



# TIMBERS



Newsletter of the Timber Valley Holt

Vol. 3, No. 13

**\*\*Gentle Breezes, Timber Folk!\*\***

Welcome to the Timber Valley Holt. As you can see right off, TIMBERS has undergone some changes. One is the format and style of the newsletter, and another is that there is a different editor in the center seat, putting out these pages.

For those of you who have been with Timber Valley for several years, you know me as the first editor of this publication, and I hope my return is welcomed. For those who have joined since Joanne became Holt Coordinator, I bid you welcome and hope your interest in this Holt will continue.

The first thought which may be running through your minds is probably in wondering why Joanne is no longer in this position. Because of new developments, tight schedules, etc., Joanne felt as I had a couple of years ago, that she no longer had the time to devote herself to this Holt.

It is clear active EQ fandom has been in a slump lately. Newsletters are few and far between, and some holt's have dissolved entirely. Joanne felt that Timber Valley deserved the chance to continue, and, through this decision, a new editor was sought to take the load from her.

Quite recently, I regained my own interest in the EQ fan club when I was asked to help out on a major project, Yearnings III. I read a lot of good stories about elves in this project and my interest was recaptured.

Now, although there will be those who are "elf-ed out", hopefully there are others who will be happy to help fill our files with stories, artwork, poems and other etc. If you are one of those who will help out, please contact me and let me know. If you don't tell me, I can't know. Right? Write!

Okay. Before sitting down to write something now, please read through the rest of this newsletter. Everything in here is relevant to future stories and tales concerning this valley of timbers. When the formats changed last time, several modifications were made. Read this information, for changes have come with this format also. Comments on this issue would be greatly appreciated.

Okay now,  
the valley of timbers awaits...



*Maoncrest*

# ★ The "Need-To-Know" Page ★

TIMBERS, Volume 3, Number 13, August 1988, The newsletter of the Timber Valley Holt, c/o Ted Blasingame, PO Box 30578, Midwest City, OK 73140. Published four times a year (February, May, August, November). [c] 1988 Copyright TIMBERS. All rights reverting back to the authors and artists after printing. Elfquest and the characters therein are trademarks of WaRP Graphics and are used with permission.

**MEMBERSHIPS:** A one year's membership or renewal to the Timber Valley Holt is \$6. This fee includes four issues of TIMBERS, updated timelines, maps of the Timber Valley area, and other miscellaneous tidbits as they come out. Make checks or money orders out to TR Blasingame. For your own protection, DO NOT send cash through the mail.

**NOTE:** A "SASE" is a Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope. We appreciate them whenever possible. Or, an alternative to this would be to send stamps, which would save you on postage sending the SASE with your letter!

**CHARACTER INFORMATION:** Teresa (Greeneyes) Arellanes will be handling your character information sheets (CIS's), so all news, updates and/or changes should be sent to her.

**CHARACTER ILLUSTRATIONS:** For those of you who do not have any drawings of your characters made up as of yet, Bill Nichols is offering to draw them for you. You can contact him at PO Box 426, Elizabethtown, KY 42701-0426.

**SUBMISSIONS:** When you write a story, fill out character information sheets, and/or draw illos, do not send us your only copy. Keep the original or at least a photocopy for yourself. The holt can't afford to make photocopies for free all the time. Also, when filling out forms for the holt (CIS's, etc.) please use black ink. Pencil and other colored inks don't copy well whenever Teresa or I have to send copies to one another. (Some of the CIS copies I have are nearly unreadable!)

**THE TIMELINE:** DF stands for "Death Flood", the point in time that we use as a reference. DF followed by a number [DF 5] means that event took place that many years AFTER the flood. DF followed by a negative number [DF-5] means that event took place that many years BEFORE the flood.

GT means the event happened in the Green-Time (Spring) season. HT is the Hot-Time (Summer) season. LF is the Leaf-Fall (Fall) season, and WF is the White-Fall (Winter) season. Therefore, something that happened DF3(GT) took place three years after Death Flood in the Green-Time of that year.

**BACK ISSUES:** Due to the postal increase (minimal), here are the new prices:

#1...\$.55	#2...\$.55	#3...\$.80	#4...\$.80	#5...\$1.05
#6...\$1.30	#7...\$1.05	#8...\$1.30	#9...\$1.05	#10...\$1.55
#11...\$1.05	#12...\$1.55			

## An Introduction

Nightstep's Beard has been a subject of past controversy in the Timber Valley Holt. When Timber Valley was first formed, it was established that the Timber Folk were pure blooded elves. Although the Timber Valley elves were modeled after the Wolfriders, the wolf-blood kindred was not used in our elves.

Shortly after the holt changed editors, it was discovered in the ElfQuest Role-Playing Game rulebook that only elves with animal blood in them (i.e. Wolfriders) can have facial hair.

At this time, it was already established in the holt stories that the chief, Nightstep, sported a chin-beard.

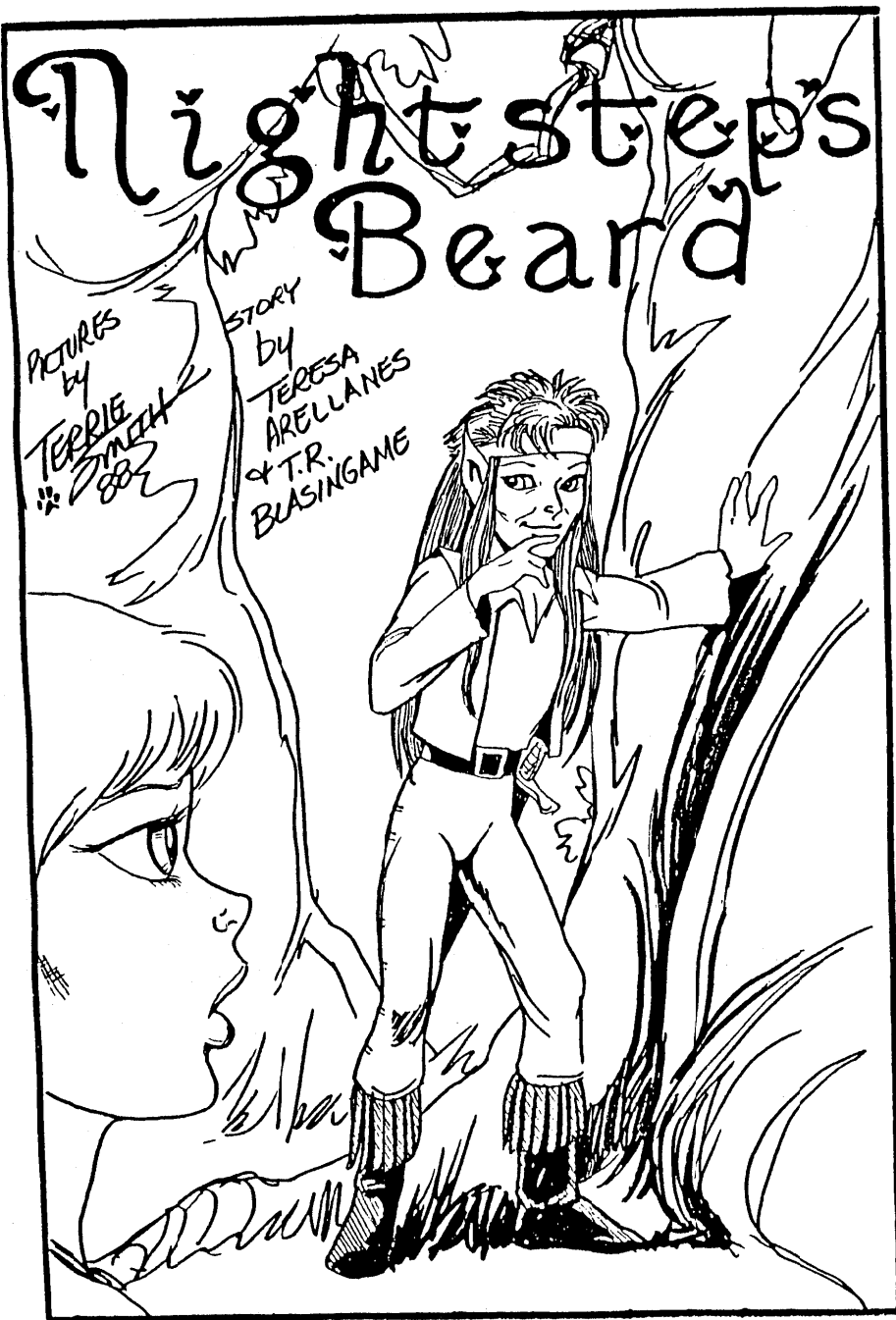
The dilemma: Nightstep is a pure-blooded elf who has facial hair.

