A Helping Hand

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**A Helping Hand**

by [MashpotatoeQueen5](http://archiveofourown.org)

**Summary**

Times in which Legolas was… uncomfortable around mortals and his friends had to come and save him. And one time his friends were feeling uncomfortable around elves and he had to save them.

Essentially, Legolas needing help and the fellowship and friends giving it to him.

All the fluffiness! :D

And maybe angst…

**Notes**
Takes place when Legolas is around 9 in human years.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Elladan and Elrohir

The elfling laughed as he ran through the woods, glancing behind him to make sure that his caretakers were not giving chase. He lept over a large boulder, his blond hair flying behind him, and grabbed the branch that had been helpfully lowered in front of him. Taking a brief break from his excursions, the young elf patted the young birch in thanks. Feeling the tree’s happiness and encouragement, he smiled and took off in another sprint, except this time he flew through the foliage and not the forest floor.

After many minutes of running, the elfling finally pulled to a stop at a small clearing. From his leafy perch, the blond peered down to the earth below and, sensing no danger, silently dropped to the ground.

Legolas grinned; Elladan and Elrohir would never find him here.

The young elf had sneaked past his elders earlier that morning, and the peredhil had been after him ever since. Naturally, the wood elf had headed to the trees, knowing that even in Rivendell the forest would shelter him.

Legolas gently leaned his bow and quiver on a tree, thanking the oak for its assistance. Now all he had to do was wait for the twins, and their game would begin anew.

The wood elf had been staying in Rivendell for the past few weeks and would stay for at least another two months. He would then travel back to Greenwood with Elladan and Elrohir, who were in charge of him during his stay.

Legolas smiled mischievously, for he had every intention of making it a difficult endeavor for the twins.

Flopping to the ground in the center of the clearing, the elfling passed the time by singing of the sun and the stars, the trees and the grass and anything he could think of. The trees themselves were humming contentedly along with him, and Legolas eagerly waited for his caretakers to find him, for the game to begin anew.

Only mere minutes passed, however, when suddenly the trees started to whisper of unease and danger. Frowning, the elfling stopped his song and sat up, pointed ears twitching in an effort to hear what had made his friends upset.

Tilting his head to the side, Legolas heard the sounds of heavy feet hitting the ground and felt a tremor of fear ripple through him; what if the owners of said feet were orcs? Making up his mind, the wood elf grabbed his bow and arrows and scrambled up the large oak, hiding himself in the thick foliage.

He placed a hand on the trunk, both for support and to be supporting, and silently asked, “What comes?”

Immediately, the whispering voices flooded his mind, and he felt fear that was not his own.

“Humans! Humans are coming!”

“Bad Humans!”

“Run! Run!”
“Not safe for you. Not safe. ”

Instead of striking new terror into the younglings heart, the fearful voices caused the wood elf a heavy bout of curiosity; he had never talked to humans before.

The elfling wondered why the trees were so scared. He had seen humans before, at his Ada’s council, and they had seemed pleasant enough. Perhaps they didn’t like the smell? Humans did smell funny…

For a moment, Legolas considered running off to find Elladan and Elrohir, for surely they would know what to do about the strange humans who were scaring the trees, but then he shoved the thought aside; the humans might leave before he even got a chance to speak with them! He couldn’t let that happen.

His Ada never let him talk to mortals, this was his chance!

So, ignoring the tree’s urgent cries, the young prince settled himself deeper into the foliage and waited silently.

Soon enough, the sounds of men arguing and many boots stomping on the ground echoed through the woods. Legolas pressed himself closer to the tree trunk, deciding he would wait and see the humans first before going to talk with them.

“I told you, Cadwell, it was coming from this direction!” A voice grunted.

The men entered the elfling’s line of sight, who immediately wrinkled his nose when they stepped into the clearing; they smelled even worse than the humans at the council! Still, the young prince stayed, watching the large forms move below. A large man with a thick beard spoke up, “Well you’re wrong, cause I don’t hear any singing, do you?”

Various voices responded with negative confirmations.

“C’mon, we’ll go look by the stream.”

If Legolas had spoken more mannish, he would have realized that they were searching for him, and recognized the danger, but as it was he spoke but a few words.

And so, when the humans turned to leave, the young elf panicked and came out of his hiding spot.

He slithered onto a branch that was quite above the men’s heads and dropped upside down, hanging on by only his feet, his arms crossed loosely in front of his chest.

His sudden appearance caused all the humans to whirl around and gape at him, and he gave a tentative wave, a shy grin working its way onto his face.

One of the humans, the one who first spoke, gave his companions a I-told-you-so look and stepped forward. He gave the elfling a kind smile and said gently, “Hello,” trying to avoid scaring the creature away.

The young elf himself was delighted (He knew that word!) and twisted himself the right way up. He copied the man, giving a brilliant smile and chirping, “Hello!”

Weldon, for that was the man’s name, could not believe his luck. They had been wondering through Rivendell in hopes of finding an elf for the market, and here they had found an elf child. He knew quite a few people who would pay a pretty penny to get their hands on one of those.
But first they had to catch the thing.

Still using the same gentle voice, he asked the elf child if it would like to come down.

The elf simply stared at him, confusion written all over its face.

The group was getting impatient, and Cadwell- the stupid man- shoved him roughly in the back. He gave a quick glare to his companions, knowing one false move would lead to the child running far beyond their reach, before turning back to the elf in the tree and smiling again.

Slowly, he pointed at the creature and then at the ground, hoping that it would understand.

Legolas was slightly confused. The man kept pointing at him and to the forest floor, did he want him to come down? Was that what he was asking? Repeating the man’s motions, he pointed at himself and then to the ground. The man grinned and nodded repeatedly, and Legolas smiled back happily. Just wait until he told the twins that he had made a friend with a human!

He quickly scrambled down so that he could properly meet his new friends, but the moment he put his feet on the ground the man grabbed his forearm painfully tight. He frowned, and tried to pull his arm out of the man’s grip, but it just tightened further. He yelped in pain and looked up. Couldn’t the man see he was hurting him?

The humans were laughing and slapping each other on the backs. Why were they doing that? Why wouldn’t the man let go?

Legolas frowned, getting angry, and yanked hard on the arm holding him. The mortal jerked towards him and almost fell, but regained his balance at the last second. The man glared at him and growled something in mannish, slapping him hard across the face.

Legolas pressed his unrestrained hand to his stinging cheek, tears pooling in his eyes. The humans were laughing at him now, and he didn’t like it one bit. He suddenly was filled with a terrible want to be away from the clearing. He wanted to go home. He wanted Ada. He wouldn’t even mind if Elladan and Elrohir showed up, he just didn’t want to be with the humans any longer.

He was passed on to another man, who shook him roughly while the human who had been holding him looked through his pack. When he pulled out a rope, Legolas felt his eyes widen. Were they going to tie him up?

He shook his head pleadingly at the man, cringing back into the chest of the human who was holding him. The man just smiled cruelly and took a menacing step forward.

The elfling cried out in fear and pain when sharp nails curled into his shoulders in order to keep him still, and became aware of the trees screaming in horror and anger. He wanted to reassure them, but he was too panicked to even try.

He was crying now, and he was terrified of what was going to happen, and he needed the humans to let him go really soon because he hurt and wanted his Ada and Elladan and Elrohir.

Why were they not letting him go?

Suddenly, two arrows came whistling out of nowhere. One hit the bad man with the rope in the hand- who yelled and clutched the wounded appendage to his chest- and the other hit the man who was holding him in the shoulder. Both the man and Legolas dropped down to the ground.

Instantly, Elrohir was in front of him, his feather light touch ghosting over his body, checking for
injuries. The younger twin was speaking soothingly in a constant stream of elvish—*Legolas? Come Legolas, you will be fine now. We are here. We will keep you safe. Now, now, don’t cry tithen las, it will be alright*—while the elder twin brutally punished the foolish mortals who *dared* lay a finger on their precious charge.

