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FREE

40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

# ELFQUEST<sup>®</sup>

SPECIAL

WENDY PINI  
RICHARD PINI



# HERE'S TO 40 YEARS OF ELFQUEST!

*Thank you Wendy and  
Richard Pini. Shade and  
Sweet Water to you!*

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# ELFQUEST

SPECIAL

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# 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ELFQUEST<sup>®</sup> SPECIAL

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# FORTY

## OF ADVENTURE!

If you're not new to *ElfQuest*, you already know much of what follows here.

You've heard how, in the spring of 1977, *Star Wars* the movie demonstrated to the world that science-fantasy was a force (pun intended) to be reckoned with. How, armed with that realization, we—Wendy and Richard Pini—determined to take our own shot at world building, which we called “ElfQuest.” How we nearly lost two issues’ worth of original art to an unscrupulous publisher who did a shoddy job of printing the first issue but who, in all fairness, still managed get the job done so that, in early 1978, comics fandom was introduced to the adventures of Cutter, scrappy elfin leader of the forest-dwelling Wolfriders. But even so, you’ll still find much that’s new in this 40th anniversary ashen, so stick around!

If however you are a newcomer to the World of Two Moons, then hopefully this little pamphlet will enlighten you. You must be wondering what’s it all about. Perhaps you’ve seen the name “ElfQuest” as it zips across your social media radar screen. Maybe a friend mentioned that they used to read it. Are you curious? Do you wonder what could motivate two people to start a project that would take four decades to complete?

Few set out to realize an idea, expecting that the task might take two-thirds of a lifetime (so far). We certainly didn’t. After

we’d witnessed the ripples through pop culture created by *Star Wars*, Wendy—already a professional fantasy artist—shared the plot of an elaborate fantasy saga she’d been wanting to tell for a long time. We determined the best format to do so was comic books, since we were both fans, and comics are still the most engaging synthesis of words and pictures around. We figured the basic story could be told in about fifteen issues, and all we really hoped to get out of the process was some fun, and not to go broke.

There’s a joke that goes, “How do you make the gods laugh?” “Tell them your plans.” Our plans were simply to write, draw, print, and distribute our little thrice-yearly comic book as best we could. We had little idea what we were doing, but we must have done it right, because *ElfQuest*’s first issue immediately sold out its 10,000 copy print run. This figure may not mean much until you know that, at the time, the sale of a thousand copies of



# YEARS

BY RICHARD PINI

any indie publication was a miracle, nearly unheard of. Issue #2 doubled down and sold 20,000 copies. By the time the initial saga was wrapped up, twenty issues later (the characters, proving even more feisty than we knew, would not be confined to fifteen), *ElfQuest* was even outselling some of Marvel's *X-Men* or DC's *Batman* titles.

We'd told the gods our plans, and they went fairly hysterical with laughter. "Sorry, Wendy and Richard, but you're nowhere near done, because the elves are nowhere near done with you."

Somehow, *ElfQuest* touched—and continues to touch—a deep chord in its readers.

When the final issue (#20) of the introductory tale premiered in autumn, 1984 at the World Science Fiction Convention in Los Angeles, some 1200

fans showed up to help us celebrate at a gala "End of the Quest" party. And we knew that *ElfQuest* was not—could not be—finished. Especially as there was still so much more story to be told. Essentially, the "original quest" is akin to J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. It's a lovely book on its own, yet it also serves as a lead-in to the *Lord of the Rings* epic.

And so it is with *ElfQuest*. The Original Quest served to introduce the major

players in what had always been planned as a great Hero's Journey for the lead character, Cutter Kinseeker, Blood of Ten Chiefs. From forest to desert to frozen northland he leads the Wolfriders; from callow youth to mature chieftain he has been tested over and over.

We have also been tested in the creation, over decades, of this world-and-time-spanning story. As the elves have enjoyed victory and endured betrayal in their world, so have we in this real world of business dealings and occasional broken promises. But those are tales for another time, around a different campfire, hopefully with full mugs of dreamberry wine!