How?

Since it was also established that we are following the official guidelines set up by WaRP Graphics, the question was, "What do we do?" Several answers popped up, some including: (A) Act as if the rule doesn't exist and let Nightstep have his beard, (B) Let him keep the beard, but only with an acceptable reason for him having it, despite his pure elf blood, or (C) Act as if his beard never even existed.

Going with suggestion (A) would be going against the guidelines that we said we followed, so it was dropped. No acceptable explanation was found, so suggestion (B) was also ignored without further thought. The decision was finally made to go with suggestion (C). Now, while this did eliminate the discrepancy in our usage of the guidelines, it seemed as an unacceptable alternative to some of the holt's membership. How then to fix the situation where nothing previously established in the holt is changed and the guidelines we use are still valid? Suggestion (B) has finally become useful.

Please note that in further stories and illustrations which contain that controversial chin belonging to our chief, the beard does exist. He hasn't always had it -- it hasn't always been there, but the reason for it's existence is brought out in the following tale. So, sit right back in your chair, relax and read on...



## NIGHTSTEP'S BEARD

by Teresa Arellanes & TR Blasingame  
DF4(HT)

If there was one thing that Greeneyes hated more than sour dreamberries, it was curiosity unquenched. There was a question she was itching to ask, but any possible answer she could think of might be quite delicate, and she didn't want to stir up trouble or ask stupid questions just after she had been adopted into the tribe of the Timber Folk. She had been whisked away from her own tribe, the elves of Black Rock Holt, less than a season ago, landed in the Valley, loved with the tall and brave LongKnife and had been welcomed into the family of the Timber Folk. It seemed odd to Greeneyes that something commonplace to her would be an avoided subject with her new friends.

Greeneyes pondered this as she popped another dreamberry into her mouth and watched her love mate barter two hopper skins to young Duskdew in exchange for a new dress woven for herself. She slowly slid from the branch of her new hometree and headed towards the center of the holt when Dusky, grinning from ear to ear, started flirting with the tall hunter outrageously. LongKnife glanced at his mate, eyebrow raised, but Greeneyes only smiled and shrugged. She left him "helpless" to the youngling's charm.

"Well now, lass, are you going to walk yourself into the stream with the wanderlust upon you so?" came a gently teasing voice off to Greeneyes' left. The elder Two Star stood two elf-lengths away from her when she looked up from her thoughts. She blushed as she looked back at her feet that had stopped only a handspan away from the stream that ran through the holt.

"\*\*Oh!\*\*" -sent Greeneyes with a nervous giggle. "\*\*I was thinking and I guess they just walked away with me.\*\*" Two Star stepped to her side and they navigated the riverlet together, walking in companionable silence for a small ways past the holt's protective Thorn Barrier.

"Something bothering you, lass? Aren't you happy here in the Valley?" Two Star prompted, trying to draw the small elf woman from her mental silence.

"\*\*Oh, my goodness, no! I'm very happy here. Truly, I don't miss my home all that much, not with the Timber Folk around. Just sometimes.\*\*" The tiny elf stopped, her large leaf-green eyes making contact with the elder's narrow, pale violet ones. Hands on hips, she finally blurted out, "\*\*Why doesn't anyone else have facial hair like your chief? Don't you think it looks nice? Why does everyone avoid my questions...Goldenbraid nearly fell over herself in her haste to go "do something important", instead of giving me an answer! Why? Why? Why?!\*\*"

Two Star chuckled at the little elf's blunt sending, laughed aloud when she stamped her foot demandingly on the ground and told him of his Lifemate's unusual behavior. "Well, little one, elves don't have hair on their faces like the round-ears do, and that is a story filled with not a little bit of embarrassment on my Lifemate's part." He paused, looking at her squarely. "You've seen others of our kind with chin beards?"

Her mental laughter sounded like chimes blowing in a soft breeze. "\*\*Of course! It isn't that hard of a trick. I've done it myself. The elves with mixed blood...the wolf-blooded, they

sometimes grow them naturally when they get to be your age, elder. Doesn't Goldenbraid flesh-shape? She is a Healer.\*\* Greeneyes dropped to the ground, sitting crosslegged; the scent of a very interesting tale was in the air. She picked a few long strands of grass and a couple nearby flowers and started braiding them into a wreath, waiting for the elder to speak.

"Aye, lass, she is a Healer of great talent, but that 'little trick' of yours isn't hers. Let me tell you a tale..." Two Star, the eldest of the native Timber Folk, made himself comfortable on the rounded root of a tree and began his story.

\* \* \*

DF-421(GT)

As the cool night breeze blew softly in through the valley, two figures moved through the brush as silently as the wind itself. Neither moon was visible and the blackness of the night under the canopy of tree branches made their going a little difficult. In small clearings, the overhead stars shone with a piercing brilliance, unobstructed by any cloud. This cool Green-Time night was peaceful and quiet.

One of the silent figures stopped and motioned to the other, but in the darkness the action wasn't seen. The second one collided with the first.

