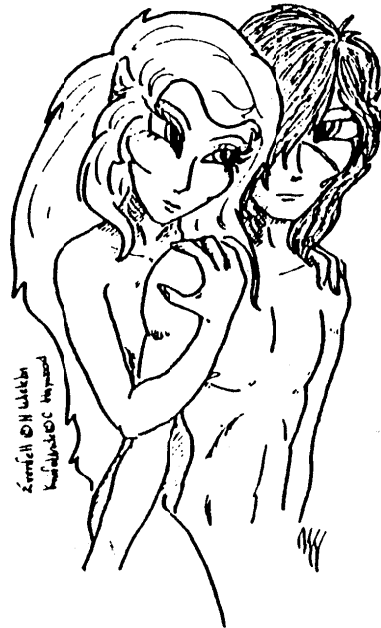
(Duskdew & Suntop)

**QUICKSILVER** - TVM native, fostered by Duskdew's family when his parents left the Valley in DF -1 HS. Called 'Silver by friends. Friendly, playful, generous, naive, level-headed, diplomatic, casual, resourceful. Curious about humans; friendly with trolls; loves dreamberries and hanging around with friends; thinks Preservers are cute. Runner, tracker, scout, wood carver, troll trader. Weapons are short sword, bow, and spear. Clothing is of leather, green and tan in summer, green and black, trimmed with grey fur in winter. Closest friends are Duskdew and Fishnibbler (troll youth); also friends with Season, Skyflame, and Wildwood.  
 SOUL NAME...Thom; MAGIC...sending, animal bonding, gliding  
 BIRTHDATE...DF -5 HT; TREEHOME...10; SKIN TONE...medium tan  
 SEX...male; HT...4'1"; BLD...strong but slender  
 EYES...green, level; HAIR...silver, unruly, front short, mid-back  
 ANIMAL FRIEND...Keenear (male, grey fox, not pictured)  
 FATHER...Greenleaf; MOTHER...Darkpine (both missing); FOSTER SISTER...Duskdew  
 FATHER'S FATHER...Chopper  
 CREATIVE CONTROL...Robert Pierce



**FARLANCE** - Wanderer from Seven Star Holt; left for unrevealed reasons. Stubborn, superstitious (his tribe believe spirits inhabit their weapons), friendly, quiet. Detests humans; finds trolls only useful for their metal-forging; tolerates and avoids Preservers; likes dreamberries (not to excess); loves the ladies. Warrior, scout, excellent eyesight. Uncannily accurate with lance; also uses short sword. Clothing is of leather, tan and brown; neck sash is cloth. Still working on making friends.  
 SOUL NAME...Lanna; MAGIC...sending, animal bonding  
 BIRTHDATE...DF -253 LC; ARRIVAL DATE...DF 22 HS; TREEHOME...17 (may change)  
 SEX...male; HT...3'10"; BLD...muscular, barrel-chested; SKIN TONE...light tan  
 EYES...light blue; HAIR...straight, fine honey-blond, shoulder-length  
 ANIMAL FRIEND...Widejaw (rust-red and black bond wolf, not pictured)  
 MOTHER...Fairplain; FATHER...Fourpoint (neither at TVM)  
 CREATIVE CONTROL...Dave Trimble

**EYENFELL** - Wanderer, originally from Bear clan. Left birth-tribe to accompany Talon (her nephew) on search for Greensleeves. Open, unsophisticated, playful and fun-loving, ingenuous, flighty but practical, a flirt. No opinion of humans--has heard they're bad; hates trolls (Bear clan calls them "back-stabbers"); is "owned" by a Preserver; enjoys dreamberries but never over-indulges; doesn't understand pranks (as in "why?"). Hunter-forager, wood wise, very fast and dexterous. Uses spear, bone knife, bare hands and teeth for hunting and fighting. Very physical. Dresses in as little as possible. Very friendly.  
 SOUL NAME...Ist; MAGIC...strong sender, spirit traveling, animal bonding  
 BIRTHDATE...DF -1204; ARRIVAL DATE...DF 22 NL  
 TREEHOME...14 (and around); SEX...female  
 HT...4'3"; BLD...lithe but sturdy  
 SKIN TONE...tanned; EYES...dark grey  
 HAIR...red-gold, hip length, right part, wild  
 ANIMAL FRIEND...Needle (Preserver)--sometimes a bond bear, but not at present  
 LOVEMATES...Smoke, Knifeblade, Rogue, Skyflame...  
 NEPHEW...Talon; FAMILY...with Bear clan  
 CREATIVE CONTROL...Nikki Wieleba



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If you still have questions about these characters, write to the people with creative control (an updated address list should be enclosed with this newsletter), or to the Holt. Send a SASE, please. And look for the upcoming Timber Valley Holt Character Reference Guide for indepth profiles.