***ElfQuest was even outselling some of Marvel's X-Men or DC's Batman titles***

Here, you have an overview of the whole elfin shebang and we hope you are intrigued to dive further into the world of *ElfQuest*. Even as one

Hero's Journey concludes (we hope, satisfyingly) we can hear the gods snickering, whispering "They think they're finished. Hold my beer!"

The quest goes ever on.



# THE MANY FACES OF ELFQUEST

## THE WOLFRIDERS

The Wolfriders are the main characters of Elfquest, a shy and secretive tribe of forest dwellers who have allied themselves with the wolves of the World of Two Moons.



## THE SUN FOLK

The Sun Folk are a secluded, peaceful community of farmers who settled ages ago in the desert oasis of Sorrow's End.



One of the great things about *ElfQuest* is its wide variety of fascinating players. Each individual possesses unique characteristics, from characters who have matured and grown since the beginning of the tale, to the young and the new who have much more recently joined the cast. Each of the elfin tribes have

touched one another, even if only in the most fleeting of ways.

Though there's nowhere near enough room to show every face from the history of *ElfQuest* here, the Who's Who on *ElfQuest.com* does an incredible job of just that.



### THE GO-BACKS

A tribe of elves from the Frozen Mountains of the north, the rough, blunt Go-Backs originally set out to take the Palace of the High Ones back by force.



### THE TROLLS

The Trolls arrived on The World of Two Moons as minions to the elves; they are creative, industrious and not terribly friendly toward their erstwhile masters.





**CUTTER KINSEEKER**, Eleventh Chief of the Wolfriders, Soul Name: Tam, Lifemate of Leetah, Soul-brother to Skywise, Father of Ember and Sunstream



**LEETAH**, Healer and Advisor, Lifemate of Cutter



**SKYWISE**, Stargazer, Soul Name: Fahr



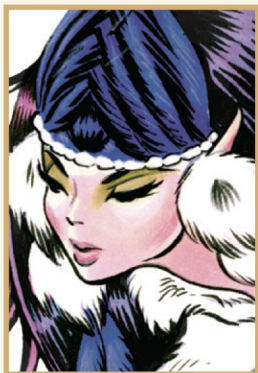
**EMBER**, Twelfth Chief of the Wolfriders, Soul Name: Zheel



**SUNSTREAM**, The Psychic Link, Soul Name: Klynn



**RAYEK**, Winnowill's Jailor, Father to Venka



**WINNOWILL**, The Black Snake, Mother of Two-Edge the half-troll



**VENKA**, Chieftess of the Go-Backs, Magic-Blocker



**TIMMAIN**, Firstcomer, Ancestor of all Wolfriders





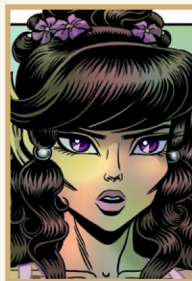
NIGHTFALL



REDLANCE



STRONG BOW



MOONSHADE



TREESTUMP



CLEARBROOK



PIKE



TIER



DEWSHINE



TYLEET



MENDER



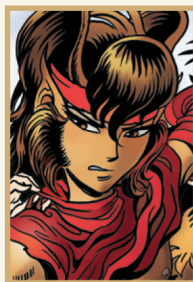
WINDKIN



SUST



FREETOUCH



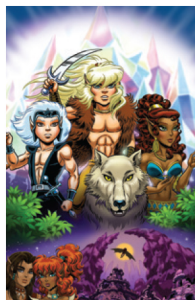
DART



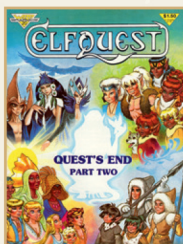
KRIM



# FINAL QUEST COVER GALLERY







## ORIGINAL QUEST #20

This was our first big wrap-up; we'd set out with a big goal and we actually achieved it. There were hurdles along the way, both business and personal, but with this issue we and the elves achieved—even if temporary—a feel-good place to rest for a bit. Collected in *The Complete ElfQuest* Volume One