"Umph!" grumbled the one in back, "I hate it when you do that, Nightstep!" he whispered.

\*\*Send, Two Star. Humans may hear you!\*\*

\*\*Sorry. Why'd you stop?\*\* -Two Star asked.

\*\*We're getting near the water. Listen...\*\* The soft gurgling of Blue River was off to their right. The two young elves moved forward until they stood beside the grassy bank. The water was delicious as they knelt to drink. They'd been out all night, travelling around the forest for no other reason than to spend time together. The best of friends, Nightstep and Two Star often managed to duck away from the holt's activities to strike out on their own. Chief Greylock didn't approve of their private excursions, but they'd never gotten hurt, so their travels continued.

Although Two Star was a little over two hundred years old, and Nightstep wasn't but thirty years younger, small bits of mischief caused their natures to forget their place and try daring acts just for fun. Greylock understood, for he'd been rather adventurous in his younger days also. Two Star nudged his friend.

\*\*Look! Across the river!\*\* -he sent. Nightstep looked up and saw a young human male walking along the other bank of the river, oblivious to the elves' presence. Nightstep grinned wickedly and glanced over at Two Star.

\*\*Are you game?\*\* -he sent, anxious for the appropriate answer. Two Star responded as he had wished.

\*\*Always! What'll we do?\*

Nightstep stroked his chin in thought, his eyes glowing slightly in the darkness. \*\*He's heading towards Rock Span. It's not but just a little ways up the river.\*\* He fell silent again in thought.

Two Star chuckled, \*\*Your father would have our heads if he knew...\*

\*\*...but we're not going to tell him, are we?\*

replied with a wink. Skillfully, he edged back away from the water, careful to be silent. Two Star followed.

\*\*The kid can't be more than seven turns old. Let's put a scare into him that'll haunt him the rest of his life!\*\* Two Star grinned widely and offered a few suggestions.

The human boy was beyond crying. His parents wouldn't allow him to join any of the night-time hunts. Though he believed he could hunt as well as any of the grown-ups, he was determined too young and unqualified. He had pleaded to go many times before, and it was always the same answer. This time, however, he had run away, angry and with hurt feelings.

Because the regular hunters were busy preparing to leave, the youth's departure wasn't noticed. He had run blindly through the woods, not noticing where he was headed. After a long time, he tired and wandered around until he finally came to the river. Now sorry for running off, he had lost his way, but knew that if he followed the river upstream, he'd come to the lake -- and he knew how to get home from the lake. Roja knew he would be punished when he returned, but all he could think of was how tired and hungry he was getting.

Up ahead, in the dim starlight, he saw the stone archway that spanned the distance between both banks of the river. Tired, he decided to rest there. The area looked peaceful enough, even though he remembered the tales he'd heard the grown-ups tell about those who lived on the other side of the river. As he wondered at the strange symbols that had been shaped into the bridge's stone, Roja didn't see a shadowy figure climb out of the water on his end of the archway.

An identical shadow rose up on the opposite end of Rock Span, also unnoticed by the boy. Momentarily, Roja felt a presence beside him. The fine hairs on his neck stood up and the child shut his eyes tightly. He didn't know if he'd imagined anything or not, but he really didn't want to find out. He was suddenly scared. He heard nothing for several moments, so he decided to open an eye. When he did, two violet eyes glowed softly in the darkness at him. His heart skipped a beat and his voice caught in his throat.

Somehow, he managed to find the strength to stand. The eyes, belonging to a silhouette he could now see dimly, stood up with him. He was paralyzed with fear, staring into the eyes of



evil. He noted that the shadow he faced was about his size and height, but those glowing eyes belonged to no human. The dark shape smiled and the white teeth were as visible as the eyes. It growled.

Roja finally found strength and turned to run, but his way was blocked by another shadow! He stopped, frozen in his tracks, waiting to die. He was too scared to cry, even when he knew there was no escape. The silhouette he now faced began towards him, wet hands upraised and fingers curled as if they were claws.

The boy's breathing became very rapid and his muscles were tense. A slender hand eased up from behind and gently grabbed his shoulder. He suddenly found his voice. Roja screamed and bolted forward, his head down and arms extended in front of him. Two Star's breath was knocked from him when the kid's fists hit him square in the chest. He fell backward onto the bridge as the human ran toward the trees. Nightstep took out after him, howling at the top of his lungs for added effect.

Two Star cursed under his breath and got up onto his feet again. He coughed and began to follow his friend -- not because he wished to join the chase, but to keep Nightstep out of trouble.

Roja was tired and winded, but he knew if he stopped to rest, certain death would be upon him. A howl sounded out at his heels and a cry escaped from his lips. He was going to die!

Nightstep had no intention of harming the youth, but merely to frighten him to the point of panic. He didn't really even want to catch the brat, but he'd gotten so caught up in the chase that he came close to touching him several times.

**\*\*Nightstep! Humans ahead of you!\*\*** -Two Star's sending out through his thoughts like a knife. Nightstep cursed himself, for he'd forgotten that each step he took was taking him deeper into the Tall Ones' territory. He stopped and began to run back the way he'd come--but now the orange glow of torchlight was all around him!

Large figures jumped out of the brush and tried to grab him. Nightstep drew his dagger, but it was swiftly knocked from his hand by a stone-tipped spear. He backed up against a tree, completely surrounded by his race's deadly enemies.

**\*\*TWO STAR! THEY'VE CAUGHT ME!\*\*** -he sent wildly, genuine fear underlining his "words". Two Star watched from the relative safety of an overhead tree branch, as one of the humans closed in on his friend and hit him hard with the back of his hand. Nightstep's eyes rolled upward and closed as he slumped to the ground.

Two Star watched helplessly as the Tall Ones gathered around his friend. The child they had been chasing was wailing in the arms of a large broad-shouldered man. Anger was in the man's eyes as he listened to the child's story. A moment later, he walked to the unconscious elf and kicked him in the side.

Two Star winced, trying to find a way to help his friend. He didn't know how much longer Nightstep had to live, so he would have to act quickly. There wouldn't be time to go back to the holt for help, but an idea came to him as he silently slipped away from the area.

He didn't know how long he'd been knocked out, but Nightstep awoke to a sharp pain as human fingers grabbed his wrist and twisted. Nightstep yelled as his arm threatened to break. His captors laughed at his cries of pain, prompting the large man to tighten his grip.



Nightstep was tied hand and foot, upside down, to a sturdy tree. His breathing was difficult this way, and his blood pounded in his ears as it rushed to his head.

He hadn't yet learned the human's tongue, so he was ignorant of their plans for him. He opened a swollen eyelid and saw the child standing before him. The kid's tears had been washed away, but the look of fear still lingered in his eyes.

The large man said something to the youth and handed him a small tree branch. The boy nodded and stepped toward the elf. Nightstep closed his eyes and tensed himself, for he guessed what was coming. The child hit the tender skin of his face a handful of times as the captive tried to muffle his cries. The stinging was intense!