# SOME DAYS, PART 2

BY *Bill Nichols* '86

## A ROGUE ADVENTURE

DF 25 GT



IT'S BEEN ONE OF THOSE DAYS WHEN NOTHING HAS GONE RIGHT, EVERYTHING WRONG. EVERYTHING LIKE GETTING HURT,

LIKE FALLING, LIKE ROGUE GETTING HIS CREST CUT, (AND NOW) LIKE FLOUNDERING IN BLUE RIVER.



I SWEAR I'LL NEVER PULL ANOTHER PRANK ON-



HUH?

\*IT DOESN'T PAY TO GET OUT OF THE OLD SLEEPING FURS.



WHAT A BIG FISH, EH, BOMBAR?

HELP?

AN ELF! ON OUR SIDE OF THE RIVER



DETA WILL BE PLEASED!

YOU BET, DREK! GET THE SPEAR!



ISN'T HE JUST THE STUPIDEST-LOOKING THING?

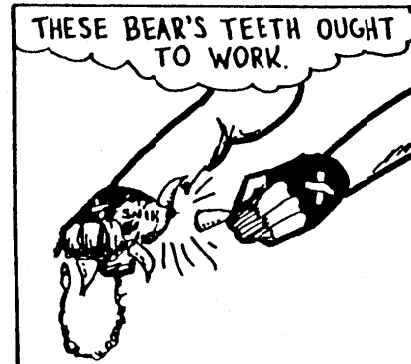
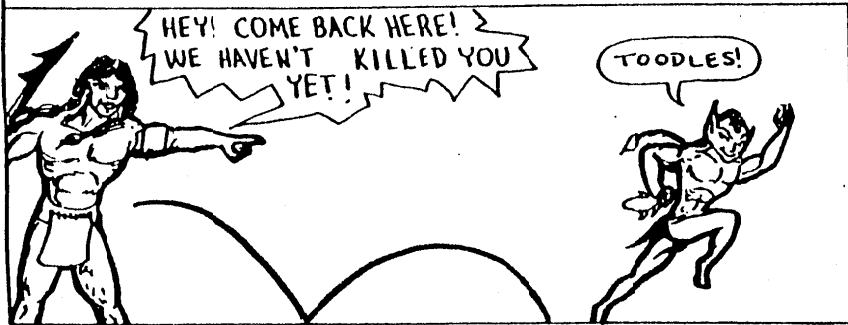
YEAH. HOLD STILL, ELF!

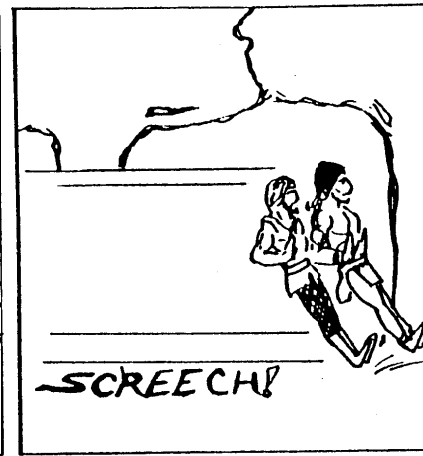
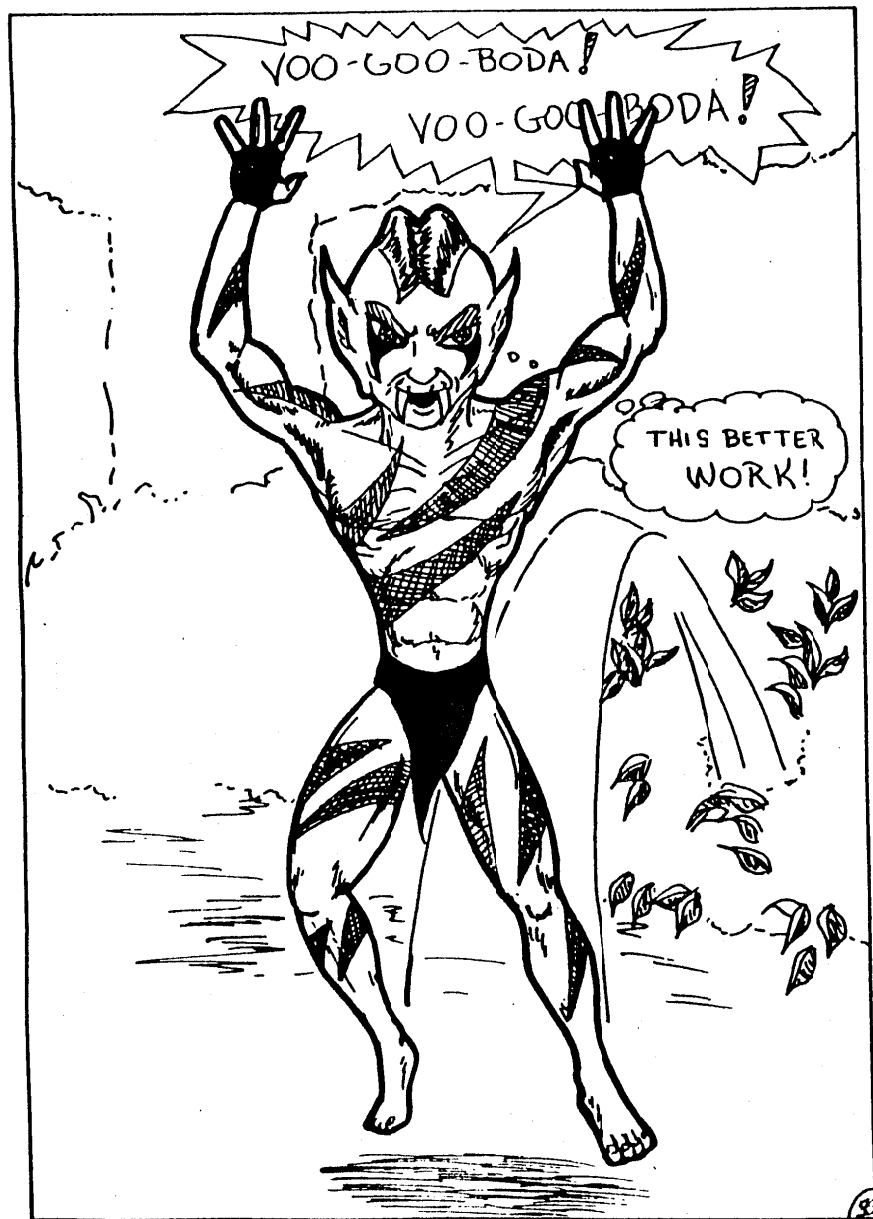
NOT MY DAY.