## KINGS OF THE BROKEN WHEEL #7

In the late 1980s, Wendy was in constant physical pain while drawing “Kings of the Broken Wheel” (soon after to be corrected by hip replacement surgery). In this chapter her avatar, Cutter, hits his own spiritual nadir, making this one of the most personally symbolic issues for either of us. Collected in *The Complete ElfQuest* Volume Two



## HIDDEN YEARS #3

Readers, often keenly enamored of the elves, sometimes lose sight of the fact that these otherworldly beings live immeasurably longer lives than we humans. “Little Patch” highlights that contrast—with compassion, humor, sadness, and deep emotional insight—in what we feel may just be *ElfQuest*’s most beautifully rendered issue. Collected in *The Complete ElfQuest* Volume Three



## HIDDEN YEARS #9 1/2

When pressure builds, sooner or later something's got to give. Rayek kidnapped Cutter's family and now it's payback time. In 40 pages of gritty action (Wendy Pini pencils inked by John Byrne), the two elfin antagonists go after each other mercilessly, leading to the unexpected, but only possible, outcome. Collected in *The Complete ElfQuest* Volume Three



## FINAL QUEST #22

As *Final Quest* builds to its decades-in-the-making conclusion, Wendy especially likes this issue, only two installments before the ending. She says, “It was a bear. It fought me every step of the way. Nothing seemed to be going right, but when everything was finished, it felt perfect!”



# ELFQUEST

For those of us who grew up reading print comics from the newsstand or the comic shop, but have since then witnessed the birth of digital comics, we may feel we have seen major changes in the landscape of comic publishing. We would not be wrong to think so, and the developments that we have gradually embraced in comics form a continuum that may yet lead to changes far beyond our current imaginative climate.

However, the shifts that occurred in both the method of creating comics and in publishing in the decades before many of us were part of the comics conversation were so wide-ranging and astonishing in their impact that it is hard for more youthful readers to fully grasp those seismic shifts now. And yet those very shifts created the continental drifts that led to the current changes we still witness. Conceptually, comics became community-driven in the hands of self-publishers like Wendy and Richard Pini, the creators of *ElfQuest*, long before the dawn of fan-driven webcomics or crowdfunding platforms.

***“Conceptually, comics became community-driven in the hands of self-publishers like Wendy and Richard Pini, the creators of *ElfQuest*, long before the dawn of fan-driven webcomics or crowdfunding platforms.”***

No doubt books will be written on the ways in which *ElfQuest*, and self-published comics that followed *ElfQuest*’s example, blazed remarkable trails in fan engagement. This is particularly likely now that the Pinis have generously donated a wealth of original art and supporting documents as an *ElfQuest*

archive to the library at Columbia University. The size of the donation itself, and Columbia’s delight in receiving it, suggest just how significant comics historians know *ElfQuest* to be, and what potential for research and discussion lies ahead.

The unlikelihood of *ElfQuest* ever coming into existence as we know it was, however, profound. All it would have taken would have been a momentary hesitation from the Pinis when their first *ElfQuest* story appeared in an indie comics magazine printed on sub-standard materials, only for that publisher to promptly go out of business. They could have taken that as a sign to move on and try some other endeavor less precarious, less potentially disappointing, than comics. But instead, they didn’t simply take the series to another publisher, but sat down and conceived of a superior way to present the material, geared toward aesthetic values and a rich reading experience for the audience. Taking matters one step further, they self-published that material, a decisive act that set them on a path which is still unfolding forty years later.



Trying to pin down the alchemy of appeal in the comic series itself will leave you certain of its raptor-like ability to seize the

# AN ORIGINAL LEGACY

BY HANNAH MEANS-SHANNON

reader's attention, but perhaps even less able to single out just one particular quality that makes it shine. But if you open a book like *The Complete ElfQuest* Volume 1, which takes you back in crisp clarity to the "Original Quest" and earliest *ElfQuest* stories, you will be immediately struck by Wendy Pini's art style and the intense use of page space for layered narrative. You'll also notice the manga-like visual focus on the emotional state of the comic's characters, as well as the more general mood of each panel. It's no exaggeration to say that a single panel is often capable of conveying a whole world in *ElfQuest*.