How much more could he take of this torture? He hadn't intended to hurt the child, but the Tall Ones didn't know that and now he was being punished for it. He wished it would be quick, but his captors didn't appear to be in a hurry to kill him. High Ones, how he was in pain! A wolf howled in the distance and Nightstep wished briefly he could howl with it.

The largest of the humans spoke to him, but it was meaningless noise to his ears. The Large One's eyes grew darker at the elf's silence. He took a torch from a comrade and knelt in front of the elf, examining him closely.

Nightstep could barely see him through his swollen eyes, so he closed them, hoping to the stars that this would be the end. The man said something else, but the elf paid it no mind. Suddenly, however, his eyes flew open as wide as they could against the swelling.

**\*\*Nightstep! Hold on, I'm coming with help!\*\*** -came Two Star's "voice" into his mind.

The human saw Nightstep's reaction and correctly figured out that something was up. To stop whatever magic the elf was about to use, he thrust the torch at the elf with a menacing growl.

Flesh burned and Nightstep's scream filled the air. The human ground the torch into his captive's chin and laughed heartily at the rank odor now rising from the shrieking elf. The other humans applauded and cheered.

Their laughing stopped quickly, though, when wolf howls sounded out through the surrounding brush. The howling continued, growing closer with each heartbeat. The Tall Ones readied their spears and clubs as the wolves drew nearer. The child clung to the Large One's waist and wailed in fright.

Eight wolves burst into the small clearing, an angry Point-ear riding the lead. The humans scattered as the lupine attackers charged them. The Tall Ones tried to battle the vicious creatures, but eight wolves were too much for four humans and a child. They broke and ran, howling night-animals at their heels.

Protected by two wolves who stayed behind, Two Star lept from his mount and cut his friend's bonds. As he gently took Nightstep in his arms, he saw with anguish all that the captors had done to him. Standing out above all was the terrible burn to Nightstep's chin. Blisters were already rising in the blackened area. Two Star felt slightly ill, but fear of the humans' return made him swallow the lump in his throat. He had to get him out of there.

Nightstep whimpered in pain as Two Star lifted him up on his wolf's back. A few of the other wolves had returned to guard the elves, their job of chasing away the humans finished. Although mindful of the injuries, Two Star nudged his wolf forward to leave



the area quickly.

Presently, they arrived at Rock Span, though it had not been an easy ride. Nightstep had suffered several broken bones in his torture and the burning feeling was unbearable. He had kept falling unconscious, only to be jolted awake by the hard and fast ride. At times, he moaned from the pain, and Two Star had to cover his mouth to soften the noise. He wasn't unmoved

by his friend's injuries, but he didn't want to reveal their location to the pursuing humans.

Once across Rock Span, the wolves stood beside the bridge as Two Star took cold water from the river and gently poured it on Nightstep's burns. By this time, however, the intense cold of the river hurt almost as much as the burn itself. He howled in pain as Two Star held him still. The grey-haired elf sent as far as he could, hoping someone from the holt was close enough to "hear" him.

**\*\*Hold tight, my friend,\*\*** -Two Star sent to the whimpering Nightstep, **\*\*Help is on its way! I was able to contact Goldquill, who says he will bring the Healer, Darkwell.\*\***

Nightstep clutched at Two Star's tunic, tears rolling down his swollen cheeks. **\*\*Help me, it...hurts!\*\*\*** -he sent weakly. He coughed a couple of times as the older elf helped him up onto the wolf's back.

**\*\*Help is coming and we're going to meet them half way. Hold on tight -- don't give up!\*\*\*** -Two Star encouraged him.

As fast as he dared, Two Star rode along the woodland trail as if the humans were still after him.

Goldquill lept from his wolf's back and ran to Two Star's side. He gasped when he saw Nightstep's wounds and mumbled something to himself. Gently, he took Nightstep's unconscious form and set him down on the soft furs Goldenbraid had just spread on the ground. Both parties had just met a moment ago, though they'd been communicating for some time.

Darkwell had been unreachable, for he and several others had gone into the Troll Caverns to trade for more metal hunting knives. Goldenbraid, who was little more than a cub, was the only Healer available. Chief Greylock was also along on the party, but had said nothing so far. He sat quietly atop his wolf's back, silently watching the preparations.

As soon as Two Star was sure he could do nothing more, he looked up at his chief's dark scowl. Humbly, he gave his explanations and sent mental images of what had happened.

By the time he had finished, Goldenbraid was ready to begin her healing. She was inexperienced, but her talent was needed.

Tenderly, she took Nightstep's left hand in her right and placed her other palm on his forehead. Her body stiffened as she "saw" his wounds, both external and internal. Her breathing slowed as she went to work, mending cuts, repairing bones and soothing pains. She took her time, wanting to do this important task correctly. As she worked, Goldquill attended and cleaned the dirty cuts and whelths.

Greylock's eyes took stock of his son's injuries and lock-sent with Two Star. The chief of the Timber Folk was not a gentle leader, especially when dealing out punishment. Two Star became as quiet as his chief and sat on a rock, his head in his hands.

Long moments passed and the redness and swelling of Nightstep's injuries slowly disappeared. The inside work took longer still, but eventually Goldenbraid opened her eyes, a signal that she was finished. Nightstep slept, a good sign after the ordeal he'd been through. Goldenbraid looked up at her chief, her eyes close to tears from embarrassment.

"What's wrong, cub? Is he not well?" the chief asked, eyebrows drawn close together.

The young Healer looked back at the sleeping elf, keeping her eyes from making contact with Greylock's penetrating gaze. "His



wounds are healed, my chief," she began, "but his burn scar is more than my talent will correct."

Greylock dismounted and knelt beside his son. He took Nightstep's head and gently tilted it upward so as to see the underside of his jaw. He grimaced when he saw the badly misfigured area. He did not doubt the cub's inability to repair such damage. Only a flesh-shaper could smooth over that scar.

He shook his head sadly and put a hand on Goldenbraid's shoulder. "Don't blame yourself, cub. You did your best. I doubt Darkwell could do more." She nodded and brushed a stray lock of hair from Nightstep's forehead.

Greylock turned to Goldquill, "You and Two Star set up the litter. He may be healed, but he's bound to be weak. Goldenbraid, how are you feeling?"

"Tired, but okay." she answered, smiling a little,

"That's the hardest healing I've ever done. Darkwell usually handles the bigger tasks." Greylock nodded and stood up. A few moments later, Nightstep was secured to the litter and the party headed back toward the holt.

When Darkwell's trading party returned to the holt, close to sunrise, the Healer went straight to the Father Tree, where he'd been informed Nightstep was resting.

The tale was told to the Healer and Darkwell examined the patient. Nightstep, now awake, was humbled and embarrassed, since it was his own foolhardiness that had caused the trouble. His self-consciousness was increased by his disfigurement.

