



TIMBERS



Newsletter of the Timber Valley Holt

Vol. 3, No. 15

Fresh Breezes, Timber Folk!

Here we are again! For the TIMBERS staff, these last three moons have gone by rather quickly. We've stayed constantly busy on Holt business, including the work on the new Guidebook (which is 80% complete), and production of this newsletter. I wish to take this time to thank Teresa specifically, for her hard work on T-15. I was hit with a major set-back that left me without access to a word processor. To keep the newsletter on schedule, Teresa did the main body of work on this issue, including the type and layout. Thank you, Cub! [As of the middle of February, my word processor's been replaced.]

We've had three new members join us since last issue! I would like to offer them a warm welcome into the Timber Valley Holt. Say hello to Valerie Bowe, Ruth Dempsey, and Eugene Gryniewicz! We'll let you know who their characters are when they've decided on names.

Normally this would have gone on the Need-To-Know page, but it is important enough that I want to mention it here. Our local tribe of Humans need a name. Yes, the Timber Folk refer to them as the "Tall Ones" (among other things) -- but what do they call themselves? If you have any suggestions, please send them in to me. The name will be announced in the appropriate issue of the newsletter when chosen. If you come up with a strange sounding name, please include the translation of what it means in the Humans' language.

For those curious about what WaRP's been up to lately, here's a few tidbits: ElfQuest: Siege At Blue Mountain #8 was released to the comic shops a few weeks ago, with its final segment of the story. Several situations were resolved, but more were left with a number of directions the next story could go. If you haven't picked it up, check your local shop to see if they have any copies still available.

Also released was Blood of Ten Chiefs, Vol. 3: Winds Of Change. This can be purchased at your local bookstore. For those curious about the new Color Volumes of ElfQuest & Siege At Blue Mountain, Books One through Five are now available,

with the exception of Book Four (production scheduling on this one suffered a setback). Book Six is also due to be released very soon. Books Five and Six offer the readers their first view of the Siege artwork in color! Something else to be on the lookout for is

Wendy Pini's work on Beauty And The Beast for First Comics. (Can you believe it? We actually had some news to print in our newsletter!)

S'okay now, it's that time again. I'm finished with my babbling, so now you can see what goodies we have in store for you in this issue. Enjoy!



Mancrest

TAP.TAP
1/88

★ The "Need-To-Know" Page ★

DF 20 (GT)

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MEMBERSHIPS: A one year's beginning membership to the Timber Valley Holt is \$7. This fee entitles the new member to four issues of TIMBERS, a membership guidebook, character sheets to fill out and return, and maps of the Timber Valley area. Renewing memberships are \$6, which covers the production and postage of the newsletters. Make check or money order out to: TR Blasingame. For your own protection, DO NOT send cash through the mail.

SASE: When writing to either Ted or Teresa, please include a stamp or Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope for a prompt reply. This enables us to respond quicker to your queries. We'd appreciate it!

APOLOGY: Deb Whitmer is the artist who penned the illustration of Pebble for TEA TIME on page 19 of TIMBERS 14. Her name was accidentally omitted from the Art Credits last issue. Sorry, Deb!

TVH BUTTONS: Logo Buttons printed with the TVH Tree are now available to the membership at \$1 each. The buttons are made of clear plastic and are 2½" in diameter. The logo is printed on a leaf-green background. For those who frequent Conventions, you know how popular buttons can be. Due to the quantity of buttons on hand, orders are limited to one per person until further notice.

SUPPLEMENT ISSUE: Going through the TVH art files recently, I've noticed that I have more artwork on hand than I will probably be able to use in the newsletters. We have many good artists in our group and it is a shame not to showcase their work. You will probably notice the abundance of art in this issue -- I want to show off what our people can do. Now, for the next part, I need a show of hands (or, a P.O. Box full of mail). I have in mind the idea to release a supplement issue of TIMBERS, for no other reason than to display our "symbol-makers'" works. Since there are no extra funds in the TVH treasury to pay for such a project, I will voluntarily contribute the costs out of my own pocket -- providing someone else volunteers to help pay for the postage (45¢ per copy). What I want to know is this: Is anyone interested in seeing a 20-page art-only supplement issue? If I don't hear from enough people stating an interest in wanting a copy, I won't bother to put out for it. (The new Guidebook costs are coming completely out of my own pocket, too, so I'm not about to spend more clams for something no one wishes to see.) Don't wait several months before sending a postcard or letter -- send one now. I will be keeping a tally of interested numbers and I have my own deadline for when I want my answer to this question. Don't delay! Are you interested?

ADDRESSES: Take a look at the list of addresses that I printed last issue, and check your own address to make sure it is correct. Three have been called to my attention -- there may be more. If my files aren't right, then someone may not be getting their newsletters...

MYSTERY: Look on page 27 of TIMBERS 13. Though these are characters from our Holt, can you guess from which recent movie this pose was taken? The answer will be given next issue.

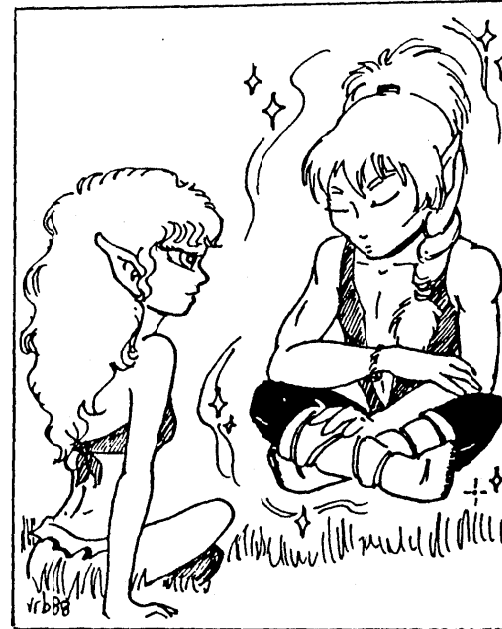
MOCKER'S SONG by Linda Wosttjen

There is memory, which fades, and too soon dies away. There are stories, told round howl fires, and enhanced by open sendings of those who still recall the events. But song outlasts both memory and history. It keeps alive the essence of a moment, not just the facts. At least, that was how Woodwreath felt as she raised her voice in singing "Mocker's Song". Few living had witnessed the events of that night, yet, as they sang each verse, Woodwreath relived her emotions of the time when those things actually happened.

* * *

DF -620 (GT)

She had resented being forced to remain behind with the cubs when the grown-ups went hunting. Though Woodwreath had no desire to hunt, she felt she was old enough to pursue her own interests. She and Cloudracer were supposedly there to help Raindrop tend the youngsters, but Woodwreath suspected it was just an excuse to allow the cub-sitter to keep an eye on them as well.



"Woodwreath," called Raindrop from the entrance of her hometree, "can you take charge for a moment?" Perhaps they really were beginning to accept her as responsible. "I need to go check the skins I have drying in the clearing."

"Sure," Woodwreath called back cheerfully. The only cubs there at the moment were Mocker, Two Star, Splitpath and Clearfox. The three he-cubs were busy playing wolf rider, with the two younger lads bouncing up and down on Splitpath's back. Clearfox sat nearby, scolding them for sending dust in the direction of her doll family.