And yet this is a book that transmits thousands of years of alternate history for its star-traveling and shipwrecked elves, the splintered clans that result from their crash-landing in pre-history, and in particular, the life and times of the Wolfriders. This is a story world that plays out on both the large scale and the small scale, and suggests that both have virtually equal emotional weight in the narrative.

***"This is a story world that plays out on both the large scale and the small scale, and suggests that both have virtually equal emotional weight in the narrative."***

Central characters Cutter and Skywise immediately enable the reader to grasp the intense personal lives of the elves, and the procession of long periods of time and vast distances in space enable the reader to grasp their cultural and historical context in ways that we may wish we could grasp our own.

The Pinis built upon these original core elements to establish an astonishingly wide

cast of characters, times, and places. It is hard to conceive of a more expansive story universe in the realms of science fiction or fantasy than the Pinis have created through attention to their original architecture. Their ability to build *ElfQuest* has been just as impressive as their ability has been to reach readers outside of mainstream distribution.

Of course, prior to the Pinis, there had been other comic creators who discovered that self-publication can reach readers, and their lessons learned no doubt empowered *ElfQuest* to come into being in the same way that *ElfQuest* has since then empowered many comics in the digital comics generation to reach out to their own fanbases. But innovation is often found, not only in the tools we use, but in how we use them. With *ElfQuest*, the Pinis essentially took a model previously associated with underground comix and applied the verve and self-determination of that movement to an entirely new mode of storytelling.

Their new mode was genre-blending fantasy that would parallel the interests of the mainstream comics industry and, even more closely, the interests of the mainstream prose fiction market. Somewhere at the intersection of the two, *ElfQuest* would not only become a monumental success story, but usher several generations of fantasy fans into the realm of comics readership, too.

In retrospect, what Wendy and Richard Pini did contained plenty of common sense, but it also reflected very specific personal aesthetics that the Pinis expanded into in the hopes of creating a superior reading experience. They took their story and blew it up into magazine format, created a full-color glossy cover for it, and provided extra character portraits on the back covers. They created their story on substantial paper stock that would do justice to the lavish inking and make

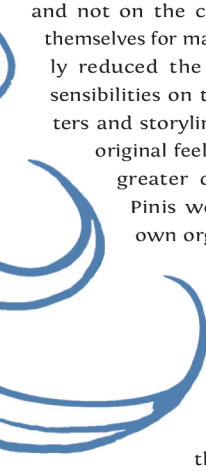


reading the script elements sharper and clearer. That paved the way for readers to encounter the Pinis' story as a more opulent experience of the fantastic.

As *ElfQuest* grew, and as readers, holding this superior quality of book in their hands, experienced the unique world and universe the Pinis had artfully created for them, people were, quite simply, hooked. The Pinis had created a new product in a new format that appealed to the senses, the emotions, and a desire for community among readers. Only as the



comic became increasingly successful did other potential self-publishers take note of this emerging fandom as a developing marketplace.



*ElfQuest* soon garnered interest from publishers, but the Pinis decided to only work with publishers on the collected editions, and not on the creation of the stories themselves for many years. This effectively reduced the influence of outside sensibilities on the creation of characters and storylines and shored up the original feel of *ElfQuest* to an even greater degree. However, the Pinis were not without their own organizational structures for production. They have spoken in the past about Richard's role as editor and co-scripter in the creation of *ElfQuest*, and little insights like these help unlock the mysteries of the comic's success.

When Richard and Wendy co-scripted each issue of their comic, they produced a back-and-forth typical of editorial process. When Richard quite literally took out a pen and trimmed and reconfigured dialog, he brought an internal awareness of process to the series that kept the reader in mind and focused on a specific goal: the greatest possible quality in the final product.

If the Pinis are beginning to sound both like business people and a two-person publishing house, that is because they pioneered both personas for comic creators seeking to publish and distribute their own work. If that sounds unromantic compared to the alluring, and often extravagantly beautiful stories that Wendy and Richard tell, ask yourself: What could be more romantic than producing an experience with readers so firmly in mind that stories arrive regularly for them in high-quality format? Nothing takes a reader as directly out of the world of a comics story than the conditions under which they are read. The Pinis fine-tuned those conditions as carefully as they crafted their stories.