He pleaded with Darkwell to rid him of the scar, but the Healer only shook his head, saying it was beyond his ability.

"What if you and Goldenbraid worked together on it?" Nightstep asked, hoping. He didn't want his friends and tribe to have to see him scarred up the rest of his life, especially since it was all due to a prank gone wrong.

After listening to the brown-haired elf's pleas, Darkwell and Goldenbraid agreed at least to try -- but without promises of success. Nightstep said that he would be satisfied if they tried.

Following a short preparation, both Healers extended their talents into the scarred area. Nightstep lay on his back in the sleeping furs, eyes closed and relaxed. He didn't really expect much, but he hoped.

Greylock had been watching in silence, his gaze steady on his son's chin. Moments passed slowly and nothing seemed to happen. Both Healers' foreheads were covered in small droplets of perspiration. As Greylock watched, Nightstep's chin suddenly turned a dark brown. Thinking that the scar was actually healing, the Timber chief knelt closer for a better look, but what he saw clearly made his eyes widen. It was a shock at first sight, but then he found he had to stifle a chuckle. A moment later, both Healers came out of their trance and looked at their handiwork. Goldenbraid's mouth dropped open and Darkwell simply stared in disbelief.

Nightstep opened his eyes and looked at them. He was puzzled by their expressions as he looked from one to the other. Things were further complicated by his father's attempts to hold back his laughter.

"Wh--what's the matter?" he wanted to know.

Goldenbraid swallowed and shot a glance at the elder Healer. "What happened?" she asked.

"Justice deserved." Greylock answered with a smile. Both Healers glared at him, unamused by his humor. At that moment, Two Star entered the Father Tree. Nightstep looked up at him as he stopped and stared.

"By the High Ones!" Two Star exclaimed. He smiled and knelt on one knee next to the sleeping pit for a closer look. "It's different, but it looks good!"

Nightstep clenched his teeth and forced his voice through them, "Will someone please explain?!"

"Better tell him, Two Star." Greylock chuckled. Realizing now that his friend didn't know, Two Star put a hand on Nightstep's shoulder and grinned.

"You don't have a scar anymore." he stated simply. Goldenbraid elbowed him and Nightstep raised a hand to his chin. As soon as his

fingers came in contact with his jaw, he froze.

"I'm sorry, Nightstep," Darkwell said slowly, "It was an accident..."

"We didn't intend..." Goldenbraided started to say.

Nightstep ran his hand over the soft brown hair that now covered his chin. "A...a beard..." he whispered in disbelief. Two Star handed him a shiny knife, so he could see his reflection. Nightstep took it and saw the fur on his chin. "I look like a troll..." he gasped.

Chief Greylock could stand it no longer and began laughing aloud. Nightstep didn't think it was at all humorous. "What happened?" he asked.

Darkwell shrugged, "I don't know, honestly. We tried to smooth out your scar, but it looks like the effort had a side effect. Neither Goldenbraided nor myself are flesh-shapers, but something happened when we combined our talents." He looked apologetic and added, "You now have hair growing on your chin."

Nightstep stroked his beard absentmindedly, while he pondered the situation. He looked at the Healers and asked, "Can you get rid of it?"

Darkwell scratched his head and replied, "I think so, but you'll still have the scar. That was never straightened out."

Greylock's mirth had wound down, and he had spent the last few moments quietly listening to the conversation. Now he joined the discussion.

"Which would you rather have, son--the scar or the hair which covers the scar?" He was serious now, no trace of teasing in his voice. "Our Healers have already proven that you'll be keeping the scar, no matter if it's covered or in plain sight."

"It'll take some getting used to," Two Star added, "but you can handle it. Besides, it doesn't look all that bad."

"For a troll, you mean," Nightstep snorted. He fell silent again, lost in thought. Nightstep had always had a habit of stroking his chin as he thought, and the beard didn't seem to change that. He caught himself in the act and looked dumbly at his hand as if it were someone else's.

"Okay," he said at last, "I'll keep it for a few nights, just to see how everyone reacts. But," he held up a finger, looking at the Healers, "I'll need your help if I change my mind."

Darkwell and Goldenbraided smiled together, grateful that Nightstep wasn't angry at their mishap, and Two Star winked at his friend with a nod. Nightstep looked to his father, who merely smiled. He



stroked his chin again, already getting used to its feel.

\* \* \*

DF4(HT)

When Two Star focused his eyes after recounting past times, he found that his audience had multiplied. Greeneyes had a look of well-loved contentment on her small, round face. Longknife cradled her in his lap and her arms circled his neck, his cheek pressed to hers. Duskdew lay at the tall hunter's feet, using his legs as a backrest, and wearing Greeneyes' braided garland at a saucy angle in her hair. Two Star also felt his Lifemate near him, a thought confirmed when Goldenbraided put her arm about his shoulder. And in the deep shadow of a giant oak tree, Nightstep's eyes glittered. All was quiet in the glade.

Goldenbraided took the silence in hand. The senior Healer of the Timber Valley Holt motioned her chief to the center of the clearing. He raised an eyebrow at her, but refrained from comment, and moved to the spot she indicated. "Let us see this flesh-shaping 'trick' of yours, child," she instructed Greeneyes, pointing to where Nightstep knelt on the grass.

At first, the tiny elf looked alarmed; it had been several moons since she had last used this particular ability of her healing power, and she feared that she had become rusty. But Longknife's quick squeeze of reassurance set her in motion. Greeneyes went to Nightstep, dropped to her knees and faced him. Her large eyes searched his face for any trace of reluctance. His narrowed eyes shone darkly, and his rigid jawline showed his apprehension. She took a deep breath and started to reach towards her patient's beard. Strong hands gripped her wrists tightly and her eyes flew open and locked with Nightstep's -- the beginnings of a healing trance broken. His lock-send reached her only a second after his touch.

\*\*A Healer did this--what makes you so sure, little cub, that you can do what Goldenbraided and her accumulated experience can now not undo? Tell me why, youngling, tell me how.\*\*

Greeneyes could feel his force of will--not a Challenge, but most assuredly a Test. The little elf from Black Rock Holt could not speak of what she knew, but instead sent her emotions and ideas to him. \*\*I am now one of you, my Chief, but the folk I was born to have powers of the High Ones your tribe may not have seen for a while: Flesh-Shapers, Finders, those who can stun and snare a mind, Storm-Sense, Spirit Projection, even Anti-Healers. Our leader, Trailmist, bore a girl-child whom the elders say will be a Self-Shaper, if the indications prove to be true. We are a small folk, but have much power. I can flesh-shape, heal, send thoughts far or through rock if needed, and Shield with the power. But I can't raise the dead, nor shape lifeless bone. I can do what you ask of me.\*\*

With Nightstep's body blocking all but Goldenbraided's view, Greeneyes focused her talent on herself. Under the elder's sharp gaze, her hand held in the chief's grip started to change, grow longer--fingers becoming stick thin, the skin becoming red and scaled. The power tickled Nightstep's fingers, lessening his grip on the wrist, and the Healer's will encouraged him to release it as if



he held a burning ember. His smile was tight-lipped, minute, but he nodded his approval as she reshaped her hand back to normal and then put her hands to his face. Goldenbraid had monitored what the girl had been doing with her talent, but hadn't been able to follow the whole process from beginning to end.