Once certain that the cubs were occupied, Woodwreath turned her attention to Cloudracer. For once, the handsome youth was sitting still. Usually, he his blue eyes were cast skyward, and his legs were propelling him in the direction the clouds were moving. Today, he was more interested in testing his developing skill at levitating. He was seated

cross-legged in an open spot where the moonlight made his blond hair glow. No part of Cloudracer touched the ground.

"That's wonderful," Woodwreath gushed. She had talents, too, but today, her mind was set on developing another sort of skill. "Do you think you could do that with me in your lap?" She fluttered her eyelashes at him, but he didn't seem to notice.

"I don't know," he looked her up and down. "You're probably about as heavy as I am. I don't know if I could handle double the weight."

"Never mind," she said as he finished his answer. Woodwreath pouted for a moment, then decided to try again. After all, he was the only eligible male around at the moment. Obviously, she needed some practice.

Woodwreath crouched so that she could look at him eye-level. She reached a delicate finger out and pushed a strand of pale hair away from his sky-colored eyes.

"You know, that really is fantastic. Can you get any higher?" Cloudracer's eyes seemed to unfocus, but she saw him slowly rise. When his chin was higher than her head, he stopped.

"Terrific!" she squealed appreciatively. "Oh, he's done better than that," Clearfox said from where she sat encircled by wooden dolls. The three male cubs took notice then. Two Star came rushing forward, with Splitpath and Mocker close behind.

"What's so great about that?" asked Mocker, his arched eyebrows the same color as his tawny-brown hair. Beside him, Two Star's violet eyes were wide and his mouth hung open. He was the youngest of the group, and most easily impressed.

Mocker was probably jealous. Two Star usually tagged after him, ready to do whatever the older cub wanted.

"Can you do it?" Woodwreath challenged him.

"No, but I can do something better." He pursed his lips, and in a moment, made the cooing sound of a bird.

"Who can't whistle?" she asked, intentionally trying to provoke the youngster. Woodwreath did not like having her flirting practice interrupted.

"Well, what about this?" He gave a low bark, then a growl and a yip. All were perfect imitations of a wolf, but Woodwreath refused to admit it.

"What's all that noise supposed to be?"

"Wolves." Splitpath was a loyal friend, and obviously

didn't realize she was baiting Mocker.

"Sick wolves, maybe." She was growing tired of the game. "You cubs go play some more. If Mocker thinks he's such a great wolf, maybe you should be riding him," she told Splitpath. The trio moved away, but Mocker's face was sullen. Woodwreath resumed her admiration of Cloudracer's talent. A moment later, the buzzing of whispered voices turned her attention to the three conspirators again. What were they plotting? Whatever it was, Splitpath seemed opposed. He shook his head, looking over at Clearfox. Mocker said something else, and finally the older youngster nodded. Still, there was a reluctance in his gait as the threesome approached the she-cub.

"Wanna go rock hunting?" Mocker asked Clearfox. "You're the best rock finder in the Holt."

Clearfox was on her feet in an instant.

"Sure!" She turned to Woodwreath. "Can we go?"

Woodwreath looked around. No sign of Raindrop. There was a rocky place within sight to the Holt. The cubs couldn't get into any trouble there. Woodwreath knew Raindrop often let them play in that spot.

"Just go to the rock pit, no farther," she warned.

"Right," Clearfox answered. As eldest in the tiny group, she would be in charge, a role Woodwreath guessed the bossy youngster would relish. Once the four playmates had disappeared between the trees, Woodwreath decided to see if Cloudracer could keep afloat while being tickled.

* * *

"Where are the others?" Raindrop demanded the moment she returned. Woodwreath and Cloudracer stopped wrestling. Catching her breath, Woodwreath answered.

"I let them go play at the rock pits. Clearfox knows every inch of that place."

"Well, I suppose that's all right," Raindrop said with a frown, "but you'd better go get them."

Woodwreath was glad to have the wrestling match ended. Cloudracer was stronger than he seemed to realize. He'd laughed when he pinned her down, but she was sure he didn't know how much his tight grip hurt her.

She passed through the Thorn Barrier and skipped off toward the rock pit, wondering who she should go after seriously. Maybe Woodmark. Though he was much older, his lifemate was dead. His current grim demeanor might be changed by the right female. What Woodmark did have in his favor was a love of trees and dreamberry bushes. Since Woodwreath was a treeshaper with a fondness for dreamberries, the match seemed to have potential.

When she reached the rock pit, Woodwreath found Clearfox settled in a pile of pebbles. She held a smooth, round stone in her hand.

"You're a good little rock," Clearfox crooned to the stone.

"Clearfox..."

"Oh, Woodwreath," the cub looked up bright-eyed. "Do you like my new pet?"

"It's fine," Woodwreath answered impatiently. "Where are the others?"

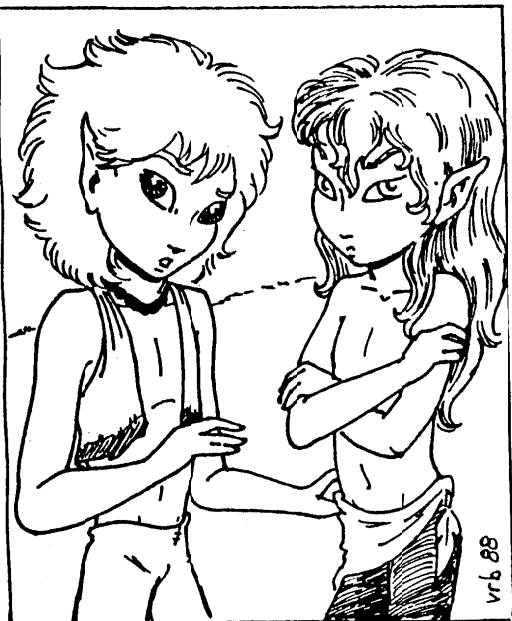
Clearfox looked around, blank-faced.

"I don't know," she said. "I thought they were here."

"Those rascals have sneaked off!" Woodwreath kicked up a pile of pebbles. "That's what they were planning."

"Don't hurt the rocks," Clearfox said plaintively as she watched the pebbles skitter and bounce across the pit.

"Hush." Woodwreath knew she was in trouble. "Go tell Raindrop the others are missing. I'll start looking for them."



Clutching her new rock pet to her chest, Clearfox hurried off toward the Holt. Woodwreath could not guess where the he-cubs might have gone, so she set off in the opposite direction from the grove of hometrees.

She had not gone far when a hideous yowl broke the silence. A great-cat! Woodwreath had no weapon, but she knew the cubs might be in danger. She had to proceed.

****Help!**** she sent as strongly as she could. ****Great-cat in the area. Cubs missing.****

As she moved cautiously toward the sound, her mind was filled with reassuring replies from the hunters and those still in the Holt. Help was on its way.

****Mocker.**** She sent, wondering why she hadn't thought of it before. ****Splitpath. Two Star?*** Did any of the cubs have a developed sending talent? She couldn't remember. No reply came.

Woodwreath saw a heavy branch on the ground. It's burnt end meant a lightning bolt had probably severed it from its tree. She grabbed it up, knowing it would be little use against a great-cat's sharp claws.

"Yooowwl!" Came the sound again. Woodwreath turned toward it. The cat was closer to the Holt now, almost parallel with where she stood. She took a cautious step in this new direction.