Legolas honestly couldn’t care about the happening of the world around him, all he cared about was that comfort and safety was at hand. The elfling threw himself at the tall dark-haired elf and hid his face in the crook of elder’s neck, sobbing for all his worth.

Elrohir cradled the small head and caressed soft golden tresses, trying to calm the child down. Silently, as is the way of the elves, he stood and walked out of the clearing, Legolas still in his arms. He trusted that his brother had things covered and would follow after he finished dealing with the mortals, but he had a far more important task to take care of.

It was time to bring Legolas home.
Gimli

Chapter Notes

I’m ignoring Peter Jackson’s take on the movie where Legolas is the person who finds the dwarves in Mirkwood. Sorry Sir.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

If there was another way through the mountain halls to his parents, Gimli would take the elf through that way. But no, every dwarf- or in this case, elf- who passed through the gates of Erebor had to pass through the dining hall before going anywhere else.

Gimli could feel Legolas tense next to him as they entered the room and every eye turned to him. Every muscle in the the lean body was taught, and the elf was prepared to spirit away at a moment's notice.

*Flighty elf.*

Still, flighty elf or not, Legolas was his friend, and if a single dwarf even *thought* about hurting him they would have the pleasure of being acquainted with his axe.

His silent vow didn’t ease his friend’s nerves though. (Not that anyone could tell the elf was nervous, to any other dwarf he would seem calm and collected, a blank slate. Gimli could tell though. The elf was biting the inside of his cheek, a telltale sign.)

Legolas’ eyes were flitting around- probably planning an escape route if one became necessary, or the best place to climb high above all the dwarves’ heads- but they met his own when Gimli gave him a pat just above the elbow, the highest place he could reach.

The ginger gave his best smile and twitched his head forwards. In response the elf relaxed marginally and nodded, flashing a small smile of his own.

Together, the unlikely duo walked straight through the hall without batting an eye at all the dwarves staring at them. When they reached the opposite side they exited quietly and closed the door behind them.

Legolas’s clear, ringing laughter mixed with Gimli’s low chuckles when an explosion of noise occurred the moment they were out of sight.

The crisis was diverted.

(For now.)
Legolas followed Gimli as the axe-bearer marched down the hall and smiled as the dwarf’s heavy footsteps echoed. Ducking under yet another beam, (The ceiling was just high enough for him to be able to stand properly, but every few feet a support beam would cause him to stoop his head in order to avoid a nasty collision. Gimli found it very amusing.) he ignored the walls that seemed intent on suffocating him and focused on his friends chatter. The ginger was talking of his parents and how excited he was to finally see them again, and while Legolas was happy for him, he also felt a string of nerves low in his stomach.

Gimli had sent a message ahead to warn them of their arrival, but they had received nothing in return. While the dwarf had been sure that his parents would welcome them with no resentment, Legolas had his doubts.

He was, after all, an elf.

And he was, in the end, the son of King Thranduil, who had put Thorin’s company in prison. And Thorin’s company, if he remembered correctly, included Gimli’s father.

He bit his lip, glancing behind him; perhaps he should just leave?

But no, he had promised he would come, and it would be rude to not even give Gimli’s parents a chance. It was too late anyways; they had arrived, and Gimli was knocking soundly on the door.

The wood-elf gave an instinctive step back as a whirl of skirts and hair sprang from the suddenly open doorway. Smiling, he watched as the dwarf pressed kisses all over Gimli’s face and how his friend’s deep rumbling laughter filled the empty hall as he pulled the woman into a hug.

*This must be Gimli’s mother,* thought the elf.

Another happy guffaw echoed, and a dwarf who looked much like his friend entered the fray. Gimli’s father, Gloin if he remembered correctly, was pulling his family into a hug. The father and son brought their foreheads together with a solid thunking noise, and Legolas winced in sympathy.

Watching the happy scene, the prince could not help but feel uncomfortable. Wrong. He… did not belong here. Not in this mountain, nor in this reunion. This was a time for family. A time for mothers and fathers and sons and daughters to be brought together again after long separation. A time for renewal.

It was not the time for intruding elves.

Silently, Legolas slipped away. He would wait outside, he decided, for Gimli to finish his greetings and stories. The dwarf must have many others waiting to see him, many others who missed him and care for him just as much as his parents. And he would not be the one to ruin it. He would not destroy these precious moments for his friend.

He was stopped by a large, thickly calloused hand on his wrist.

Legolas whirled around, startled, and stared at his friend who had somehow sneaked up on him.

“Just where do ya’ think you’re going, laddie?”

To any other elf, the dwarf would appear stubborn and proud as all the rest, but really he was concerned. Legolas could tell. His heavy red brows were furrowed, a telltale sign.

And as he stuttered out reasons and explanations, the red brows go higher and higher. And Legolas felt ridiculous, like a small elfling who’s done something wrong, but Gimli was looking at him with
knowing eyes and he just didn’t understand.

The dwarf was bringing him back now, the firm grip on his wrist never lessening, despite his many protests - *Truly Gimli, this isn’t necessary* - and the way he tugged and pulled at his hand.

And they were at the door again, Gimli’s parents waiting for them, and Legolas finally managed to wring his wrist out of Gimli’s hold. He shot a glare at his captor before giving a small bow to the waiting couple and introducing himself. He hoped that they didn't think him rude, or cruel, or haughty, or emotionless, or a terrible friend, or anything of the sorts.

He blinked when Gimli’s mother asks him to call her Tem* and greets him just as warmly as she greeted her son.

He blinked again when Gimli’s father looks him in the eye and grunts, “You looked after my boy?” And Legolas nodded- because *of course he did, Gimli’s his friend* - and Gloin gave him something that resembles a smile and nodded in gratitude.

And he blinked yet again when he found himself on a too small dwarven couch with his companion beside him, laughing at a story of times long ago, surrounded by Gimli’s friends and family.

And the elf thought that perhaps it *was* a time for family and friends and renewal of the old, and he thought that perhaps it was a time for something else as well.

New beginnings.

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Legolas does not know that Gimli sent a second letter to the mountain, stating that any and all dwarves who would not be able to tolerate his shield brother and friend, simply because he was an elf, should stay far away.

He does not know that Gimli argued secretly with his father for days in the form of ravens, convincing the old warrior to stand down and give Legolas a chance.

He does not know that when a group of dwarves showed up at the door with an intent to mock and scorn, Gimli greeted them with his axe and a smile that would give them nightmares for the next decade.

He does not know the effort that Gimli had put into making sure his friend would be comfortable and happy.

Legolas only knows that his friend is besides him, and that he would stand by him for every twist and turn that he would come across in his life. And that he would do the same for Gimli in a heartbeat.

And that’s enough for the both of them.

Chapter End Notes
I hoped everyone enjoyed! Thanks so much for all the Kudos/reviews! :)

*I completely made up the name of Gimli's mother. It's by no means canon!
Legolas cursed Estel for the hundredth time as the sound of giggling reached his ears.

Pretending to be interested in the conversation he was partaking in— the nobleman was talking about how skilled he was at politics and was continuously hinting that he would be a good advisor for the king, not that Legolas believed him—the wood-elf allowed his eyes to flutter nervously about.

There!

The giggling intensified and Legolas quickly ducked his head, closing his eyes in despair. The predator had spotted its prey, and there was little possibility that he could avoid confrontation.

The elven prince interrupted the man he was talking with, politely excusing himself from their discussion and telling him that he was required elsewhere.

The elf hated to be rude, but it was his only chance of escape.

Legolas advanced hurriedly to the food tables, hoping to lose his pursuers in the dense crowd. Again, the blonde warrior cursed his friend turned king, for this was surely all his fault. Surely.

The celebration was being held in honour of Arwen—the future elven wife of King Ellessar—who had finally arrived at the fair city of Gondor, and all were welcome to attend. The actual marriage was not for another two months, but the elleth had wanted to know more of her future subjects and so the merrymaking had commenced.