The lock-send Nightstep had initiated made the Healer's power bridge the gap between minds swiftly. The chief felt her presence within himself, though it came nowhere near the center of his being, and it gave his soul name and surrounding private area a wide berth. Nightstep reflected that Greeneyes' healing felt light her sendings. There was no denying that she had more power than the native Goldenbraid, but the youngling lacked experience and direction. Greeneyes had a teasing, tickling touch--like a splash of brightly colored silk, or perhaps feathers, or better yet, laughter. She threw herself into life with her heart wide open. It was that very openness that tugged at Nightstep, and from that moment on he included the little Healer as one of his own tribe.

Those in the clearing watched in fascination as the hair on Nightstep's chin receded, disappeared, and the horrible mottled burn scars faded and then smoothed into the surrounding layer of skin, turning a healthy color to match the rest of his face. Greeneyes sent again to Nightstep, but also included her fellow Healer. Goldenbraid had moved behind Greeneyes during the shaping, to help support the elf who was beginning to tire visibly. Goldenbraid could feel the drain, but the younger Healer sent as steadily as ever. \*\*The healing of the scar was fumbled--sort of like tripping--and the magic ran away from them, but only a little ways. See, all better.\*\*

Nightstep stood when Greeneyes mentally retreated. He turned to Two Star, who had a surprised but pleased expression on his face. Nightstep and his fellow elder gripped forearms, the chief grinning, Two Star shaking his head in near disbelief. "No more Troll-Face?!" Nightstep asked as he stroked the smooth skin that was now at the bottom of his face.

"Aye, my friend, none of that. It takes years off your appearance. Perhaps 'Baby-Face' would suit you better?" Two Star teased as he slapped his lifelong friend on the back. Nightstep made a face.

Despite her exhaustion, Greeneyes had done some more sending on her own and the result was walking into the clearing at that moment. "What is going on here? Greeneyes, why did you call me and tell me to hurry?" Freshwind stood at the edge of the trail, one hand pushing the hair from her eyes, and the other balancing her two-year-old son, Skyflame, on her hip.

Nightstep turned, confronting his beloved Lifemate. Her eyes went wide and her mouth formed an "O". She quickly handed her squirming cub over to Dusky's outstretched arms, and went to her mate. Freshwind's long supple fingers caressed the unmarked smoothness of Nightstep's face. He held her close to him, their sending private. After a moment, Freshwind nodded, a smile playing across her delicate features. The chief of the Timber Folk stepped back to where Greeneyes rested against Goldenbraid.

"You can put it back now, cub. I thank you for removing the scars, but I feel...bare...without my chin-beard." She nodded and in moments Nightstep had his beard once again in place, this time by free choice.

LongKnife carried an exhausted and oblivious Greeneyes back to

the holt. Duskdew followed not far behind with the bouncing Skyflame, intending to share cub-sitting responsibilities with Wildwood. The remaining two couples trailed behind the rest at a leisurely pace. Nightstep stroked his beard, a wicked grin on his face, his eyes alight with mischief as they had been when he was younger. He elicited a deep chuckle from Two Star when he loudly announced, "Besides, it doesn't look all that bad!"

END





# The Timber Valley Holt

\*\*\*

"A LIFETIME is a very short story of a single situation in a character's life. It is usually humorous, but not always. Please feel free to write one of your own. It does require a title and a date -- an illustration is optional. These concern, more or less, a 'Day In The Lives' of our characters."

\*\*\*

The above paragraph should be familiar to many of you who have seen past issues of this newsletter. It is supposed to be an enticement to you, the members, to contribute to the newsletter. Without stories, TIMBERS would not exist. We need your cooperation.

At this time, I do have a number of stories in the files--however, most are unusable due to the fact that they were written by people who are no longer in Timber Valley (characters and/or members). Because of this, the files ARE low.

Now, I know there are many out there who don't have the time to write stories and get involved in making sure you have used other characters correctly. That's one of the good things about the LIFETIMES type of stories. LIFETIMES are small, one to two and a half pages long, and need only concern something that happens to your character (or others, if you choose).

LIFETIMES can be about why your character has a particular name, a prank that is pulled, a certain good (or bad) day, finding a friend, spying on someone, an embarrassing situation or a whole myriad of other reasons. Look around you -- there are short stories everywhere! What happens on a day-to-day (or night-to-night) basis to your character?

If everyone started sending in events about their individual characters, other people would see what yours are like. Due to these stories, people would begin to learn about your elf (or troll or human), and might even see something in your character that would be good to use in their own stories.

Build the files and show everyone who your character is, how they feel, and what they're like. You may be surprised at what little tales could result! The larger, complex stories are great to read, but then again, so are the smaller, simpler ones.

So, grab your pen (or keyboard), and put your ideas into LIFETIMES. Send them to me -- the files are waiting...



# The History

Long ago, the High Ones - the firstcomers - were forced to crash-land their palace/ship and were scattered over this two-mooned planet without a name by the savage and fearful humans.

Many of the elves took up with animals to learn how to survive in this wild land. Many of the scattered groups of elves chose to follow the wolves. It seemed the lupine predators had the best lessons to offer to the strangers.

One group, with their new friends, a wolf pack, wandered around until they eventually set up a holt near the edge of a vast forest. They shaped hollows into the huge trees found there and aptly called it the Hollow Trees Holt. Here, they lived a thousand years in peaceful solitude.

All this was changed, however, when a wandering band of superstitious humans attacked and killed many in the elven tribe. The few survivors escaped and were driven from the forest out onto a large grassy plain, which held nothing but occasional trees and brush for concealment. They were chased for days, but once out of the forest, the primitive humans stopped the pursuit, uneasy about being out in the open. After nights of wandering through this area (for they never thought to go back), the elves discovered a deep blue river which they followed downstream.

After half the face of the Greater Moon has passed, these wandering elves followed the river and found what is now called "Two Falls". There, the river split around a small hill and fell into a small valley that was sunk deep into the ground, with sheer cliff walls surrounding the entire area.

The river flowed down the face of the cliff and fell into a small blue lake. The beauty of the place overwhelmed the small group of elves, for the valley floor was covered in a rich green forest of timber -- an oasis in the desert of the grass plains!