Over the years, the Pinis would have to become even more firmly entrenched as business people in running their own publishing house. It is hard to conceive of any other independently created property that, in continuing to publish new work across four decades, was obliged to make deals with several major publishers for collected and remastered editions. From Marvel Comics, to DC Comics, and finally, to Dark Horse for new stories, collection and distribution, few creative teams have had such an intense experience of learning just how creator-owned properties can have mutually beneficial relationships with publishers.

But that task has not been thankless for the Pinis. The response from fans has always been what has buoyed the series and inspired the Pinis to continue their work. Developing into multi-media formats, from prose, to drama, to music, and more, the world of *ElfQuest* has proved highly versatile in inhabiting the imagination of its audience. The existence of *ElfQuest* continues to support the idea that creative people can craft new ways of thinking, as well as new ways of storytelling, and when released on the world, those innovations can find a community who will benefit from them.

***“ElfQuest found a tribe in the days before crowdfunding, before webcomics, and before the rise of all-access digital platforms.”***

*ElfQuest* found a tribe in the days before crowdfunding, before webcomics, and before the rise of all-access digital platforms. And it managed to adapt new methods in order to reach readers over a swath of publishing history very few properties can boast. As such, it represents the power of like-minded communities to find each other through the stories they tell.

# THE WOLFRIDER CHRONOLOGY

BY AMY GREEN AND OTHERS

## THE WOLFRIDERS

- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 3 - Swift-Spear
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 4 - Two-Spear
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 6 - Tale of the Snowbeast
- ☐ Two-Spear 1-6
- ☐ Kahvi 2 - Perchance to Dream
- ☐ Kahvi 3 - Music of the Spears
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 5 - Talon
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 7 - At the Oak's Root
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 17 - Howl for Eldolil
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 18 - Finder
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 8 - Spirit Quest
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 9 - Shadow Play
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 12 - Coyote
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 13 - Demontricker's Dilemma
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 14 - Hero Worship
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 2 - The Phantom of the Berry Patch
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 15 - Lessons in Passing
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 16 - Of the Fathers
- ☐ Hidden Years 9 - The Enemy's Face
- ☐ Wolfrider! Part 1-5
- ☐ Hidden Years 5 - Starfall, Starrise
- ☐ Wolfrider! Part 6-7
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 19 - Scavengers
- ☐ By Any Other Name
- ☐ Wolfrider! Part 8
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 10 - The Broken Circle Part 1
- ☐ Blood of Ten Chiefs 11 - The Broken Circle Part 2
- ☐ Wolfrider! Part 9-10
- ☐ Troll Games and Soul Names
- ☐ New Blood 6
- ☐ Wolfrider! Part 11-Part 12

## THE ORIGINAL QUEST

- ☐ Elfquest 1 - Fire and Flight  
(Begins The Complete ElfQuest Volume 1)



- ☐ Elfquest 2 - Raid At Sorrow's End
- ☐ Elfquest 3 - The Challenge
- ☐ Elfquest 4 - Wolfsong
- ☐ Elfquest 5 - Voice of the Sun
- ☐ The Heart's Way
- ☐ New Blood 4 - Moonshade
- ☐ Homespun
- ☐ Elfquest 6 - The Quest Begins
- ☐ Elfquest 7 - The Dreamberry Tales
- ☐ Elfquest 8 - Hands of the Symbol Maker
- ☐ Elfquest 9 - The Lodestone
- ☐ Elfquest 10 - The Forbidden Grove
- ☐ Elfquest 11 - Lair of the Bird Spirits
- ☐ Elfquest 12 - What Is the Way
- ☐ Elfquest 13 - The Secret of the Wolfriders
- ☐ Elfquest 14 - The Fall
- ☐ Elfquest 15 - The Quest Usurped!
- ☐ New Blood 9 - Long Dream's Ending
- ☐ Elfquest 16 - The Go-Backs
- ☐ Elfquest 17 - The First War
- ☐ Elfquest 18 - The Treasure