Several steps more, and she stopped. A slight rustle came from the brush behind her. She began to pivot, to pinpoint it, but a twig snapped in front of her. Soon, she realized that there were several large creatures moving in on her. Too petrified to send, Woodwreath clutched the branch tightly and stayed completely still. Perhaps the beasts wouldn't notice her.

Woodmark stepped from the bushes.

"Woodwreath?"

She let out a long breath then threw herself into the arms of the chief's son. Only later would she think that this had been her chance to try to attract him. For the moment, all she could do was shake as the tension left her.

"What cubs are missing?" demanded Plercer. Beside him, his mate looked on anxiously. The whole hunting party crowed about her now. She looked at Plercer and Birdsong. They were Mocker's parents.

"Our son?" Birdsong asked. The tawny lashes that ringed her golden eyes blinked back tears.

"Yes," Woodwreath answered. "He's with Splitpath and Two Star."

Others moved forward, questions forming on their lips, but an eerie sound turned all gazes back toward the Holt. The cat was moving toward the hometrees. The Thorn Barrier would protect their homes and Clifftrail surely had guards at the entrances.

Woodmark pushed her away, gently, and moved off with the others. They had bows readied. Woodwreath only hoped that since the cat still stalked toward the elves' home, it hadn't found food yet.

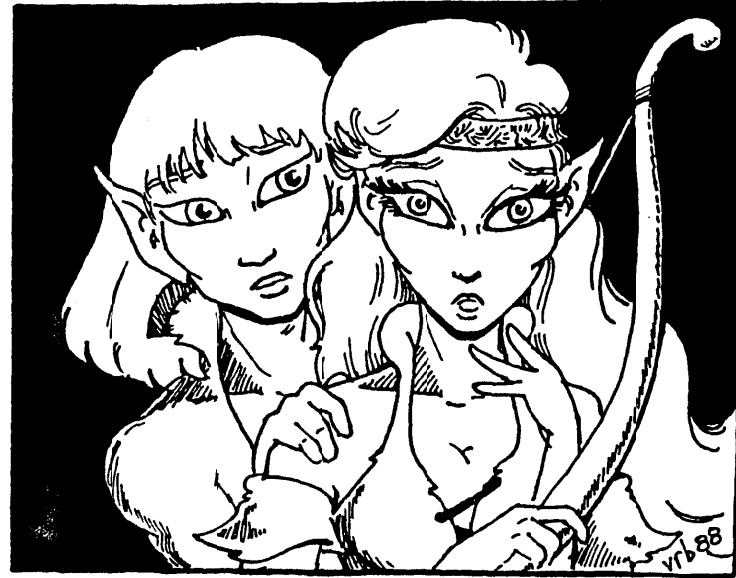
She hurried after the hunters, praying to the High Ones as she ran. A strange sound rent the air. They stopped, listening. It was the vibrating sound of a bow string just released followed by the whirr of an arrow sailing toward its target.

As Woodwreath looked at the others, she saw their heads turned toward the sound of the bow. Following their gaze, she saw a solitary archer poised at the top of a grassy incline.

"Mother," someone whispered beside her. She glanced over to identify the speaker. He was Greylock, so the archer must be Springbow.

A child's scream echoed through the woods. Ahead, Springbow had leapt out of sight. The party fought its way through the brush toward the walls of terrified cubs.

The first thing Woodwreath saw was Springbow. She stood, stone-still, an expression of horror frozen on her face.



We're too late, Woodwreath thought. The hunters were beating the brush about them, looking for the beast. Others moved toward the stricken cubs. Woodwreath followed these. "I shouldn't have let him do it," Splitpath was saying.

He stood with his arm around Two Star. The cubs were both crying as they watched Plercer and Birdsong kneel beside Mocker's fallen form. Woodwreath moved forward feeling somehow responsible for Mocker's accident. She only hoped the great-cat hadn't killed him.

"He breathing," Birdsong whispered. Woodwreath, hearing this, dared a look over the heads of the worried parents. Mocker was still, but his only wound was a hole in his shoulder. Springbow's arrow protruded from the bloody gash.

Glistenfire helped remove the arrow and bind the wound while Stormer comforted his lifemate, Springbow.

"I saw the flash of tawny-brown," she muttered. "I thought it was the cat."

"Don't worry," Stormer said softly. Greylock had joined them, but Springbow seemed inconsolable.

"Raindrop will never forgive me," she said then began weeping.

Blueraven had taken the two frightened cubs into her gentle arms.

"Tell us what happened," she coaxed.

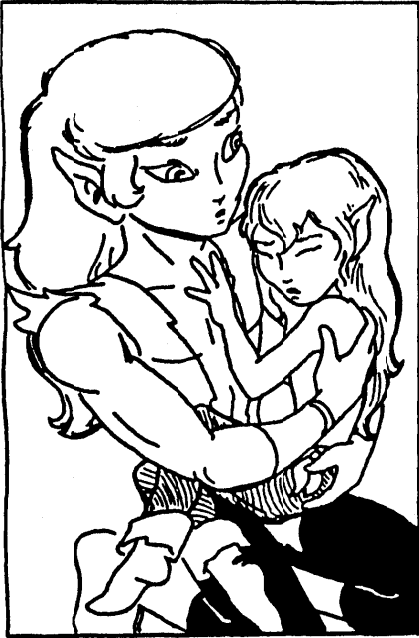
"Mocker was making the cat sounds," Two Star said.

"He wanted to show everyone how realistic his animal sounds are." Splitpath kept his head down as he spoke. "I shouldn't have let him."

"Don't worry," Stormfire said. "We'll take him back to the Holt and have Darkwell fix him up." She gathered Two Star into her arms, but he wriggled away.

"I'm too big to be carried."

"All right," Stormfire answered, "but take my hand. It's getting late and your parents are worried."



"All right," Stormfire answered, "but take my hand. It's getting late and your parents are worried."

She and Blueraven escorted the cubs toward the Holt while Piercer lifted his son. Though it seemed everything would be all right, Woodwreath was reluctant to join the others as they moved back toward the Holt. She watched Chestnut holding Glistenfire close as they walked home. Woodwreath envied them.

"Hey, Curly-top," Rainer came up beside her. "Aren't you eager to get back to the Holt?"

"Not really." Woodwreath looked up hopefully into the round, smiling face. A grey eye winked at her.

"Maybe these will cheer you up." He lifted her hand, turning it so the palm faced up. Carefully, he deposited two plump, purplish berries.

Woodwreath looked at the dreamberries then flashed him a grateful smile. Rainer snaked his arm about her, escorting Woodwreath back to the Holt.

No one scolded her for her part in the day's misfortune. Mocker was indeed healed by Darkwell's newly-emerging talent. Several moons passed before Duster and Sweetwater allowed Two Star to play with Mocker again. Chief Clifftrail used the event as an excuse to hold a Holt council. The meeting took on a party atmosphere as they celebrated the fact that no permanent harm had been done.