At the far end of the lake, the river continued and flowed down the middle of the entire valley, until it was lost in the distance. The far wall of the valley could barely be seen in the morning forest haze. These elves, overcome by the peaceful attraction of the valley, decided that this was where they would now live. They named the place Timber Valley and called themselves the Timber Folk.

They wandered around the valley rim looking for a way to descend. After a couple of nights, they discovered a natural pathway winding down the Sheercliff wall to the valley floor.

Once reaching the bottom, they journeyed back to the lake they had seen from above and set up their holt nearby, with treeshapers doing their task of making honetrees.

After a brief scouting trip throughout the valley, it was discovered that a small group of humans lived on the far side of the lake. Fear swept through the small surviving tribe of elves once again. They tried to escape the notice of the five-fingers, but a human hunting party discovered them one night.

A short battle broke out between the two races, but with the elves a little more prepared this time. After a series of skirmishes, the Timber Folk formed an uneasy truce with the Tall

Ones. The river was set up as a boundary between their two territories, with warnings that anyone found on the other's side of the valley would result in death, with no other reason necessary. So, the two tribes lived with little contact, but occasionally an event would occur and someone would be killed.

After a turn of the seasons had come and gone, the elves discovered that near their holt was a large cavern system sealed with a large boulder set up on metal hinges. This turned out to be a doorway into the Troll Caverns, a domain which had existed long before either tribe of elf or human had entered the valley. Meetings were made with the underground dwellers and gifts were exchanged. Soon afterwards, a bartering system developed between the two groups, with the elves supplying meats and furs in exchange for the forged metals and the sparkling stones mined by the trolls. It was a situation which benefited both groups. At night, the trolls were not afraid to venture from their caverns, and were occasionally seen near the new holt.

It was later discovered that the entire valley's existence was largely due to a past troll leader's blunder. The trolls' attempt in enlargening their domain with extensive tunneling was far too ambitious, and it caved in from weight and the softening effect of the river above. After collapsing, the new valley area became as an oasis and flourished heartily over a millenia of years. All this had occurred long ago, and now the valley was a source of life to all which inhabited it.

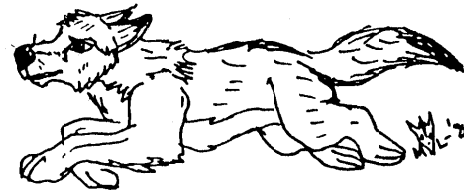
The Timber Folk had found and established a home in the valley, and have now been there over four thousand years, content with their way of life.

This contentment was disturbed recently, however, when a massive storm blew in from the north, bringing with it mighty flood waters. The Upper World (the lands outside the valley walls) was deluged with the devastating waters and caused a catastrophic flash flood to sweep through Timber Valley, reducing the elves's number by nearly a third. Only half of the human tribe survived, but the trolls had been sealed off well enough to keep too much damage from happening to their domain.

Over twenty years later, the elves continue to survive despite the threatening world around them. They knew other elves must exist elsewhere in the world, but they were content with the knowledge that they, at least, still live.

For over four thousand years, the Timber Folk knew of no other elves but themselves. But several years after the Death Flood had taken some of them, a stranger elf was discovered wounded in the valley. They healed him and soon learned that other elves indeed existed outside their valley.

This was something they had given up hope for in the many seasons they had resided in the valley. Now new hope sprang up that they were not the sole survivors of their race. Others were living in the world, despite the human threat. Not long after, other elves found their way to Timber Valley and made their homes there.



Now, after over twenty years of peaceful existence, the valley's contentment is about to be shattered again. A visitor to the Troll Caverns has caused trouble and war is about to break out! War is always a time of rearrangement; lives are lost, feelings are changed, allies are made and enemies are fought. Nothing is ever the same again.

Ill Met By Moonlight was the first installment of THE TROLL WARS storyline. Upcoming segments will tell of the warring forces and the effects they have on all inhabitants of Timber Valley.

## The Troll Wars

The Troll Wars storyline was conceived and created in order to give you, the club membership, an exciting framework with which to write stories about your characters and the Holt in general. The actual number of Troll Wars related stories will depend solely on just how interested you all are in writing stories using the concept. Cartoons, illustrations (battle scenes, action "shots", etc.), and other artwork are eagerly sought. LIFETIMES story sections dealing with an individual's personal participation in the War are also invited.

For those who haven't yet ordered the TROLL WARS flyer which Joanne had printed up, I still have copies left. It is a two-page "basic plot outline", designed specifically to let people know the backgrounds of the story and to, hopefully, help generate ideas and input from the members. It's well done and it's also free!

Just as a reminder, here's how you can get it: Send me a Self-Addressed Stamped envelope with TROLL WARS written on it somewhere. I'll insert the flyer into YOUR envelope and mail it back to you promptly. Then, you can get to working on ideas for us.

OK? OK!

Hat Feather  
Drosb  
2/78

# It's Here!



## Yearnings III

80 pages of some of the best fiction, poetry and art that Elfquest fandom has to offer, put together in a magazine format using the highest quality production standards available. A beautiful addition to your Elfquest collection, Yearnings III is available only through Shadow Island Graphics. Order your copy today! Send your check or money order for \$7.00 (\$8.00 overseas) to:

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**NEW ADDRESS!**

(Please allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery, US and Canada.)

# Meet the Chief

ELF NAME: Nightstep  
SOUL NAME: Fuli  
GENDER: Male  
MATE: Freshwind, Recognized lifemate.  
FATHER: Greylock, Timber Folk chief  
MOTHER: Joycall  
SIBLINGS: none  
CHILDREN: Skyflame, son  
OTHER RELATIONS: Wavesong, aunt.  
Twill, cousin.  
BOND ANIMAL: "Riftweed", male wolf  
with dark grey fur and yellow  
eyes.

DF DATE BORN: -596(WF)  
ORIGIN OF BIRTH: Timber Valley  
EYES: Brown

HAIR: Straight dark brown, hangs to  
middle of back. Has a crest tied  
up in back with a leather thong.  
Eyebrows are thick and dark.

HEIGHT: 4'1"

TALENT (POWER): Strong sender  
WEAPONS USED: Simple longbow with  
quiver of brown feathered arrows.  
For close battle, uses a straight  
two-edged sword carried in an  
unadorned black sheath.

SKILLS: Hunter. Archer. Leader.  
JEWELRY WORN: none

CLOTHING: long sleeved tan cloth shirt  
with open collar. Light tan wide  
leather belt with silver troll-made  
buckle. Dark brown breeches laced  
with tan lacings - tucked into black  
moccasin-type fringless boots.

OTHER INFORMATION: Nightstep was very surprised to find himself suddenly chief after his father's death. He, along with most of the holt, had expected Wavesong, Greylock's sister, to assume leadership. It took him a while to get used to the idea of being chief, but his natural leading abilities have molded him into the role rather well.