LOOK OUT!

EY-AAAH!







THIS DAY JUST SUCKS.

I KNOW. I WON'T TELL ANYONE, EITHER.



ROGUE.

UH OH.

WOULD YOU MIND TELLING ME WHAT YOU WERE DOING ACROSS THE RIVER?



THE GRASS IS GREENER ON THE OTHER SIDE?



HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO SAY IT?



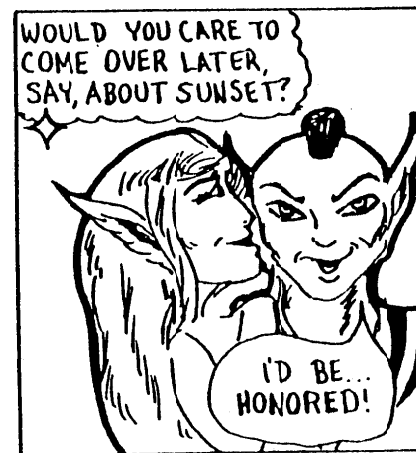
LATER

--AM I UNDERSTOOD?

YES.

THEN, TELL ME WHAT YOU WERE DOING?

OKAY..FIRST, I WOKE UP...



# VALLEY TALK

Of 23 HS

An eight of days past, some elves of Timber Valley went to the troll caverns for a routine session of bartering and gaming. They never returned...

Three nights ago, a second group went to fetch them home. Nothing has been seen or heard from them since...

This night, someone crawled through the Thorn Barrier and through the hometrees to the Council Clearing. It was Dripstone, known as Thunderfoot to the elves, a troll youth who has long been a friend to the Holt. He was wounded and bleeding badly. Just before he lost consciousness, he looked directly at Nightstep and gasped out: "A revolt in the caves... King Grubmoss is dead... help us... my Chief..."

## THE TROLL WARS

Timber Valley Holt will never be the same.

\*\*\*\*\*

The above blurb is an ad for a major Timber Valley Holt story. We've mentioned the Troll Wars to you before, now we're ready to start work on them! We need input from the membership--volunteers to go on the original bartering trip, on the first rescue party and to be involved in what follows. Characters will die--but not yours unless you request it. (But if you'd like to get rid of a character to make room for a new one...) Originally conceived by Diana Stein, Joanne Papin, Nikki Wieleba and Stacy Lung during an all-night session at Capricorn '85, now we're asking for your additions and contributions. Join in, gang, this is gonna be exciting!

\*\*\*\*\*

Other stuff...in case you're wondering, this is a new, improved version of the old "Want Ads" page. If you have a story idea and are looking for a character (or more than one!) to fill important parts in the action, send in a description of what you are looking for and we'll put it in "Valley Talk". Or, if you're looking for a friend, family member, love or life mate, or...whatever!...send it in.