For the occasion, Joycall composed the song that still echoed around Holt council fires life-times later. Woodwreath listened to it, reliving once more that horrible day. No blame had ever been placed on her. In fact, the song did not even mention her. The only real effect that day had on her was that she was never again asked to keep an eye on the cubs. Woodwreath hadn't minded too much. *



QUICKSILVER



DIVER



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Timbo Valky 11689

Sapphire, Mooncrest, Coppermane

TROLL NAME: Dripstone
 "ELF" NAME: Thunderfoot
 RACE: Troll
 GENDER: Male
 MATE: --
 FATHER: Billowgut
 MOTHER: Mossfinger
 SISTER: Sourcheeks
 BROTHER: Leatherskin
 CHILDREN: --
 DF DATE BORN: -11 (HT)
 ORIGIN OF BIRTH: Timber Valley Troll
 Caverns.
 EYES: Brown
 HAIR: Brownish-green. Has short beard
 which begins to cover chest.
 MARKS/SCARS: Several burn scars on arms
 from hot metal splashes from the
 forges.
 HEIGHT: 3'9"
 WEAPONS USES: Pickaxe, dagger.
 SKILLS: Metal smith, tunneling, some
 awkwardly-acquired elven crafts.
 JEWELRY: None.
 CLOTHING: Brown ratty pants. Thin long
 sleeved shirt worn under an olive
 vest, which has two buttons on each
 shoulder and a criss-cross pattern
 across chest. Wide belt with gold
 buckle. Usually goes barefooted.

OTHER INFORMATION: Dripstone is a young troll who was bored with a troll's life, believing an elf's life was always exciting and fun. Upon meeting Redlace, an elf who discovered him 'sneaking' through the forest watching him, he declared, "I WANT TO BE AN ELF!" Redlace couldn't help him there, but he did rename him for the loud way the troll sneaks through the woods. Redlace became friends with Dripstone, now called Thunderfoot by the elves, and the two can often be seen together in the forest. Although he doesn't believe the troll can learn elven skills, Redlace patiently shows him the things he asks. Thunderfoot does have a lot of friends in the Holt, but there are others who merely tolerate his presence, such as Nightstep. The troll seems naive and always full of wide-eyed wonder when around the elves, but when in his natural habitat, the caverns, he is knowledgeable and sharp. His association with the elves often causes him to suffer scolding and ridicule from his own race, and it will eventually cause his family to disown him when the Troll Wars begin.

When in the company of elves, he sometimes gets in the way--especially to the gardeners and their food plants when he tries to 'help'. Though he has now been a familiar piece of scenery around the Holt for almost 20 years, he still acts youthful and spirited. In respect to Nightstep, Thunderfoot responds to him as "my chief", something which amuses Nightstep. Even though he knows elven ways, he is still unaware that elves can Send.

CREATIVE CONTROL: Teresa E. Arellanes & Ted R. Blasingame



DF 20 (GT)

CAN'T RUN FROM FEAR
 by Dana Evans

"Curse these Rockclimbers," Torisen swore, as his blade cut through a Rockclimbers's gut. The elf screamed and his blood spattered Torisen's white clothing. "These animal-blooded elves have always warred with us, over the water," Torisen thought bitterly. "Why can't we make peace?"

Torisen didn't have time to think about it. His long dagger swung up, deflecting one of the Rockclimber's blades. He kicked the smaller elf away. A scream in a voice all too familiar to Torisen broke through all the others that were ringing around him. He jerked around and saw his unrecognized lifemate, Fleyan, fall with two arrows buried in her chest. Regardless of the danger, Torisen knelt beside his love and took her in his arms. Experience told him that she would join the High Ones soon. Through the blood, she smiled at him.

It is less painful than I imagined, Torisen. For me the nightmare ends, she sent, and then she was gone. Tearfully, Torisen nuzzled her cheek and leapt back into the fight, lest he join her in the High Ones' Palace, and he wasn't ready to die. He rejoined the fight with a brutality he had not thought possible.

After the battle, Torisen allowed his grief to hit him fully. He curled up in the corner of his ward and cried. He was startled by his sister, Asha. Her eyes were red-ringed and swollen.

"You heard then?" she asked, seeing her brother's tears.

"I can't believe Fleyan's dead," he muttered, not hearing her.

"Fleyan's dead? Oh, Tori, I'm sorry."

"You didn't know, then why..." Torisen hesitated.

"Mother and Father are dead," Asha said flatly.

"Dead? No! No!" Torisen cried. Asha dropped by her brother's side and they clung to each other tightly.

That night Tori and Asha watched as their parents and friends were tied to zwoots and then animals were scared out into the desert. The Wind Riders couldn't bury their dead in the shifting sands and so they sent them into the deep desert.

Torisen went back to his ward, shrugging off those trying to comfort him. Once there, he began to fill his pack. He was tired to death of it all. Insanity waited for him if he remained. Torisen loved peace too much. His beloved harp, Whisperwind, was gently placed into her leather case. He readied his weapons. As much as he would have loved to leave them behind, Torisen knew he would need them.

"Tori, what are you doing?" Asha asked coming into the ward, startling her brother.

"I'm leaving, Asha. Come with me."

"Torisen, are you insane? Where would you go? What else is there but us and those animal Rockclimbers? Nothing! You have no where to go! Stay here and help destroy those Rockclimbers once and for all!" Asha exclaimed, emphatically.

"There is no once and for all! It's never ending! How can I stay here? How can you still want to fight? Mother is dead! Father is dead! Our friends are dead! I can't stand the death any more! Elf should not kill elf! I can't stay."

"You must not go! Kalan won't let you go!"

"What are you going to do? Run and tell Chief Kalan? What's he going to do? Hold me here in ropes?" Torisen screamed at her.

Asha turned away in tears. **You're all I have left, Hlaaroo,** her mind sobbed. Torisen stiffened, hearing his soulname. While he and his sister knew each other's soulnames, they rarely used them.

Lea, please understand. I'm not as strong as you. I will surely die if I stay.

Then go, Hlaoroc. I can't have your death on my soul.

Lea, you'll never leave my heart.

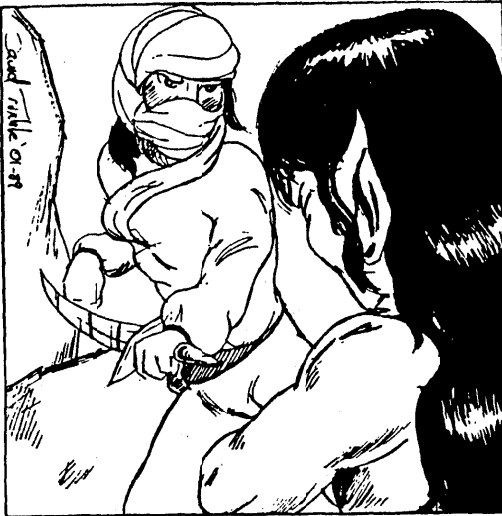
Asha crushed herself to her brother in a tearful hug. When they could find the will to let go, Torisen stroked her cheek, shouldered his pack and stepped out into the darkness. He whistled softly and was rewarded by the almost silent flap of wings. Torisen's trained hunting hawk, Wing, settled onto Torisen's arm. Wing's talons gripped tightly into the long heavy glove on Torisen's left hand.

They hadn't gone far from the village when Wing took to the air with a shriek. Torisen's long dagger was in his hand and he scanned the area. He heard the soft pads of the cat's feet a second too late. The mountain lion's claws tore his back even as he leapt aside. A Rockclimber elf leapt from his cat-friend's back and swung a sword at Torisen. Too stunned to move fast enough, Torisen got his belly slashed. The gash was bloody, but, luckily, not very deep.