He takes his position seriously and strives to be perfect. Only Freshwind really knows how greatly a toll leading others' lives takes of him and she is his silent supporter in all things. Nightstep tends to be a bit over-zealous with his authority at times -- he has a bad habit of ordering instead of asking, but the tribe is used to it and doesn't complain. Greylock was much the same way. Often he will try to everything by himself and won't delegate small tasks unless forced to; he considers it his duty and feels slightly guilty if he has to ask for help.

Nightstep is something of a disciplinarian, but he never



demands more from his tribefolk than he demands of himself, and is more unforgiving of the slightest error on his own part than he is of the greatest blunder by another of the Timber Folk. When making decisions, he strives for the greatest good for the greatest number. He is a strong sender and can be heard at long distances when he is angry. Even at times of burning rage, though, he would never touch any member of his tribe in anger. Nightstep does not believe in physical punishment, and finds subtle but effective ways of disciplining wrongdoers.

Appearances are important to Nightstep. He maintains an air of unshakeable dignity in public, speaking only when necessary and then in a low voice, saying what he has to say as concisely as possible. He expects to be heard the first time he says something, and tends to "not hear" requests for him to repeat something. He doesn't eat dreamberries, but is tolerant of those who do. Nightstep tries to appear inexhaustible and, in a crisis, will keep going until he collapses. If he has a problem on his mind, he tends to be moody and snappish; the tribe knows that it's best not to bother him with trivial things at such times. In general, he lightens up only when with his family. He is exceedingly proud of Skyflame, though he rarely says so.

Nightstep loves the hunts, and he and Riftweed lead all chases. The death of a wolf-friend hits him hard and he is very gloomy and short of temper for a while afterward. He knows how to swim, but isn't comfortable in the water, and prefers cold weather to hot. Leaf-fall is his favorite time of the year, with all the hunting that goes on in preparation for the cold season. Nightstep has a great deal of foresight and is rarely caught unprepared.

Nightstep respects all his tribefolk, but is particularly respectful to the Elders of the tribe: Two Star, Goldenbraid, and especially Wavesong, his aunt. He depends on her counsel heavily, and she is his second-in-command when needed. His attitude toward strangers is generally welcoming, but he will not tolerate many foibles on their part. They are expected to pull their own weight and obey the holt's unwritten laws. Nightstep is gruffly good-natured with cubs and respects children. Youth can often be used as an excuse for slight misbehavior, even when the elf in question is technically too old for it. (It is Windrace's most frequently used excuse.)

Nightstep does not like humans at all, and hates them for praying on his tribe, but he is aware that peace must be maintained; he will not provoke them, although takes swift revenge for damages. It is because of the humans that he is an oddity amongst the tribe, however. Although the native Timber Folk are of pure elven blood, Nightstep's chin is covered by a thick patch of hair. His beard is a result of flesh-shaping, performed many years ago in an effort to cover a badly scarred chin, obtained through a run-in with humans. His hatred of humans is often fueled through remembrance of that incident. One habit he has picked up is that he will most always stroke the beard when lost in thought.

He takes no nonsense from King Grubmoss or any other troll and, while he has a certain amount of respect for them, he also believes they should not be allowed to overstep their bounds. The trolls are a bit wary of his anger, although they are quick enough to seize upon opportunities to annoy him, hoping to shake his habitual aloofness. \*

## TEA Time

Hiya, Timber Folks!

Guess who?! Betcha didn't expect me to be underfoot again so soon! (Wicked grin!) Well, I am! I thought you all might like to know how my roll-call is going. Somewhere between 60-75% of our members sent in their cards in the first five weeks. The response was overwhelmingly positive only a handful of casualties due to burnout. A BIG thank-you goes out to all who volunteered their writing and artistic skills. There are still 14 who have not yet sent the postcard back to me and the 9/1/88 due date has come and gone. \*Sorry folks\*

Well, SABM #6 is out and Wicked Winnie is up to her old tricks...again! The GATHERUM VOL. II should also be in your local comic/book shop. There is an updated glossary, an excellent article by Ree Morehead Pruehs on research, etc. But for me, it's the covers that stand out the most. Check it out!

I'd like to take this time to say: HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Bill, Cyndy, Dale, Gary, Janice, Mark, Nikki and Sharon. They celebrate these special times in July, August and September. AYOAH!!!! And, also a big, big Thank You to Janice for the masthead logo and tree illo!

I'll leave you now with something to think about. How would your character(s) react to most of the trolls turning against the elves, humans becoming (uneasy) allies, blood, terror, chaos...CHANGES?! In two words: TROLL WARS! We need to hear from you to set up an outline for willing writers (with the help of John Merkel) and get this show on the road! So till next time, my friends, take care and happy trails!

*Greeneyes*

## Credits

Ruth Clark, pg 26.  
Jennifer Crosby, pg 22.  
Ted Delorme, pg 1.  
Eileen Fryer, pg 17.  
Melody Luke, pg 21.  
Bill Nichols, pg 19.  
Terrie Smith, pgs 4,7,9,11,12,14,28.  
Janice Stett, pgs 1 (masthead logo), 23.  
Frank Strom, pg 24 (reprinted from T-1).  
Jill Thompson, pg 23 (Yearnings III cover).  
(reprinted with permission).



## LAST★SEND

Is this the newsletter's editorial, or is that on page one? That's something I never really understood about the issues, last time I did this. Actually, page one serves as an introduction to the newsletter and sets the mood for the members prior to reading the rest of the pages. It is also a welcoming for new members.

On the other hand, the Last Send section is devoted to final words until next issue, disclosure of new information and general babbling from the editor. Personally, I don't believe there really is an editorial to this newsletter, but just a couple of regular spots to print whatever's on the mind.

Editorials exist mainly to provide the top (couch) potato of a group a place to give the readers his/her opinion of something which is in the editor's thoughts. Truthfully, I don't like editorials, which is why I don't usually write them. Random babbling is more of an accurate description of what I normally produce.

(The text above WAS an editorial, if you didn't recognize it.)

Okay, now that you have seen and read through this issue, with its changes of format and style, I want to know what your reactions are. My format is quite a change from Ferret's, but then again, hers was quite a change from mine the first time around. She didn't want to copy my style and I don't want to copy hers. However, perhaps this newsletter can be better with a little fusion of the two. It may not show up right at first, but Teresa and I are discussing ways to combine the best elements from both styles to create a better newsletter. Please write and let us know what you think. OK? OK.

From time to time, this LAST SEND section from me may be replaced by random babblings from our Associate, Teresa. How often this will occur will be quite up to her.

While this issue has mainly consisted of information, rather than stories and character profiles, next issue should be back on schedule with its usual complement of fun. Remember, this is your holt, about your elves, so we need more of your stories and your artwork to keep it going. \*This is a hint, folks!\*

TIMBERS 14 (T-14) should be issued around the middle of November 1988. If your membership is paid up, we'll be visiting your mailbox then!

Bright Starlights!



\*MOONCREST & NEWFUR\*