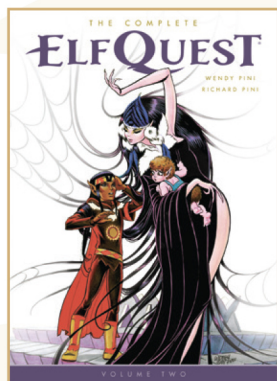
Presented here is the chronological list of *ElfQuest* comic issues and stories during the era of the Wolfriders. There are stories that come before and after this checklist. You can see the full *ElfQuest* series in chronological order in all its glory on Amy's website: [ourgazebo.net](http://ourgazebo.net). Created by Amy and many

others. Dark Horse Comics is focusing its publishing efforts on the complete story arc of the Wolfriders, beginning with *The Original Quest* and ending with *Final Quest*. Our publications do not follow the exact chronological order below, but for you brave few the full chronology can be your own personal quest.

- ☐ Elfquest 19 - Quest's End Part 1
- ☐ Elfquest 20 - Quest's End Part 2

## THE PALACE RECOVERED

- ☐ Siege at Blue Mountain 1 (pages 1-16)  
(Begins The Complete ElfQuest Volume 2)

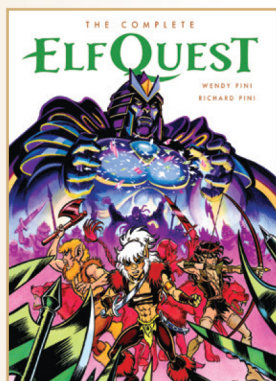


- ☐ New Blood 5 - Windkin
- ☐ Siege at Blue Mountain 1 (pages 17-end)
- ☐ Siege at Blue Mountain 2
- ☐ Siege at Blue Mountain 3
- ☐ Siege at Blue Mountain 4
- ☐ Siege at Blue Mountain 5
- ☐ Siege at Blue Mountain 6
- ☐ Siege at Blue Mountain 7
- ☐ Siege at Blue Mountain 8
- ☐ Kings of the Broken Wheel 1
- ☐ Kings of the Broken Wheel 2
- ☐ Kings of the Broken Wheel 3
- ☐ Kings of the Broken Wheel 4
- ☐ Rock-Shaper
- ☐ Kings of the Broken Wheel 5
- ☐ Kings of the Broken Wheel 6
- ☐ Kings of the Broken Wheel 7
- ☐ Hidden Years 2 - Going Back

- ☐ New Blood 11 - War Part 1
- ☐ New Blood 12 - War Part 2
- ☐ New Blood 13 - Forevergreen Part 1 beginning (pages 1-14)
- ☐ Frank Frazetta Fantasy illustrated 1 - "The Jury"
- ☐ Hidden Years 1 - Wolfwood  
(Begins The Complete ElfQuest Volume 3)



- ☐ Hidden Years 3 - Little Patch
- ☐ Kahvi 1-6
- ☐ New Blood Summer Special: The Price of a Soul
- ☐ Kings of the Broken Wheel 8
- ☐ Kings of the Broken Wheel 9
- ☐ 2001 Summer Special 1 - Wolfshadow
- ☐ Dreamtime
- ☐ Hidden Years 8 - Daughter's Day
- ☐ Hidden Years 4 - Right of Passage
- ☐ New Blood 13 - Forevergreen Part 1 conclusion (pages 15-end)
- ☐ Hidden Years 9.5 - Rogue's Challenge
- ☐ Hidden Years 10 - Shards Part 1  
(Begins The Complete ElfQuest Volume 4)
- ☐ New Blood 14 - Forevergreen Part 2
- ☐ Hidden Years 11 - Shards Part 2



- ☐ Hidden Years 12 - Shards Part 3
- ☐ Hidden Years 13 - Shards Part 4
- ☐ Hidden Years 14 - Shards Part 5
- ☐ Hidden Years 15 - Shards Part 6

After issue 15, the plot splits in two, with Hidden Years carrying one thread and the Shards magazine the other. A third series, New Blood issues 13-35, runs parallel to these two plot lines. How New Blood interlocks with the other two series is not easy to tell, so most of this plotline is shown first.