Wing flew down and pecked and clawed at the eyes of Torisen's attacker. Torisen recovered and sunk his dagger into the Rockclimber's middle. It was a mortal wound but Torisen knew it would take a long time for the Rockclimber to die. Torisen believed that no one should have to suffer, so he mercifully finished off his enemy. Unfortunately, Torisen forgot about the mountain lion.

He heard it growl and whirled only to be knocked to the ground. Instinctively he got his hands between his throat and the cat's fangs. Screaming in pain as his hands were rent, Torisen thrust the hand the cat was gnawing farther down its throat, choking it. His other, bleeding hand grabbed up his dagger and opened the cat's neck.

Shocked and nearly delirious with pain, Torisen ran, and then glided away. He had no idea where he was headed or even of what he was doing. Finally exhausted and weak from loss of blood, he fell from the sky. He was unconscious before he hit the ground.



* * *

"Go on! Get away from him!" someone screamed. It cut through to Torisen. Wing's screeching and the high pitched piping of some strange multicolored things threatened to explode Torisen's aching head. He tried to move but he found he was covered to his neck in sticky white threads.

"What?" he murmured weakly.

"Awake are you? Falling asleep in a preservers' wood isn't too smart."

"Preservers? Who are you?" Torisen finally focused on a pale elf, with dark brown hair, which was worn loose except for a braid framing the left side of his face.

"I'm Dreamchaser."

"What are those noisy little winged things?"

"What? The preservers?"

"Is that what they are?" Torisen asked.

"Yes. They love to make messes. Who are you?"

"Torisen. How did I get here?"

"I haven't the slightest. I'll have you out of this stuff in a moment." As Dreamchaser pulled off the wrapstuff - much to the distress of the preservers - he re-started the bleeding of the wounds on Torisen's belly and back.

"You're hurt!"

"Badly," Torisen gasped as his pain was renewed.

"These pests may have saved your life. I'll have to bandage as I go." Dreamchaser did his best but when he uncovered Torisen's hands he was at a loss as to what to do. Bones jutted out at odd angles; muscles were hanging or missing all together; ligaments and tendons were exposed shiny white against the red muscle.

"High Ones! I...I don't know what to do!"

"Do what you can," Torisen breathed, as he went deathly gray. He fainted.

When Torisen came to, he found his head pillowed on his turban. He could see Wing perched on a limb watching Dreamchaser roasting a rabbit. He put his bandaged hands against his head. They throbbed terribly and Torisen moaned in pain.

Dreamchaser jerked his head up at the sound. "Awake again? I have a little something for the pain. I'll give it to you after you eat." Dreamchaser eased Torisen into a sitting position and leaned him against a tree. He plucked meat from the rabbit and put it into Torisen's mouth. Torisen found he didn't have much of an appetite.

"I owe you my life, Dreamchaser," he said quietly.

"We're here to help each other." That struck a chord with Torisen.

"Yes. I never knew a green, growing place like this existed." Torisen sighed, taking in the forest.

"Where do you come from?"

"A desert. It's that...well, I'm not sure where it is. I don't know which way I came. What's that?" Torisen cried suddenly, his eyes fixed on something behind Dreamchaser.

"That's Silverblaze, my wolf. Haven't you ever seen a wolf before?" Dreamchaser asked incredulously. Torisen shook his head, his eyes open wide. "He's harmless," Dreamchaser said, but Torisen didn't believe him.

"Here, drink some of this, Torisen. It'll take away some of the pain." Dreamchaser held a winesack to Torisen's lips. The drink gave Torisen a head rush.

"What is it?"

"Dreamberry wine." Dreamchaser let Torisen have another drink. It put the wounded elf to sleep.

* * *

A few cycles of the moon had passed and Torisen was still travelling with Dreamchaser. He had some trouble adjusting to riding the wolf, which he did while he was healing. It reminded him too much of the Rockclimbers and their cats. Suddenly Dreamchaser signaled for him to stop and be silent. Torisen watched as Dreamchaser stalked something. Then suddenly a group of large smelly creatures carrying weapons burst through the foliage. The startled Torisen so badly, he levitated up past the tops of the trees, like a shot. Dreamchaser had taken cover

and was letting loose a deadly barrage of arrows. Torisen tried to do the same. Two of his fingers had webbed together when they healed. The rest were stiff, scarred and pained. His once-accurate aim had been impaired. He had been practicing, to help with the hunting, but he wasn't where he needed to be. Still, between he and Dreamchaser, they finished off the humans. Torisen cautiously floated back Dreamchaser stared at him in amazement.

"High Ones! My mother told me tales, but I never believed... How do you do that?"

"By the strength of my will, I guess. I could do it as soon as I was born," Torisen shrugged. To him and the Wind Riders, gliding was commonplace. "What are those things?" he asked, pointing to the dead creatures.

"What? Them? Don't you know anything? Those are humans, five-fingers, round ears, or whatever else you want to call them."

"I have never heard of such things."

"Never?" Dreamchaser couldn't believe that.

"No. I assume they're dangerous."

"Most are. Some are elf-friendly, but I'm not taking any chances with them. As far as I'm concerned, the only good one is a dead one." Torisen shuddered involuntarily at that.

* * *

The fire lit the two elves' faces with a warm glow. They had just finished a meal of roast squirrel. Torisen thought about the day before last, when he and Dreamchaser had a run-in with trolls. Like humans, Dreamchaser warned him that the only good one was a dead one. Sure, some elves traded with them, but no troll was trustworthy. Torisen was repulsed by the warty green things.

He thought about everything Dreamchaser had taught him, especially on how to survive in the forest. He didn't know what he would have done without him. Dreamchaser taught him how to really drink wine and how to gamble - both in the same night - and Torisen found he had a real taste for the wine. Dreamchaser had a good laugh when Torisen panicked during a snow flurry. Well, he had never seen snow before, so how was he to know it wasn't dangerous. The only thing he didn't like about Dreamchaser was Silverblaze.

"Dreamchaser, how did you get Silverblaze?"

"He came to me when...when things got real bad," Dreamchaser hesitated, looking at the scar on his wrist. Torisen noticed but he didn't say anything.

"But why does he stay?"

"We're bonded. It's in the blood, I guess."

"What do you mean... 'in the blood'?" Torisen asked sharply.

"There's a little wolf blood running around my veins."

Torisen jumped up and backed away. "You're just like them...those cursed vile Rockclimbers! Half animal just like them!" Torisen shrieked. Dreamchaser stood uneasily. Torisen looked crazy to him. "Not fit to be an elf!" Torisen spat. "I feel...soiled ever having known you! Don't come near me! he screamed, as Dreamchaser moved closer.

"Calm down, Torisen. I thought we were friends."

"Friends?" Torisen laughed, hysterically. "No longer!"

"Sit down by the fire, Torisen. Calm down." Dreamchaser said, edging closer.

"Don't!" Torisen half drew his dagger. Both elves froze. Torisen could hear Silverblaze growling. The image of a Rockclimber and a mountain lion crossed his mind. He had fled his home so he would never have to draw a weapon against his own kind, yet he was ready to cut down his friend. With a strangled cry, he glided off into the night.