Besides, all reasons to celebrate were good reasons to celebrate since the war had ended.

Legolas knew all of this, and was joyful for both Aragorn and Arwen, but he also knew something else.

Legolas knew he would be the only elf—besides Elrond’s daughter, of course—to attend the gathering, and was aware that he would be well-sought after because of this. He was also aware that he was a close friend to the new king, and that would make him an even more important target.

Legolas knew this, and had prepared himself accordingly.

Then Aragorn had to go and ruin everything by introducing the wood elf as a prince to the masses. The ranger had done it purposefully as well, the blonde could just tell by the mischievous twinkle in his friend’s eyes.

Legolas could handle the crowds knowing he was an elf. He could handle the crowds knowing he was friends to royalty. But the crowds knowing he was royalty himself? Legolas could not handle
And Estel knew this, which was why his situation was entirely the human’s fault.

Needless to say, there would be revenge.

Before that could happen, however, Legolas had to escape the clutches of those who pursued him, and his chances of success were none too high.

Legolas bit his lip and wished it was proper decorum for young elven princes to climb up to the ceiling and hide in the rafters.

(It was not, Legolas had asked.)

Suddenly, there was high pitched laughter everywhere, and the elf realized that, in his distraction, he had let himself be surrounded.

Biting back the dwarvish curses Gimli had taught him, the elf plastered on his best smile and faced his foe.

The gaggle of giggling girls grinned back.

Legolas resisted the urge to shudder.

Politely, the elf said, “Greetings,” with a small bow.

Another chorus of chortles escaped from the ladies surrounding him, and the blonde tried to discreetly searched for an escape.

The titters eventually died down, and the women all replied with greetings of their own. They also saw fit to introduce themselves, giving small curtsies and batting their eyelashes.

Legolas was about to make his excuses and leave when a tall lady stepped out from the crowded group and came to a stop right in front of him. She gave an elegant curtsey, showing off enough cleavage to make the young elf’s pointed ears turn pink.

The woman was almost as tall as the elven prince, and was truly beautiful. Her hair flowed in brown ringlets down her back, and she was very well proportioned. She may have seemed kind too, if not for the predatory look in her eyes.

Legolas swallowed.

“M’lord, my name is Eliza. I would be most honoured if I may have a dance with you.”

The blonde warrior reviewed his options, knowing that if he agreed he would have to dance with every eligible woman in kingdom. Then he would have to deal with ludicrous suggestions and endless flattery for the rest of the night.

Curse Estel for all eternity!

But there was no other choice. He would have to agree, or he would be written off as incredibly rude, or worse, as a haughty immortal who thought himself above all humans.

The poor elf was about to agree and seal himself to his fate when a fair voice interrupted him.

“Legolas!”
The elven prince turned to see Arwen coming towards him, a small smile on her serene features. The *elleth* gestured for him to come over, and Legolas gladly complied, excusing himself from the young ladies. The females scowled at the dark haired beauty for taking away their prize, but the two elves paid no mind.

Arwen grabbed the prince’s forearm, leading him to a quiet alcove at the edge of the room. Once they were safe from prying eyes, the raven grinned at the blonde who gave a smile back, happy to have escaped the dire situation.

“You seemed as if you were in need of help,” Arwen confessed in explanation for her actions, and Legolas nodded empathetically, confirming her suspicions.

“You have my thanks,” he said sincerely, his relief palpable in the air.

Arwen looked him over, a small mischievous light in her eyes.

“Have they been after you all night?”

A golden head slumped onto her shoulder, a quiet groan emitting from behind the curtain of hair. The queen to be released a tinkling laugh and patted the young elf’s back in mock sympathy, smiling when she spotted a familiar figure making his way through the crowds.

“What is this, my future wife hiding in the corner with another? Arwen, how could you?” Legolas tilted his head, revealing a single squinted eye, growling, “I am going to kill you, Estel.”

“No. You shall not,” insisted the new king, “You love me far too much.”

The golden head stayed silent, whether because the prince was sulking or in agreement was unknown to all parties.

Aragorn shared a look with his beloved, smiling slyly over the slumped form of his friend.

“I must admit, though, it was rather amusing to watch you try and avoid the hoards…”

Legolas finally stood straight, if only so he could glare properly at the former ranger, and announced, “That is it. You are no longer my closest of friends. Gimli shall take your place.”

Aragorn placed a hand over his heart in mock pain, Arwen watching on with silent amusement, and cried dramatically, “You wouldn’t! Not after all we have been through!?”

The blonde stood firm, crossing his arms across his chest and stating, “At least I can trust *Gimli* not to throw me to the wolves.”

The King of Gondor gave a small grin and said brightly, “Speaking of Gimli, he is waiting for you in the gardens.”

Legolas stared at his friend for a few moments, not understanding the declaration for the invitation it was.

“Unless you would rather stay here?”

Understanding widened blue eyes, and the elf only stayed long enough to flash a single brilliant smile at the couple before he vanished into the crowds with a whirl of golden hair, heading towards the small, nondescript hallway that would eventually lead to the gardens.
Aragorn and Arwen shared a moment of shocked silence before laughter at their friend’s eagerness took ahold of them. It was a joyous sound, filled with a wholeness that can only exist when all was well.

“Do you think we should tell him that it was Gimli who suggested we tell the citizens that he was a prince?”

“No, Arwen, I do not think we should.”

And their laughter echoed again in the merry hall, for the era of pain and fear was at last behind them, and the time for joy and peace had dawned in a brilliant sunrise of something rather indescribable.

Some people, however, might just call it hope.

Chapter End Notes

My reasoning behind this chapter is that I always saw Arwen and Legolas with this close sibling dynamic, and I really wanted to show it off here. I'm not positive if it could even be possible canonically, but it always made sense in my head; I always liked to imagine them growing up together and having long conversations about the pains of having to deal with Elladan and Elrohir and their mischievous/overprotective ways... :)

If this doesn't fit in with your views of the characters, I hope that you don't mind and that you can enjoy the chapter anyway.

Thank you so much for reading!

Until next time,

The Mashpotatoe Queen
Legolas awoke to darkness.

It was a panicked awakening, one in which awareness returned in a strange rush that could only mean danger and pain. The world felt out of sorts, as if he was no longer in reality, and everything twisted and swirled in a constant, dizzying dance. The lack of... anything, in truth, only led to more terror running through the elf’s veins.

For a moment, he feared he had gone blind.

Then the young warrior realized that his eyes were closed, and the darkness he perceived was only the back of his eyelids. The fact that he was sleeping with his eyes closed at all was enough to be concerning, but it was far better than being blind.

Legolas frowned, a mere twitch of the lips, and tried to remember how the world had come to be a spinning mass of confusion.

Or was he spinning himself?

Legolas did not know.

He felt disconnected somehow, as if his grip on Arda had been released and he was now floating through a heavy fog. His thoughts were slow and heavy, and his body felt as if it was hardly there. *Everything* was off. Wrong.

The blonde realized that he had yet to open his eyes, and decided that if he could see, things would be much more understandable.

Pale eyelids fluttered opened for the briefest of moments to reveal sky blue orbs, but they were quickly scrunched tight again. It was too bright, far too bright, and the headache that Legolas did not even know he had pounded painfully in response.

The wood elf decided that he would most definitely not open his eyes, for understanding situations suddenly became highly over rated. Not being in pain was far more important.

*Still*, the blonde thought, *I have other senses, yes?*
Legolas was quite sure he did, indeed, have other senses, but one could never be too sure in this strange world he had found himself in. (Briefly, he wondered where his own world was and how he had gotten to the new, wrong world in the first place. Then the thought was pushed aside because it made his head hurt even more than before.)

He had a goal now. Goals were good. They got you places, and they did not twist and swirl and be wrong like the place around him. Goals were a way out of the thick and heavy fog, and they kept you grounded so that you would not float away on the breeze.