- ☐ New Blood 15 - Forevergreen Part 3
- ☐ New Blood 16 - Forevergreen Part 4
- ☐ New Blood 17 - Forevergreen Part 5
- ☐ New Blood 18 - Forevergreen Part 6
- ☐ New Blood 19 - Forevergreen Part 7
- ☐ New Blood 20 - Forevergreen Part 8
- ☐ New Blood 21 - Forevergreen Part 9
- ☐ New Blood 22 - Forevergreen Part 10
- ☐ New Blood 23 - One Life One Lie
- ☐ New Blood 24 - Opening Door
- ☐ New Blood 25 - Prelude to Doorwar 1 - Sorrow's End
- ☐ New Blood 26 - Prelude to Doorwar 2 - Darkness Settling
- ☐ New Blood 27 - Doorwar
- ☐ New Blood 28 - Triompe and Defeat
- ☐ New Blood 29 - In a Gilded Cage
- ☐ New Blood 30 - Fight or Flight
- ☐ New Blood 31 - Window of the Soul
- ☐ New Blood 32 - Sorrow's Fate
- ☐ Shards 1 - Clay
- ☐ Shards 2 - Wood
- ☐ Shards 3 - Stone
- ☐ Hidden Years 16 - First Step
- ☐ Shards 4 - Flesh
- ☐ Hidden Years 17 - Something Old, Something New

- ☐ Shards 5 - Hand
- ☐ Hidden Years 18 - Thick-coming Fancies
- ☐ Shards 6 - Head
- ☐ Hidden Years 19 - Mouse Hunt
- ☐ Shards 7 - Heart
- ☐ Hidden Years 20 - When Head Meets Head
- ☐ Shards 8 - Turnabout Part 1
- ☐ Hidden Years 21 - Messenger
- ☐ Shards 9 - Turnabout Part 2
- ☐ Hidden Years 22 - Inheritance
- ☐ Shards 10 - Revelation Part 1
- ☐ Hidden Years 23 - Alpha and Omega
- ☐ Shards 11 - Revelation Part 2
- ☐ Hidden Years 24 - Fire Fire Burning Bright
- ☐ Shards 12 - The Key
- ☐ Hidden Years 25 - Before the Storm
- ☐ Shards 13 - Underground
- ☐ Hidden Years 26 - Questions - No Answers
- ☐ Shards 14 - Reunion
- ☐ Hidden Years 27 - To Shed a Teir
- ☐ Shards 15 - Resurrection
- ☐ Hidden Years 28 - Siege at Howling Rock
- ☐ New Blood 33 - Blood's End Part 1
- ☐ New Blood 34 - Blood's End Part 2
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- ☐ The Wild Hunt
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- ☐ Fire-Eye
- ☐ **The Final Quest**
- ☐ Rogue's Curse
- ☐ Proof Positive Part 1
- ☐ Proof Positive Part 2



# THE TRIBE



by *Tia Vasiliou*

**E**lfQuest was my first comic. I was around twelve years old when someone in my small circle of friends began lending around his big black-and-white hardcovers. Before long, *ElfQuest* became the gravitational pull at the center of our friendship. We were a little tribe, poring over the Gatherum together, endlessly discussing characters and plotlines, designing our own elves to populate our fanfics. *ElfQuest* was, for me, always an intensely social experience.

I doubt it would have occurred to us then that we were very lucky to have a book like *ElfQuest*. We constantly pondered which elves we would be, or perhaps more to the point, which elves we wished we could be more like. One day I might identify with Cutter, the next with Kahvi. My passport picture from this time features my best Kahvi impression, a fierce little scowl framed by two thin braids on either side.

As an adult, I still play a version of this game with my *ElfQuest* tribe. We'll look a friend up and down appraisingly, arch an eyebrow, and ask, "Which elf would he be?" (The answer is almost always Pike, as this is frequently a game we play in bars.)

My *ElfQuest* tribe as an adult is not the one of my childhood. Twelve-year-olds become teenagers; they become consumed by shiny, new interests, and work very hard to shed their younger selves.