* * *

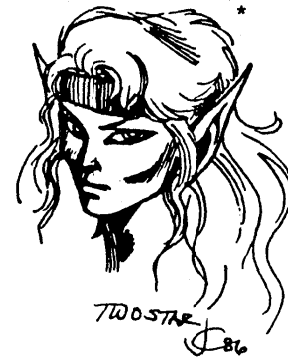
From his excellent position, floating above the tree tops, Torisen spied two hunting elves. Torisen had found the forest valley after crossing a sea of grass. He wanted desperately to go to the elves, but what if they were animal blooded too? He had regretted running from Dreamchaser, for years afterwards. He had not seen another elf since then. Perhaps animal blood wasn't so terrible as he was taught. He and Dreamchaser had been friends. He and his fear - yes, he admitted, it wasn't hate, it was fear - had ruined it. His mother always told him you can't run from fear. Finally he found the courage to meet the others. He was too tired and lonely to even care any more. He wasn't going to ask if they had animal blood or not. He didn't want to know. He needed company, so he glided down behind them.

"Hello," he said quietly. The other two elves whirled. "I'm sorry to startle you. I'm Torisen."

"Sapphire and Ivory," Ivory said. "You aren't from the Holt, are you?" Holt? That was more than Torisen had hoped for. "No! Is there one near here?"

"Yes. We can take you there if you'd like."

"Yes!" Happier than he had been for years, Torisen followed them home.



GUIDELINES FOR THE ARTISTS

The artists are very important to the holt newsletter and we wish that all who can draw would participate in making TIMBERS look good. In the past issues of the newsletter, artwork has been sent in all different shapes and sizes, according to their contents, thus making the set-up of pages a bit of a challenge. But, to maintain the quality we've been trying to put out, we would like to have all future artwork done in certain dimensions.

When I set up the layout and typing for the newsletter, I work with standard 8½" X 11" sized pages. After all is ready, they are reduced 65% -- to the "digest" format. When drawing your illustrations, I need the originals drawn full size so I can fit them properly into the text. Sending illos already reduced only creates problems for me, as I have to enlarge them to work in my parameters.

General spot-illos can be just about any size, but, unless otherwise requested, all full-page and story illustrations are to follow these sizes:

* Full-page drawings are to have a ½" border, which means it must fit into a 7½" X 10" area. Drawings sent without this border may find a half-inch cropped off all sides when printed to allow for it.

* Half-page drawings are to fit into a 5" X 10" area. A border isn't necessary, but is a great help.

* Inter-story drawings are desired to fit into a 3 3/4" X 3 3/4" area, but will be accepted up to 4" X 4" measurements.

* Character Illos are used in Profiles, so should fit into a 3½"(w) X 5"(h) area.

Please remember this: Never send your only copy of your artwork. Originals need not be sent in -- a good, clean photocopy will be quite acceptable. However, please don't send in poor quality copies of grey, since they don't reproduce well.

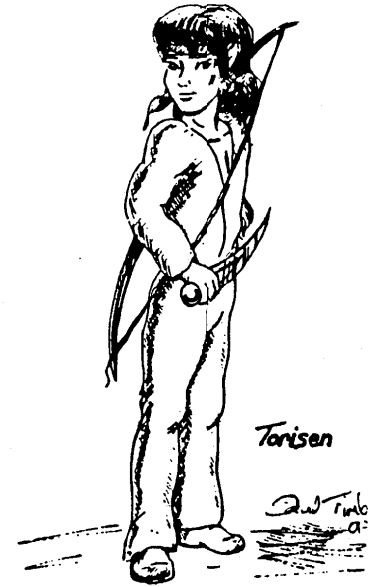
Also, do not bother to send in drawings done in pencil or colored inks. They are too hard to print and will not be considered.

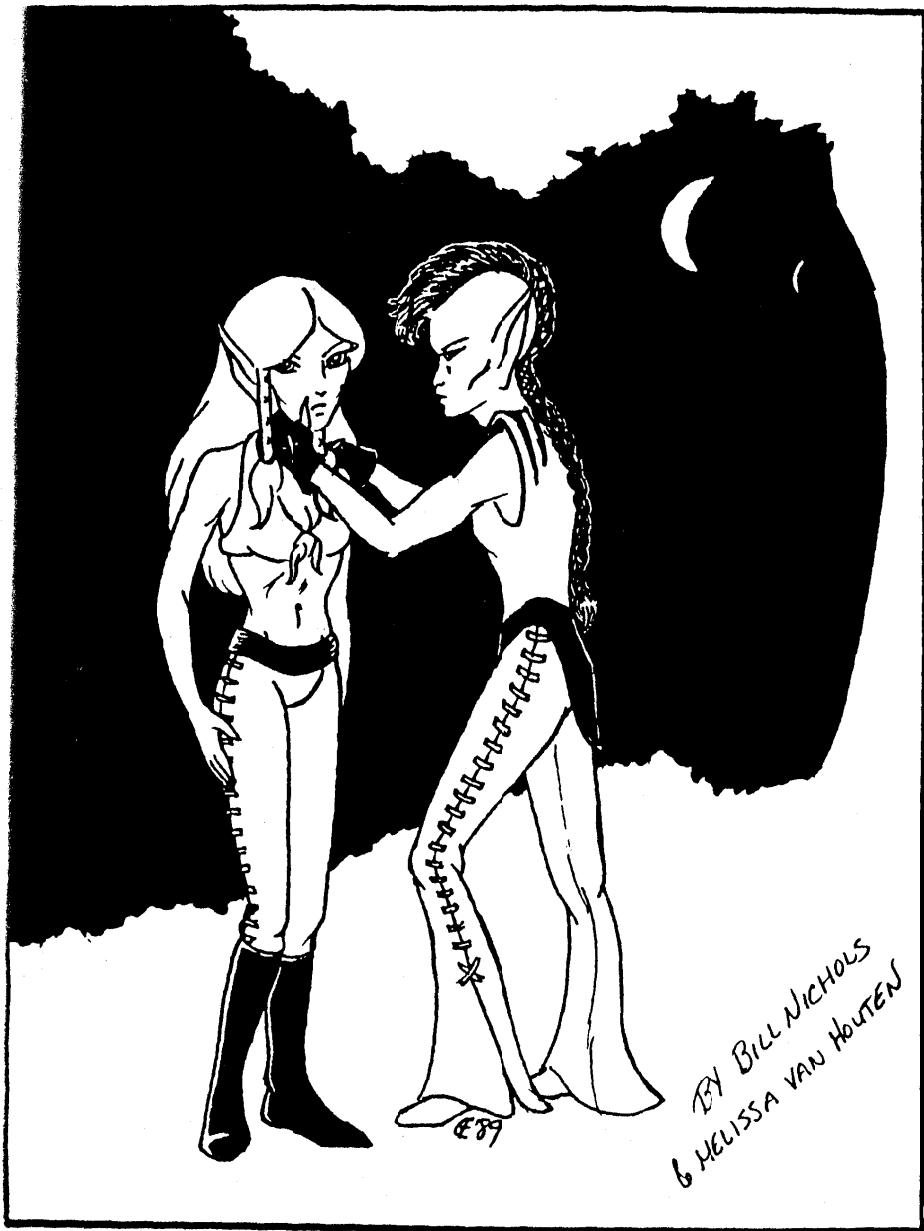
Request: If you do not currently have any artwork in our files, please send in 2-3 samples of what you can do, along with a simple statement of what you volunteer for. If you want to illustrate stories, let us know. If you only want to contribute character profiles or spot fillos, tell us.