He liked goals.

What were his goals again?

Legolas remembered, then; he had to find his senses. But not seeing, because seeing made his head hurt.

The blonde decided to start with taste.

Slowly, he focused his drifting mind inwards, trying to figure out how to make his tongue work again. It felt far too big for his mouth, and moving it took far too much effort for his liking.

He could taste though, that was good.

The first flavor was tangy and sweet and metallic, and the young elf had to wait a moment to realize that it was his own blood on his tongue.

There was dirt in his mouth, too, the elf realized. It was gritty and mushy and rather disgusting, so he chose to move past it.

His final observation was that there was a cloth in his mouth, and it was not very clean. It tasted of sweat and dust and blood and oil, and Legolas found it rather disgusting as well, but it was harder to move past than the dirt.

He had done one sense, now it was time for others.

He considered doing his hearing, but some instinct prevented him from following through with it. Something told him that noise would not help his pounding head.

Legolas chose to do smell instead.

It was not as hard to take control of his nose as it had been with his tongue, and Legolas thought that that was a good sign, but his nose did not wait for him to go through one thing at a time, he smelled everything, all at once. There was the smell of blood and dirt and sweat. There was the smell of dead wood and food preserves and horse musk. There was the smell of metal and leather and some old fruit rotting.

But there was another smell, a distinct smell that Legolas would recognise anywhere. And judging by the sheer overwhelming power of it, it must be…

Humans. He was in an enclosed space with a bunch of humans.

Why? Legolas did not remember.

Where? Legolas did not know.

When? Legolas could not recall.
Who? Legolas had no memory of them.

How? Legolas was lost.

This forebodes bad tidings. Legolas prayed he was wrong.

Suddenly, there was feeling.

It was pain. Everywhere, consuming him in a fiery chasm of terror and destruction and torment. His stomach burned, as if someone was pouring an endless stream of fire into it. His head pounded and roared, as if an angry dwarf was attacking it with the largest hammer it could find. His leg stung and his hand ached and everything was *screaming in agony*.

Despite it all, Legolas stayed still and stayed silent. He did not know how he knew, but he knew it was crucial. He could not draw attention. *He must not draw attention.*

But then the carriage- *When had he figured out he was in a carriage?*- jerked wildly, and the world exploded into agony. The elf spasmed and curled into himself, his eyes tightly shut, and shuddered. A keening whine escaped his lips, and the world was spinning in endless, dizzying circles. Everything was *wrong, wrong, wrong*. And his head pounded in synchronization to his aching everywhere and his throbbing stomach screamed at him in utter torment and it was *wrong, wrong, wrong*…

He curled into a tighter ball, resisting the urge to be violently sick.

He wanted it to stop.

He *needed* it to stop.

It did not stop, only increased when the carriage jarred roughly to the left.

Legolas released a whimper.

Through a haze of suffering, the young elf realized that he could hear voices. He couldn’t bring himself to care- *The pain, the pain, it needed to stop right now. It wasn’t stopping, why was it not stopping?*- but they filtered into his pounding head- *wrong, wrong, wrong* - without his permission.

“I think he’s waking up boss,” the voice was a rough tenor, and the way he said the words seemed gleeful, but not with any good intent. It was a malicious kind of anticipation.

“Well, get him up then!” This voice was deeper, more commanding, *louder*. Legolas shied away from the sound, his head now screaming in harmony with his stomach. ( *Pain. Pain. So much pain. Why won’t it stop? It’s wrong. Wrong, wrong, wrong*…) Something started to shake his shoulder, and Legolas flinched away, his breaths coming through the gag as ragged gasps.

“I’m amazed he’s waken’ up at all! We gave him enough drugs to bring down an oliphant!” A third voice commented this, and it was slightly higher pitched than the other two, but no less cruel.

Hands started to roughly maneuver him, and his mind was filling with brilliant white light, shaking and shuddering under this new torment.

*Stop. Please.*

He may have screamed.

His breath was coming too fast, far too fast, but he could not slow it down. Panic was settling into his
body now, trying to escape the rope. Why had he not noticed it? - that scratched at his wrists and ankles, and nausea was threatening to swell up in a large tidal wave of vomit.

He couldn’t breathe.

Finally, blue eyes shot open, the desperation of not being able to get any air overwhelming all other senses. Legolas half-mindedly realized someone was shouting - “He’s not breathing right, sir!” “Well get that rag off him! We can’t be letting him die now, we need him!” “But boss, he’ll enchant us with his elf powers -” “DO AS I SAY!” - but he couldn’t bring himself to care.

His chest was moving in a painful mocking of breath, but no air was getting to his lungs. It hurt. Everything hurt. And Legolas almost looked forward to the darkness that was engulfing his vision, if there was a chance that it would get rid of the pain.

Suddenly, the gag was ripped out of his mouth and he was slapped soundly on the back- once, twice-startling him into coughing. The elf was not sure as to what was going on, but there was air- blessed, precious air- and all he could do was focus on breathing it up in the deepest and heaviest gulps that his abused lungs could manage.

When the darkness faded from his vision, Legolas continued to breathe deeply. He hoped that it would trick the humans into leaving him be, if only for a moment, so that he could think.

The heavy fog still filled his mind, but he could at least see his hand in front of his face now, and that would have to do.

He tried to remember what had brought him to this situation, what had wounded him so badly and made his thoughts so sluggish.

He had been in a forest… somewhere. And… he had been with someone. But who? It was someone important, Legolas was quite sure, but his memories slipped through his fingers as easily as water though a stream, and they raced out of his reach faster than any horse could manage.

There had been orcs, he thought, lots of orcs. And he remembered being stabbed in the stomach. They- Who was he with!?- had managed to drive the orcs off, but his companion was hurt- unconscious?- and a group of humans came and attacked him. He had fought back, but there were many, and he was bleeding too much, and they had these sharp needles that had dug into his skin and made him feel drowsy and wrong. And then there was nothing but cruel hands and pain and something heavy hitting the back of his head with brutal force.

And then there had been nothing at all.

Which, in all honesty, was not the best of signs.

Legolas focused on the positive. He was able to remember things now, even if they were only blurry recollections, and someone knew he was here. Said someone might be wounded, or dead, but it was better than nothing.

He was pulled from his reverie when a large hand grabbed his hair and yanked upwards, dragging Legolas up with it. Blue orbs came into focus, and Legolas became aware of the world around him once again.

The world around him included pain- so much pain - but the blonde refused to sink into the hazy fog of deliriousness again. Blinking rapidly, the elf struggled to get his thoughts in order, struggled to
create a semblance of sense in his situation.

He had been drugged, he knew that much. It was the only explanation for his sluggish thinking patterns. He was also concussed, judging by the heavy headache that was *intent* on distracting him. And then there was the gaping hole in his stomach, caused by the orcs. He knew of that as well.

Someone was talking to him, and he was being shaken by the shoulders, jarring every inch of his body in the worse possible way. Gritting his teeth, the wood elf focused on the words being shouted at him.

“-If! Elf! The bloody thing isn’t paying attention!”

“Dump some water on ‘im. Should help.”

Legolas watched through a hazy gaze as the human grabbed some sort of bucket and dumped freezing cold water on his head. The elf shuddered because of the cold and started to shake his head in an effort to clear his vision, but immediately stopped when it gave a reprimanding throb that almost made him pass out.

*Valar, everything hurts*. 

They were asking him questions again, and even though all Legolas wanted to do was curl into a ball and fall asleep, he met eyes with his captor and glared. He was far too tired and cold- He was quite sure he was normally unable to get cold. What had changed? to deal with any of this. His whole body throbbed painfully in time with the beating of his heart in a dizzying drumbeat of agony, and the mortals were only a minor concern in comparison.

Not that the human in front of him knew any of this, of course.

He glared at the human who stood above him- *Why was he on the floor?* - and managed to croak, “What?”