**FRIENDS WANTED:** Quicksilver (Robert Pierce); Thunderfoot (Ted Blasingame/Teresa Arellanes); Jasmine (Ann Purtell)...in fact, just about everybody at Timber Valley Holt would like to make some friends. Why not pick out an interesting name from the elf roster, flip the page over to the address list (both enclosed with this issue, or send me a SASE for a new copy), and write that person a letter telling them about your elf. Include your character's Character Information Sheet (a copy) to save time. Be generous and give them some time to answer you. Who knows, you might gain a friend, lovemate, lifemate...think about it. Oh, just one thing, **PLEASE** let me know about this stuff, okay? As the Holt Coordinator, it makes my job a lot easier if I know the information I'm supposed to be coordinating.

**LOVEMATES WANTED:** Evenfell (Nikki Wieleba) is still looking for a few good males...; also Farlance (Dave Trimble); Smoke and Starlight (Melissa Van Houten); Jasmine (Ann Purtell); Wander Wind (Maria Manemann); Rainforest (Sharon Stanford). And again, if you see an interesting name, do like above--write and ask.

### ERROR

**AND NOW FOR SOME PARATIE CORRECTIONS:** On page 9 of TIMBERS! 9, Mooncrest is listed as a wanderer--he's not, as we all should know. Mooncrest is very definitely a native. (Oops! Sorry, Ted.)

Also, Sharon Stanford's address is given as "Arrowhead"--it is really "Arrowwood". Her full correct address is listed with the others in the Address List enclosed. Also, note the following address changes...Yvonne Gugin, Laura Craig, and Ben Thomas have all moved.



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# LAST SEND

(Our Distinguished Guest Editorial)

Hi, howdy & hello! Mooncrest strikes again! In the editorial of T-9, Ferret suggested that she might talk me into penning a "distinguished guest" editorial for the newsletter some time. Well, as we all know, Mooncrest isn't quite what you'd call "distinguished", but I took the suggestion to heart anyway.

At first, I didn't know what to say. I didn't really have a topic to discuss, so I was prepared to just shrug off the effort. But then, I began hearing some rumors going around the Holt and Mooncrest's sensitive ears tuned in.

Those of you who are members of the ELQUEST National Fan Club and have received the double issue of THE LODESTONE (#20/21) know that Richard spent a good portion of his editorial to dispel rumors that've gone around about WARP Graphics. This is what I decided to use as my topic in this "LAST SEND" column: dispelling rumors.

At this time, the rumors known to me are: (1) I hated T-9; (2) I've demanded Timber Valley to be given back to me; (3) Jo and I aren't speaking to one another; (4) Jo and I are at each other's throats; (5) I'm leaving Timber Valley; or, (6) I've already left Timber Valley.

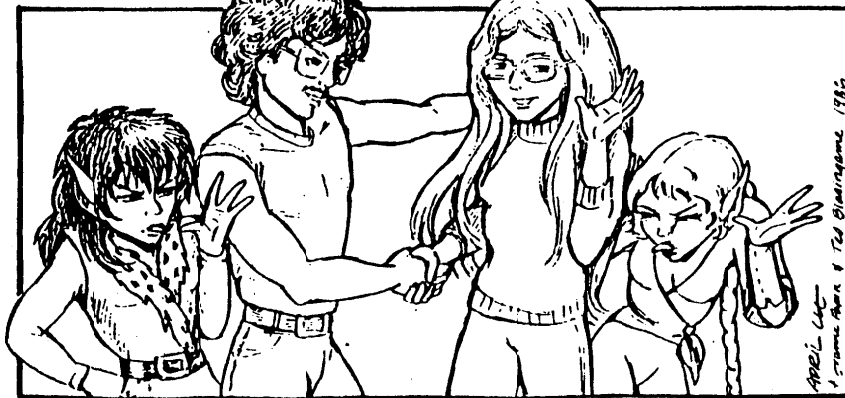
Hmph. Well, now. None of these are true and I state that plainly in written form right now. (1) Although the format was a distinct change from previous issues, I didn't hate it. (2) As before, I still don't have time for that position due to college classes, so demanding it back is out of the question. (3) Communication between us has been slow, but that's mainly due to our conflicting schedules--not conflicting ideals. (4) Quite untrue. Although we have had some differences of opinion on some topics, they have been quite civilized and thoroughly discussed as adults. Jo and I are still on good terms (Ferret and Mooncrest are still bickering, however--note the cartoon). (5) and (6) are absurd--there's no way I'm gonna abandon something I started and worked on for two years!

Many times, Jo has asked me for my opinion on certain subjects and I've given them freely. Yes, we have disagreed on some things. No, we are not fighting. I wish to reassure all the members of TVH that your editors, past and present, have not had a falling-out, but are working together as friends.

Now, I hope this clears up the mud and so ends my column. So, until I get another idea for a "distinguished guest" editorial,

Bright Starlights!

*Mooncrest*



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