When sending artwork, please do not send them folded in an envelope. Most artists realize this, but there are a few who do not. The crease lines from folded artwork usually show up in printing. If you have a title for the particular piece of artwork, please write it in pencil on the back. It's also a good idea to include your name, so you can be credited for it. Several art pieces in my files have no names on them.

If your drawing has more than one character in it, please write a small list as to who you've drawn. Everyone enjoys seeing their characters appear in drawings or illustrations, sometimes more than having them appear in a story!

Have fun!





"I enjoyed that," Starlight said as she tied the knot on her halter top. Gathering up her boots and belt, she took one last look at the river and sighed. "Nothing like a good swim." She pulled herself away and headed back to the Holt, running her fingers through her hair to get out the tangles as she walked.

Back at the hometree she shared with Smoke, she dropped her boots just inside the door and sat down on the furs and set about drying her long white tresses. As she reached for a wineskin, Starlight became aware of muffled noises and giggles coming from the sleeping chamber. Sticking out her tongue playfully at the unseeing curtain separating the two rooms, she thought, 'He's with Evenfell again. He's such a slut.'

Starlight quietly exited the tree, with the wineskin, and wandered around the Holt. She couldn't stay home, but she just didn't particularly have anywhere else to be. Hearing voices coming from the Council Clearing, she lingered in the shadows, not wanting to interrupt the conversation going on between Mooncrest, Rogue and Nightway.

Soon the young trashesaper, Nightway, stood up and loudly announced her intention to go home and to bed. Mooncrest winked at Rogue and said he would be only too glad to escort her.

Rogue watched them go, then stood himself and started off in the direction of his own hometree. Formulating an idea, Starlight followed him silently, not sure how to phrase her question properly. She finally decided to give up on tact; after all, the worst he could do would be to say 'no'.

"Hey, Blackspear! Wait up!" she called as she jogged the few steps it took to catch up with him. Rogue stopped and waited for her to reach his side. She threaded her arm through his as they resumed walking and turned her head slightly to look at him, mentally timing how long it would take for him to look back.

When he finally did, she said, "...Rogue?" She tried to make her eyebrows jump up and down suggestively as she had seen others do, but somehow it didn't feel right. By the look on Rogue's face, it didn't look right, either.

"Something in your eyes, Starlight?" he asked, turning her to face him. Rogue tenderly caressed her face as he tried to search her eyes for some speck of dirt or something. The situation was perfect if only Starlight could time it right.

"Rogue?" she asked, faking a pout. Rogue, thinking he was missing something, looked all around her eyes, his face just a finger's-length away.

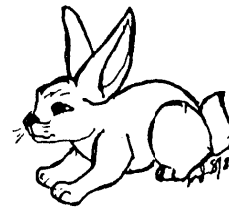
"I can't see anything, Starlight. I--"

"Wanna take a tumble in the old sleep-furs?" Starlight asked, her eyes staring directly into his. Rogue stopped looking around her eyes and looked INTO them.

"Uh...", he replied. Suddenly, the thing with Starlight's eyebrows made sense. Well, he thought, at least it would make a good story.

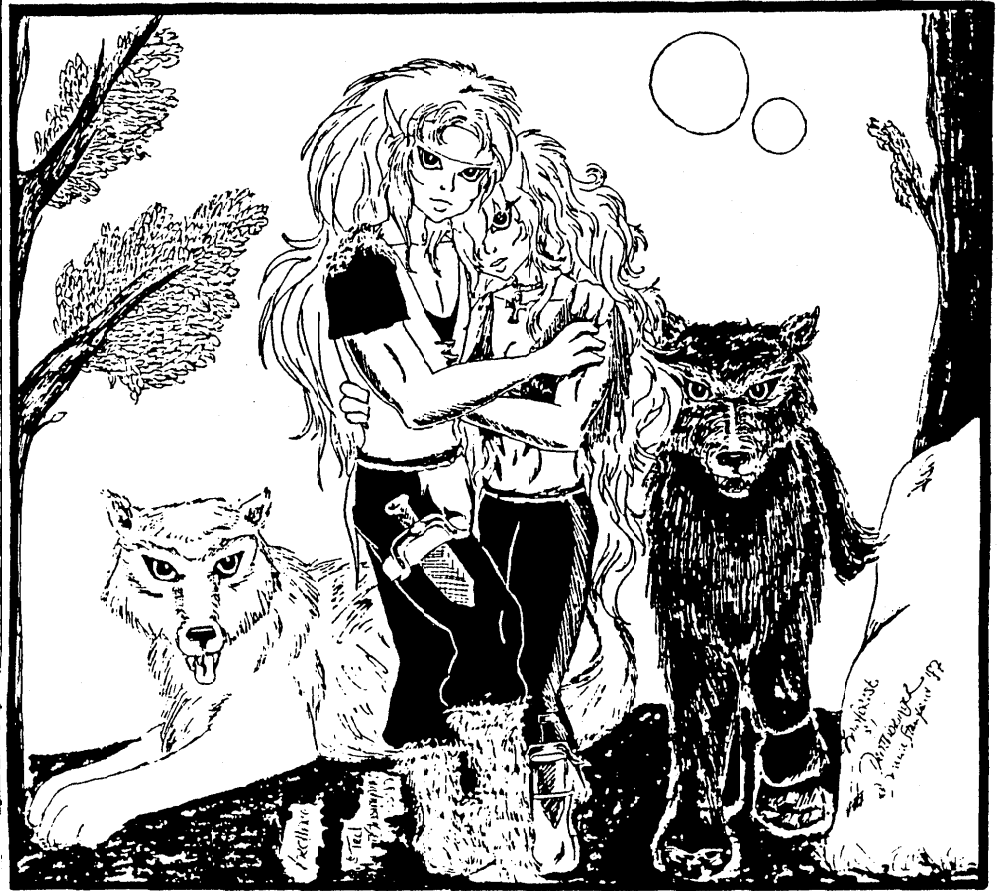
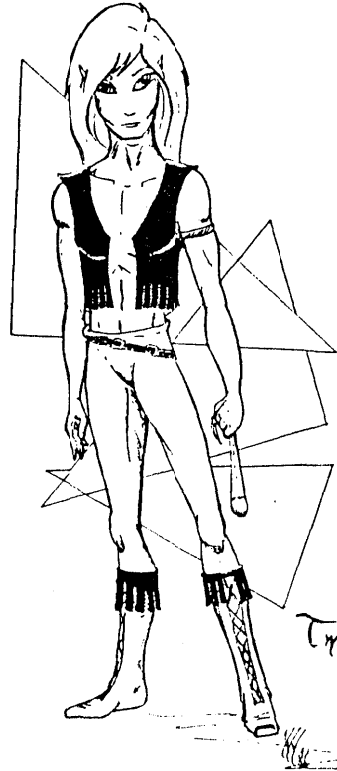
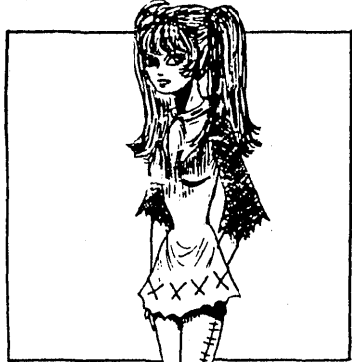
His answer was a wide grin. Starlight answered with a smile just as wide as she let Rogue take her hand and lead her back to his hometree.