*My throat is rather dry*, he noticed absentmindedly.

The humans were laughing at him, and if he wasn’t tied up Legolas would have stood and attacked them. The elf changed his mind after a moment, though, and decided that if he could control his muscles *at all* he would have stood an attacked them.

For now, he would have to make do with glaring.

The largest man kicked him in his stomach, hard, and Legolas doubled over in pain, trying to breathe through the torment and avoid the blackness that threatened to swallow him whole.

Everything was dancing again in twirls and twists that shouldn’t be possible, and nausea was building in the back of his throat. Legolas couldn’t think, could not do anything except try and control the pain.

He wondered if the world should be tinted such an alarming shade of yellow.

A hand tried to grab his face and the elf bit down hard on the exposed appendages. Even that small motion sent another wave of agony through his battered figure, and Legolas curled more tightly into himself in response.

There was talking and then something pricked his neck. The world swerved in and out of focus and Legolas went limp. He was unable to move a single muscle, even when rough hands began pulling
him up into a standing position. The blonde swayed dangerously to the side, but he was kept upright by
the two humans standing on either side of him.

Legolas decided through the heavy fog in his brain that he rather disliked these humans.

They were dragging him out of the carriage, the elf realized. Then he wondered when they had
stopped moving, and why he had not noticed.

There were other people surrounding him then. Men just as large as the ones who were carrying him,
and some women and children as well. Some watched in pity, some with greed, but Legolas could
not even bring himself to feel mortified of his situation, he was too busy trying not to pass out.

Suddenly, a small child escaped her mother’s grasp and came up to him. He was sagging in his
captor’s grip, but the girl had come to speak with him, and he was not about to turn her away.

With some hidden reserve Legolas did not even know he had, he twisted out of the men’s grip
and shoved them away, dropping to his knees in front of the girl.

She was crying, he realized, and no child should ever cry or feel sad. (No matter that he was a
basically a child himself in terms of elves.) Gently as he could with his bound hands, the elf reached
out and wiped away the silent tears. The girl tentatively reached out as well and placed a small hand
on the elf’s cheek.

The child hugged him then, staining his tunic with her tears. The elf could not hug her back, but he
carefully placed his head on top of soft brown curls, his eyes closed in utter exhaustion.

It was as if every living thing held their breathe, and the world was drowning in silence. It was a
moment of respite amidst the chaos of life, and it was beautiful to see. But terribly sad as well, for
children of any race should never feel such remorse as this.

And in that moment, all who watched had guilt fill their heart, for no creature so fair and pure should
ever suffer such torment. It was wrong, unnatural, and a terrible thing to behold. More than one
child’s silent tears fell to the ground that day, and all who saw remembered that moment of time for
the rest of their lives.

Then large hands were pulling the elf back, pulling him up, and dragging him away.

The brief respite was over and sound came rushing through in a tidal wave of noise. The child was
crying for the elf, crying out for him and his pain, but the elf could not hear her over the pounding of
his own heart.

…

They threw Legolas into a cellar.

He collapsed in an ungraceful heap on the ground when they finally released him, and they left him
with his hands and ankles still bound. The door clanged shut behind them, and the ominous click of
the lock seemed oddly final.

As they walked away, Legolas heard them discussing how much they should demand in ransom. He
figured that at least now he knew why they had taken him, and wondered if they knew he was a
prince.

Legolas did not truly care either way.
Blearily, the elf managed to turn himself around so that he lay on his back. Then Legolas forced himself to sit upright. With one last effort, the blonde pushed himself back so that he could lean against the wall, where he sat with his long legs curled up to his chest and his arms loosely holding them there. His head rested on his knees and his face was hidden by a curtain of golden hair.

The elf was numb now, but his body was constantly shuddering as if he was cold. Every breath rattled in his lungs, and he focused on keeping his eyes open against the welcoming lull of sleep. Blood loss, his mind prompted, fall asleep now and you might never wake.

Legolas did not know how long he sat there in the dark, but at some point he became aware of the sounds of fighting. It was loud and jarring, and he wished it would stop. But when it did he wished it would come back, for it was a reminder that a world existed beyond the walls that surrounded him.

Suddenly, the door swung open and the flickering light of a torch washed over him in a reassuring wave. Legolas wearily lifted his head, trying to see who had come to his prison, but he could only see a dark silhouette of a man.

Legolas hid his face in his knees again, too tired to deal with anything anymore.

But insistent hands were fluttering all over him, and gently tapping at his face. There was something different in this human, and Legolas couldn’t help but feel as if he knew him. The human was speaking as well, and the elf realized that the words were not mannish but Sindarin, and something like hope flared in his chest. *****

The man had his chin in his hand, and was looking at him in concern, trying to coax him into responding.

“Legolas, mellon-nin, can you hear me? Talk to me, saes, I need to know what has happened before I attempt to move you. Legol-”

“Estel?”

The word escaped his throat slurred and dry, but it was there. And watching his friend’s face light up into a relieved smile, the elf decided it was worth the effort.

“Yes Legolas, it’s me. I am here.”

The blonde stared as the brunette for a few moments, brows furrowed in concentration. Finally, he lifted his hand to brush against Aragorn’s forehead, where a heavy welt had formed. His voice filled with tired concern, the elf muttered, “You’re bleeding.”

Aragorn gave a pained smile; trust the elf to be worried about a small head wound when he himself was literally bleeding out. “I was unconscious for a while, but I came around.”

Legolas let his head dropped back down, far too tired to hold it up any longer, and murmured, “Took you long enough.”

He felt Aragorn wince beside him, and then the ranger said, “Yes, I know, I’m sorry.”

Legolas wants to tell the man that he had nothing to forgive, but his eyelids were closing without his permission and it seemed far too much effort.

Everything was too much effort at that moment of time.

Later, Legolas would have no memory of the journey out of the human town. He will have no
memory of getting on the horse with Aragorn and riding away. He will have no memory of the stitches and the bandages and of his friends panic filled swears as he bled far too much, far too fast. He will not remember Aragorn keeping watch all night long, gazing at the dying flames with a hand over his wounded friend’s heart, tracking its comforting beat.

He will simply remember his friend’s gentle hands supporting him, and finally giving into the blackness that pulled at him, knowing he had found safety at last.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you liked the chapter!!! Thank you for all the reviews and Kudos!!! :)  

Until next time, my peeps!

Mashpotatloe Queen
Here's the next chapter, guys!!!!

“Come with us Legolas! It shall be fun!”

The elf stood uncertainly to the side, his arms crossed in front of his chest. His face a picture of hesitation as he shifted on his feet.

“Come laddie, you enjoyed yourself at our drinking game, it shall be the same now,” said Gimli, his deep voice unseemingly loud in the empty hall.

Two encouraging grins from two eager hobbits shown forth, and the dwarf had raised an eyebrow in a silent challenge.

Finally coming to a decision, the blonde gave a tentative smile and joined the group.

“Oh, very well, I shall join you in the tavern for the night. Let me just grab my cloak.”

Merry and Pippin cheered in victory and Gimli laughed at their antics. Soon enough, the entourage exited the castle and stepped into the rain. The group hurriedly traveled through the darkened city of Gondor to their destination, a little shabby building with a faded green sign hanging on the front, which stated that the tavern was called The Wild Boar.

The inside was just as shabby as the exterior, but it was warm and dry and the bartender knew the hobbits and the dwarf, who had become something of a regular in the small bar.

So when Merry, Pippin, and Gimli entered the establishment and pulled down their hoods, they were greeted with a simple nod of acknowledgement from some and a cheerful holler from others. Their arrival was nothing odd, nothing to be excited or interested in. The normal quiet chatter and clinks of mugs and cutlery continued in an ordinary fashion.

And then the elf entered.

His cloak was removed just as all the others had done, but the revealence of the blonde’s fair features was not met with casual acceptance.