They grow apart from childhood friends. Or at least, I did. And because my context for *ElfQuest* was so entwined with the friend-tribe, I likewise drifted away from the World of Two Moons. It wasn't quite as vivid for me by myself as it had been with friends.

Years later, I found myself with a job in comics. I say "found myself" there because it wasn't somewhere I'd ever expected to be. I had just left my PhD program in art history (sadly, not studying the art of Wendy Pini, although now that I live near the archives at Columbia University I just might take that up!). Maybe it's coincidence, or maybe it's that gravitational pull of *ElfQuest*, but rediscovering *ElfQuest* with friends at my new job was like recovering a treasure from my past. I have fallen in with a new *ElfQuest* tribe. Such is the way of things in the book, such is the way of things in life, I suppose. We grow and change and stake out on our own, and eventually we find our way back to our people.

***"...rediscovering ElfQuest with friends at my new job was like recovering a treasure from my past."***

The thing about finding your way back is that often things did not stay the same

as they were when you left. I was thrilled to discover that *ElfQuest* had not been preserved in “wrap stuff” during my absence, but continued with new quests. I had a lot of reading to do, and I was at first a little wistful to see how much had changed. Characters who were little children when I first read the book were now capable chieftains leading tribes of their own. Beloved pairings had gone their separate ways. Cherished favorites were gone. Time had marched on for all of us.

I recently moderated a spotlight panel on Wendy and Richard Pini. I’m sure my twelve-year-old self never thought I was cooler. My adult self was fairly aflutter; I’m not ashamed to admit. There is something about Wendy that just makes your whole day better. It’s easy to see how one as ethereal as she could conjure such a world as *ElfQuest*. During the panel, Wendy and Richard spoke a bit about how time was an important presence in *ElfQuest*. It makes everything matter. That sense of gravity, of the way things in *ElfQuest* are meaningful, permeated the discussion and the audience Q&A.

***“There is something about Wendy that just makes your whole day better. It’s easy to see how one as ethereal as she could conjure such a world as ElfQuest.”***

A common thread among the *ElfQuest* fans in that room was that we had all been able to find pieces of ourselves in the pages of *ElfQuest*, and that it validated who we are and encouraged self-discovery. In a way, it was back to that old game, “Which elf am I? Which

elf do I want to be?” I’m not sure it gets more meaningful than that. Except for maybe the friends.

For many *ElfQuest* fans, their first experiences with the book were fairly solitary, but it’s much easier to connect with one another now. There’s a robust online fan community and periodic convention gatherings around panels and milestones. I went alone to a panel about *The Final Quest* and left it in a group of new friends. Of all the significant things *ElfQuest* has meant to its fans in its forty years, the friendships it’s helped to build are perhaps its most meaningful accomplishment.





# ELFQUEST FIRST & FINAL

Below is the cover to *Elfquest*'s first appearance in February, 1978. Next page, the cover to 'Final Quest's' concluding issue, February 2018. Across 40 years, artist Wendy Pini wanted the two to mirror each other, while taking into account all that's happened from beginning to end.





RICHARD PINI

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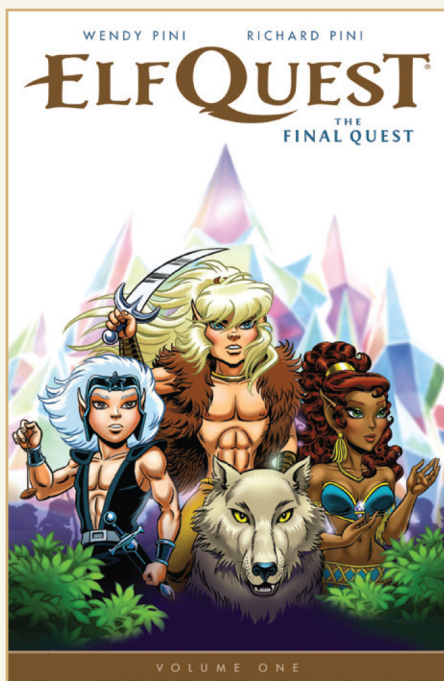


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