*





REDTHORN



ART CREDITS

- MICHELLE BENDIT: Pg 17 (Goldenbrat).
 VALERIE BOWE: Pg 3 (Woodwreath, Cloudracer), pg 4 (Splitbath, Mocker), pg 7 (Stormer, Springbowl, pg 8 (Piercer, Mocker), pg 9 (Sapphire, Mooncrest, Coppermane).
 RUTH CLARK: Pg 8 (Quicksilver).
 JENNIFER CROSBY: Pg 8 (Diver), pg 15 (Trace, Goldenbrat, Two Star).
 APRIL LEE: Pg 10 (Orystone).
 LAURA LITONSON: Pg 17 (Chance).
 MARY LOPEZ: Pg 8 (Redthorn), pg 20 (Redthorn).
 MELODY LUKE: Pg 16 (Frost), pg 19 (rabbit).
 MARIA HANEMANN: Pg 17 (Foxvine).
 BILL NICHOLS: Pg 20 (Mooncrest).
 KARYN OJAMAA: Pg 17 (Tempest), pg 22 (Starlight).
 SANDY SCHREIBER: Pg 20 (Trilligh).
 SHARON JANE SMITH: Pg 1 (Hoodwink, Mooncrest).
 TERRIE SMITH: Pg 21 (Hushleaf).
 SHARON STANFORD: Pg 21 (Redlace, Rainforest).
 DAVID TRIMBLE: Pg 12 (Rockclimber, Torisen), pg 15 (Torisen), pg 17 (Torisen).
 MELISSA VAN HOUTEN: Pg 18 (Starlight, Rogue).
 DEB WHITMER: Pg 23 (Pebble).
 NIKKI VIELEBA: Pg 20 (Twill).

TEA Time

HAPPY NEW YEAR, TIMBER FOLK!!

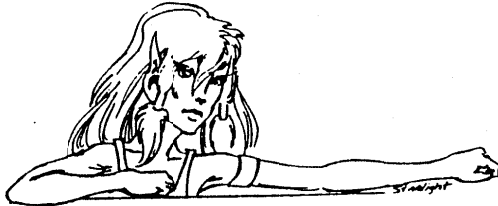
I hope the entire membership had a wonderful holiday season. With this issue, the elves start a new turn of seasons and I know all of mine are out frisking in the daisies. It's still a little nippy out here on the West Coast, but I'm perversely pleased to say it was not a white Christmas. It doesn't snow in Santa Barbara, folks, ever. I did notice that the San Gabriel mountains south of LA were covered in it. [Hey, April, did you get to go skiing this season?]

Anyway, other than that, things have been weird around here. I broke up with a boyfriend, and found a new one in a long lost friend. I quit my job at the local news-press, and found a new one after a three week vacation at a publishing company. I have also been sick for the past FREAKING eight weeks, so once again, my mail hasn't been answered. It's not nice to come home at 4pm and crash till six the next morning. BLAH! Also, that is the reason, besides good old procrastination, that this newsletter is late. It was my first and I blew it. But my respect for our members who also run Holts has expanded ten-fold, let me tell you. Onwards.

Ted is now the proud owner of a word processor - the same exact model and brand as I have. I even know of one other TVH member that has it as well. So, just in case you hated the layout of this issue, rest assured it will be back in Ted's capable hands for TIMBERS 16.

Telephone games...I love to make and get long distance phone calls from the membership, and I know the members like to hear from each other via Ma Bell. Please be courteous when calling. Take into account the difference in time zones, if any, and be sure to leave your name AND telephone number. You might be surprised when you get a return call. If you know that one of the Timber Folk lives at home, be nice to their parents, don't call too late (or too early), and leave a message. I nearly pull my hair out when my Dad says "Some guy/girl called. I don't think it was Mark/Terri/Ted." Not too helpful, eh?

Gentle reminders -- CIS's and some stories come to me. Membership dues (MONEY), artwork, stories, change of address or address corrections go to Ted. If you have a problem with the policies set up by the TIMBERS staff, please contact Ted with your complaint. Example: The Artist Guidelines. When Ted took the reins back from Jo, a few items were changed to help things flow smoother in putting together your newsletter. The Art Guide (printed elsewhere in this issue) was one of them. After one member sent in a few art samples to Ted, he requested that in the future full-page drawings have a border around them. This person became miffed and complained to me, since Jo hadn't required this before. Mind you, Ted didn't reject the art, only requested that in the future any full-page art have a border. Until this issue, there hasn't been a way to let all the artists know about the changes. Please folks, if you're upset about something Ted or I have done, talk to us directly like adults. If you don't like a policy, let Ted know. We really are open minded and willing to work things out with the membership.

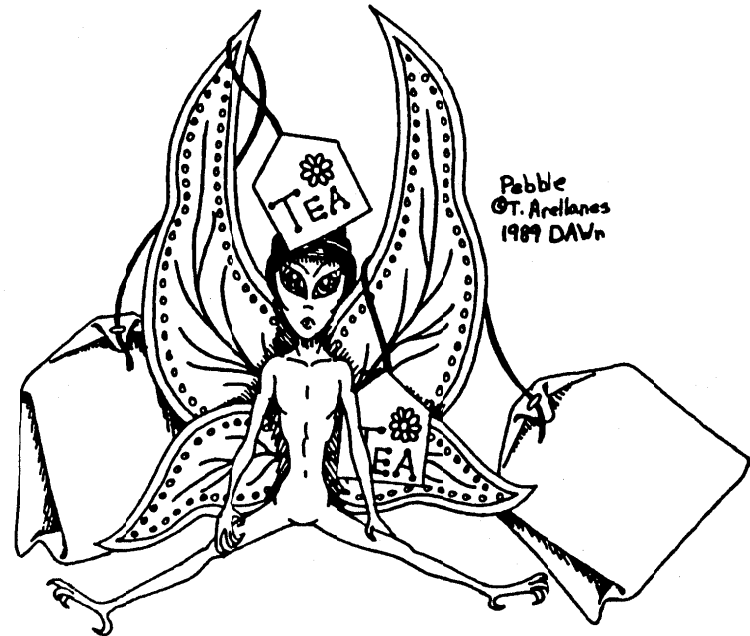


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Suggestion: Since TEA TIME started up, I've been using preservers as my -- how shall I say it? -- Mascots. ARTISTS: I need preserver pictures! I would like to thank Deb Whitmer, once again, for drawing Pebble's picture for TIMBERS 14 on the spot while I was in Kansas, and for the lovely work for this issue as well. We also haven't seen a TIMBER VALLEY ROAD SIGN CARTOON in ages. All you old timers may remember how TVH got its name, but for all you new members....When Ted and a couple of his friends decided to start a holt, they took the name from the street he lived on at the time...TIMBER VALLEY. During Volume One of TIMBERS, there would be little cartoons around or about this street's road sign. It would be nice to see them again. Hey, Ruth! You used to do tons of them! (Hint, hint, hint!) Anyway, it was just a thought.

Well, I guess that's all for now folks. See you in a few moons!

Greeneyes



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