Every eye in the room swiveled to the faintly glowing form of the immortal and stared.

All went silent, and the only noise to filter into the room was the soft crackling of the fire.

Legolas stiffened when everyone’s gaze turned on him, and so he stayed for several moments. It was as if a magical enchantment had passed over the tavern, and all were frozen, as if silent, staring statues.

The spell was broken when Gimli positioned himself in front of the elf and cleared his throat loudly, brown orbs glaring at those who dare make his friend uncomfortable.
The chatter returned then, and everyone turned back to their conversations. But their quiet chatter no longer focused on simple, trivial things, but of the blonde elf that was now in their midsts.

Legolas placed a soothing hand on the dwarfs strong shoulder, giving a small smile of gratitude when the axe-bearer looked up. Gimli nodded once in quiet understanding and relaxed his tense muscles in favor of enjoying the night.

“Alright laddies, let’s get ourselves an ale, ai?”

This broke the hobbits from their trance- they were rather stupefied by the events that had just occurred- and their excited cheers of agreement filled the room.

Just then, the bartender hurried over to their small group. He gave one awe-filled gaze towards the elf- who suffered through it with a small blush highlighting his cheeks and a ducked head- before he gave the regulars a shaky grin and said with only a slightly strained voice, “What can I get for ya Master Dwarf, Master Hobbits?”

Gimli released a booming laugh and slapped the man on the back hard enough to make him wince.

“Just our usual. Nothin’ special.”

The bartender nodded and jotted something down on his pad of paper.* Then the man swallowed hard, gathering his courage, and turned to Legolas.

“And you, Master Elf, what can I get ya?”

The elf furrowed his brow pensively before saying softly, “I shall have the same as them, if that is alright.”

The bartender nodded reassuringly and headed back to his station, shaking his head repeatedly as if he could not believe what he had just done, and was still wandering in a shocked reality.

(Gimli was secretly impressed, for the man had reacted much more casually than he had expected him to.)

The small group headed to a simple wooden table in the corner of the room, where they all sat and waited for their drinks, which were quickly delivered.

When the large pint of ale was placed in front of the elf, he gave it a dubious stare. Gimli, upon seeing his look, just patted his knee and told him to drink up, and so he did.

The night continued on with much joy and merriment. Merry and Pippin chattered in a continuous stream of words and sang many a drinking song. Gimli laughed and sang along, while the elf watched with no small amount of amusement.

Indeed, if not for the constant glances being cast his way, Legolas did believe he would be thoroughly enjoying himself.

Finally, after many pints of ale, the dwarf rose to stand on slightly unsteady feet. Excusing himself to heed nature’s call, he wondered out of the tavern.** The three remaining members shared knowing looks and chortled into their mugs.

Rapidly finishing off their ninth ale, the hobbits excused themselves as well in order to retrieve their tenth.
It was then, when the blonde sat alone at the table, that a group of men approached, but their intent was not so innocent as getting an order of food or drink.

“So, Elf, what brings ya here?”

Legolas- who had hoped the men would not approach him at all and was sorely disappointed- raised an eyebrow. “I have come to enjoy an ale with my companions, what other reason could there be?”

A man at the back of the group spoke up, “I can think of many different reasons…”

The men laughed.

Legolas frowned.

Quite done with the humans surrounding him, the blonde said, “Speaking of my companions, I must go and find them, if you will excuse me…” and made to stand.

A large hand shoved him back down into a chair.

“I don’t think so, elf,” the leader jeered, “Why don’t you stay awhile? Me and me’ boys will keep ya company.”

Legolas tossed an affronted look at the offending appendage that sat on his shoulder. With annoyance starting to color his voice, the blonde insisted, “That is not necessary. At all. I shall just take my leave-” He attempted to shrug the hand off, only for it to tighten cruelly.

“No. You won’t. You’ll be coming with us. Isn’t that right boys?”

More laughter.

Legolas outright glared then, for this was getting ridiculous. He had no intentions on going with the man, nor any of his friends, and he had made it quite clear.

He wondered how he could get out of his situation without making a scene. (For really, these men were no match for the elf.)

He wondered how he always managed to get into these kind of situations in the first place. (It happened incredibly often.)

But most of all, he wondered what on Arda was taking his friends so long. (Surely a trip to relieve one’s self or to refill your mug of ale does not take as long as this…) 

Letting out an annoyed huff of air through his nose, Legolas opened his mouth- again - to insist that he needed to find his friends, when suddenly the man holding down leaned in close, close enough that Legolas had to lean back in an effort to avoid touch.

A calloused finger brushed lightly against his cheek, and Legolas tensed when he heard the man’s whispered words flutter past his ear.

“My, you are a pretty one, aren’t you?”

By this time, the young hobbits had finally finished in retrieving their ale and started to head back to the table. They laughed merrily as they walked, for they had just heard a humourous tale and were still lost in the throes of the story.

All signs of merriment vanished, however, when they saw their elven friend and the men who
loomed over him.

Now, the halflings did not know what was happening. They did not know who these men were or why they were talking with the elf or anything of that sort.

They simply knew that Legolas had an uncomfortable and afronted look on his fair features, and that the expression had no right to be there.

There are many things that can be said of halflings. They are a kind, simple people who have a love of good food, good company, and all things of home. They are stout and stubborn. Brave and true. And they are some of the most surprising creature anyone could ever meet.

But they are also loyal to a fault, and will always put their friends above anything else.

And so, when Merry and Pippin saw the scene in front of them, they did the only sensible thing that they could do.

They jumped onto the men’s backs and hit them in the head with their mugs of ale, yelling and shouting for all their worth.

No one would mess with their friend, not if they could help it.

The two victims gave loud yelps in surprise when the hobbits landed on them and the frothy ale splashed over their heads, but the sounds were quickly cut off when two sets of small arms wrapped around their necks and pulled.

With a resounding crash, the men fell backwards into a large pile of limbs.

From there, it was a case of the small figures running through and under various reaching appendages and jumping onto the backs of the larger humans, smashing their heavy mugs of ale against their heads with a resounding thud, which caused an almost instant fallen foe.

In almost no time at all, the partners in crime scrambled out of the pile of unconscious men, unscathed besides a few bruises, brushing imaginary dirt off of their shoulders and loudly congratulating each other on the successful take-down.

The leader of the men was not so happy on his lackies failure, and he turned to the hobbits in anger, his face twisted into a snarl. A large sword was drawn on the weaponless hobbits, who froze at the sight of the towering man.

They stood firm, though, for they had faced worse enemies than this man, and they had defeated them. They would defeat this adversity as well, should it come down to it.

Luckily for the two halflings, it did not come down to it.

The man, in his fury, had made one vital mistake:

He had released the elf.

Legolas stood and leapt over the man with an elegant flip. With precise movements, he dodged the sword that the leader swung at him and grabbed the man’s wrist. With a single, hard twist, the weapon was released. Deftly, the blonde warrior grabbed it before it could even reach the ground and slammed the butt of the sword against the man’s skull, who immediately crumpled to the ground.

No one would mess with his friends, not if he could help it.
Legolas gave a small smile to the dumbstruck hobbits and said, “Let us go and find Gimli, yes?”

But they were too late, for the dwarf had already returned, and he was staring at the unconscious men with a flabbergasted look on his face.

“I leave for five minutes and you get yourselves into a bar fight!?”

The three figures shot sheepish grins at the incredulous dwarf, who threw his hands into the air in defeat and marched out of the door with an annoyed huff.

The hobbits raced after him, their bare feet slapping on the floor as they fled from the scene.

This left the elf to pay the bartender for their drinks, retrieve their cloaks, and apologize for the fight. Then he too escaped into the night, leaving an entire bar full of gaping men behind him.

Legolas quickly caught up with his companions, who were all more than a bit buzzed and were laughing hysterically.

(“Did you see their faces!?”)

Legolas released his own lighthearted laughter, for all was well and he could not bring himself to care about much else. Tomorrow, no doubt, there would be rumors about the trio and how they had attacked the unsuspecting men. There would be stories and tall-tales and suspicious glances... but that was alright. They would deal with it come tomorrow.

For now, he was simply content to be with his friends, safe, whole, and together.

Chapter End Notes

* I have no idea how service would have happened in Middle Earth, so I took some artistic liberties. :)
** Would there be a bathroom? I'm assuming not....

I hope you enjoyed! :(
Hallo! It's been awhile since I updated this... so here you go! :) 

Also like, Sam is precious and I love him, so treat him kindly, my friends.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was quiet in Moria. Quiet, and cold.

It wasn’t the natural kind of silence either, it was a silence that spoke of death.

But was that such a shock? Moria was, after all, a tomb.

Sam shivered as he lay in his pile of blankets. It was cold yes, but he did not know if the chill or his fear was the true reason for his chattering teeth. He dare not sleep either way, for the darkness was looming and great, and even though his body was tired, his mind could not master the control to rest under its watch.

Searching for distraction, roaming eyes landed upon two figures, who spoke quietly to one another.

One was a tall, brown-haired man garbed in dark clothes of a ranger. His eyes were a warm hazel in color and on his hip was a sheathed sword.

The other was a lean elf with long golden tresses, and eyes of a most brilliant blue. Even in the deep dark of Moria, Sam could see the green-clad figure clearly, for the archer glowed faintly in the dark.

Aragorn and Legolas, thought the halfling.

It seemed as if they were arguing, or- at the very least- in disagreement. The ranger kept whispering furtively to the elf, occasionally gesturing to the blonde warrior’s pack, only for the golden head to shake in what could only be an emphatic no.

The mutterings continued until Gandalf spoke up, his old, gravely voice loud enough so that all could hear.

“Go to sleep, Thranduilion.”

Legolas stared imploringly at the wizard, his pleading voice echoing in the quiet hall.

“But, Mithrandir, I-”

“I know, Legolas, I know.”

None but the elf saw the slight softening in the wizard’s eyes. And the next words were a mere murmur, so none but the elf could hear them.

“Rest, Legolas, for new challenges shall arrive come morning. You are not alone in these darkened halls, and you would do well to remember.”
The blonde nodded slowly, his shoulders slumping slightly in defeat. Aragorn gave a relieved smile and gently knocked his head with Legolas. Then the man headed to the edge of the campsite, presumably to relieve Boromir from guard duty.

Reluctantly, the elf wandered over to his pack and placed his weapons down beside it. In silence, he leaned back against a large stone pillar and stared upwards, his gaze fixed on a ceiling no one else could see.

Sam watched in silence, for it appeared that he was not the only one who found no sleep in the deep darks of Moria.

He cast a sideways glance at Frodo- unwilling to leave his master, should be needed- but the ringbearer was, for once, sleeping peacefully, and so Sam gathered his courage and headed over to sit next to the softly glowing form.

The elf, upon his arrival, raised a single eyebrow in question.

In answer, the hobbit whispered, “I couldn’ sleep.”

The blonde nodded knowingly, going back to relaxing against the pillar, pale eyelids closed.

There was something wrong with the immortal, that much he knew. Legolas had never seemed so tired, so vacant from the world around him. The yellow flare that surrounded his lean figure was faint, as if it might flutter out at any moment, and he was paler than the halfling remembered.

If he hadn’t known better, he might of assumed the warrior was sick, but elves could not become sick, for it was not in their nature.

At least, that was what he had heard.

Sam cleared his throat, and a sky blue orb revealed itself.

“I was wondering, ah, uh… Mister Legolas, sir, if I could ask a question.” *

“Just Legolas.”

The halfling faltered, his confusion clear on his face, and asked, “What?”

The elf faced him fully now, his face featuring a gentle smile, and said again, “Just Legolas, Master Samwise, I am no ‘Mister’, or ‘Sir’. Not to you. Not to anyone in this company. I am simply ‘Legolas’.”

The hobbit gaped up at him, but then he closed his mouth with an audible snap. Determination settled onto his normally gentle features, and he replied, “Then you must call me Sam, cause I’m no “Master”, not at all.”

The archer gave him a small smile, and nodded his comprehension.

“Very well then, Sam it shall be.”

The halfling grinned- To think he was speaking with an elf! - and tentatively asked again, “So may I ask ya a question, Mist- I mean, uh, Legolas?”

“Of course, Sam.”

Originally, he was going to inquire on why the elven warrior seemed so ill, so tired, but then he saw
how pale and exhausted Legolas’ face was, and could not bring himself to do it. Sam felt as if the archer had enough trials already without a hobbit pestering him, and so he asked of less troubling things.

“I was just wonderin’ what your home was like, that’s all…”

The blonde’s lips flickered into another smile, and he began by saying, “My home is the woodland realm, Samwise, the kingdom of Greenwood the Great. My father, King Thranduil, rules the land…”

Sam listened with a quiet awe as the elf described towering trees and giant butterflies. As he recreated the roaring waterfalls and the glistening glades. As he spoke of his father and of his people, the celebrations they held and the food they ate.

Sam listened as he created the elven realm around them, his only tools his voice and his memory, and the hobbit almost felt as if he had left the mines all together. It was as if some enchantment was being woven through thin air, breaching through time and space until the Woodland Realm was brought to life in the figments of imagination of those willing enough to see it.

And then the magic was broken, for Legolas was leaning towards him and asking, “What of the Shire? What is your home like, Sam?”

“You want me to tell you of the Shire?” he squeaked, and the blonde smiled a small hopeful grin, his eyes shining with a spark that the hobbit did not even know was missing until it returned, and the hobbit found himself agreeing for how could he refuse that?

And so Sam tried. He spoke of siblings and cousins, of warm round rooms and of Merry and Pippin’s antics. He spoke of huge hobbit feasts and birthday parties that happened every week. He spoke of Rosie, and just how beautiful she was. He spoke of small rolling hills dotted with chimneys and doors. He spoke of stout trees and emerald grass and his little garden and how he hoped it still bloomed.

He spoke of many things, one after the next, until he could think of no more, and only then did he turn to the elf, hoping beyond hope that he had satisfied him.

Legolas had maneuvered himself into a more comfortable position at some point during the tale, and now he layed on his side curled into a tight ball. His head rest on the ground besides Sam’s knee, and his eyes were open and glazed over…

He did not look as if he was breathing.

The hobbit almost screamed- Legolas is dead! - but a gnarled hand on his shoulder stopped him.

Gandalf crouched next to him, a finger pressed against his lips. Quietly, he whispered in the halflings ear, “There is no need to fret, Samwise, he is only sleeping.”

Sam stared at the wizard incredulously, for could he truly not see?

“His eyes are open, Gandalf!”

“I know. That is how elves sleep. His soul wanders through his memories, or perhaps he explores the shire you have just so aptly described… Oh, do not look at me like that Samwise, I am not some old coot. If you will look, you will see him breathing.”

Shooting one last incredulous glance at the wizard, the hobbit peered down at the blonde’s chest, starting visibly when he noticed the nearly indecipherable movement of the elf’s chest.
Gandalf smiled at him smugly.

“And he’s perfectly fine?”

“Yes Samwise, he is.”

Slowly, the gardener leaned back, his pounding heart finally stopping its desperate dance. Legolas was fine, he wasn’t dead. Sam had not killed him.

The shuffling of fabric drew his attention back to the present, and he watched as Gandalf stood and retrieved a folded cloth from the archer’s pack.

Gently, the wizard lifted Legolas’ head and placed the folded cloth underneath it. The elf immediately stirred and started to shift, but he placed a palm on the pale forehead and muttered something under his breath, causing the blonde to settle once more.

The hobbit looked on, a small frown of concern marring his feature.

“What’s wrong with him, Gandalf?”

The question was asked quietly, but it was filled with worry and fear for their companion, and so the wizard did his best to explain, his keen blue eyes shining with a sadness few could understand.

“Elves are not meant to be locked away in the dark caverns of old. They belong amongst the sun, the trees, and the stars, where they can hear the beat of Ilúvatar’s Song and embrace the threads of life that connect us all. To be shut off from it, to not be able to feel the rhythm thrum through their bodies… It is not good for them. Especially for the wood elves, for they are so tightly woven into the Song that it has become apart of their very essence…”

Here the elder stopped, his eyes straying to the sleeping figure that lay beside them.

“You did well, Samwise Gamgee, for Legolas has not rested since we entered the mines, and I had feared he would not rest until we were beneath the open skies once more.”

With no response from the shocked halfling, Gandalf murmured softly, “Thank you.”

And then he was gone.

Sam stared at the prone elf, his mind racing with a thousand new questions and thoughts, but then he shook his head and wandered off to his pile of blankets; he had learned enough for one night.

He tucked himself in, made sure Frodo was still safe in his slumbers, and yawned. Distantly, he could see a faint glow from Legolas’ corner, and Sam smiled as he fell into the realm of dreams, where great trees towered and golden butterflies danced to a lively song that no one could hear…

Chapter End Notes

* I’ve always seen as Legolas and the Hobbits having very little chance to interact, with Legolas always patrolling ahead or hunting game and such, hence the awkwardness.

**Legolas would have the best puppy dog eyes EVER, and you cannot convince me otherwise.
Hope you enjoyed!!!! :D
Hello! I'm really sorry for the delay, life was busy.

If your wondering, Frodo acts kind of happier here than canon because I always felt that the ring had a very immediate effect in the movies when it should have been more gradual. Hopefully, you can still like it!

Anywho, here we are! Enjoy!

Takes place about a Week into the Fellowship's Journey.

---

Frodo was tired.

The night before had been filled with endless walking, and now they trekked on through the early morning light. Even the elf- *Legolas, his name is Legolas*, Frodo reminded himself- seemed to be weary, his pace slightly slowed from his usual brisk strides.

But the hobbit had never seen Legolas sleep, and they were already a week into the journey. He wondered if the elf was tired because of one night of no rest, or many, but then he shoved the thought aside; it was none of his business.

Besides, it was not like he had slept either, for his dreams were filled with raging fire and rasping whispering voices and an evil essence that always made him wake in cold sweat.

(*Frodo thought that perhaps the elf had his own demons, but that, too, was none of his business, and so he did not ask. He still wondered though.*)

*Finally*, the wizard called for Legolas to find a place for camp, and he and his fellow hobbits perked up, for camp means rest and- more importantly-*food*.

The elf vanished into the trees, and again Frodo was curious about the immortal, for he has traded but a few words with him. The hobbit wanted to ask questions- *so many questions*- but he dared not, in case the fair being was offended.*

But then the elf was back, appearing silently and suddenly enough to make Gimli jump and curse. Frodo could not help but think that he had done it that way on purpose, hoping for that exact reaction, but Legolas was collected and calm as he reported to Gandalf of his findings, and then Frodo thought that it is just the elfish way.

(*He was wrong.*)

The hobbit was interrupted from his musings when the wizard called out that their campsite was only a fifteen minute walk away.** At the news, Merry and Pippin somehow mustered the energy to cheer. Boromir laughed at their antics, and Gimli quickly joined in. Legolas looked slightly confused,
but Aragorn patted his arm and smiled, and so the blonde warrior smiled quietly back.

Frodo decided then that he would attempt a friendship with the elf, for if the fellowship were joined together to protect the hobbit on the arduous journey, then it would only be fair to learn of those who guarded him. It would only be fair they knew each other if they were risking their lives for him.

They arrived at the campsite with no trouble at all, which turned out to be a small clearing with a merry little stream passing through. Surrounded by trees and small bushes, the place had a sense of seclusion.

Gandalf nodded, apparently satisfied, and everyone started to unpack. Bill was relieved of his various burdens and set loose to graze, a small fire was made, and Sam started to cook a pot of soup for what promised to be a pleasant lunch.

By the time the meal was prepared, the elf had vanished again to the canopy above.

Frodo sat next to Sam, eating his soup absentmindedly as his eyes searched the trees for a flash of gold hair; he was determined to begin his self-assigned quest as soon as possible. Seeing nothing, the hobbit finished his lunch and then walked to Gandalf, his eyes shining with a determination and curiosity that had been dulled since his acquiring of the ring.

"Where's Legolas?"

The wizard stared at the halfling for a few moments, obviously pondering his strange request, but then he responded, a small smile playing on his lips.

"I do not know, but I would suspect up a tree."

Frodo gave the wizened figure an unimpressed look, for he had already figured that out, and he knew that Gandalf knew that.

A quiet, throaty chuckle filled the air then, and despite his best efforts the hobbit could not help but join in, however weak his own laughter turned out to be, with twinkling eyes and an amused expression, the old man gestured to the side, where a large tree stood proudly at the edge of the clearing.

Frodo thanked the wizard with a twitch of the lips and a nod. Arming himself with a bowl of soup, he headed to the towering foliage.

He wondered then, what he was doing. The safety of all the free peoples of Middle Earth was upon his shoulders. He bore the One Ring—indeed, he could feel the heavy presence pulling at his neck in those moments, in all moments—and was on a quest to destroy it in the fires of Mount Doom. He had such a large responsibility, such a huge task ahead of him, and only he could prevent the destruction of all of Arda.

And there he was, trying to make friends with an elf, a pitiful bowl of soup in hand.

He decided not to think of it, for he would have many hours to think of responsibility and trials ahead. It was of no use to him to ponder in those moments.

With new determination, Frodo stepped forwards and knocked lightly on the rough bark of the trunk, his soft voice reaching the pointy tips of the elf who sat above.

"Legolas?"
The blonde peered down to the earth below, his eyebrows furrowed when he spotted the ring-bearer searching for him in the leaves.

For a moment, Legolas considered staying up in the safety of the tree, but he knew that would be petty, and so he quickly climbed down.

The elf was… lost.

He was an immortal amongst a group of mortals, and in truth Legolas was nervous. He had spent almost the entirety of his life within the borders of the Woodland Realm, and as such had little to none experience with any peoples of other races. (Aragorn and Mithrandir being the obvious exception.)

He knew not how to act, how they might react, what he should say or do, or why they did what they did or said what they said. He was confused and worried and fearful that he would make an outright fool of himself.

And it was ridiculous. Stupid. Why should he care? Care about what these people thought of him? He was a warrior. A warrior with a duty, and he had every intention on acting on that duty. A warrior shouldn't care if his fellow comrades liked him, just that he had sufficiently done his job with the best of his ability.

(A small part of him, however, wished to ask, wished to understand and learn and be a part of this… something that had developed within the fellowship. A rebellious piece that shouted for him to care about belonging and being something other than "the elf" in the group. But he dare not listen, for fear of rejection or distraction from his job, he did not know. Perhaps both.)

Landing in front of the startled hobbit, he smiled slightly apologetically and spoke quietly. (He cared not what the ringbearer thought of him. He cared not.)

"Do you need any assistance, Master Hobbit?"

Frodo blinked- once, twice- before shaking his head and giving a small smile to the blonde, holding up the soup he had brought.

"I'm sorry Legolas, for bothering you, but I noticed you didn't get any lunch. So I brought you some…"

Legolas stared down at the bowl for a moment, his eyes revealing the confusion he felt. Why was the halfling doing this? Would it be considered rude to refuse the offering? Should he politely refuse and say he's on watch? Could he do that? He didn't know. He didn't know.

And then a slightly hopeful voice interrupted his slightly panicked musings.

"I was hoping you'd join us, actually… I mean, if you want to."

Startled blue eyes looked up in order to latch onto the hobbit's. And he realized that Frodo was smiling hesitantly at him, that there was no reproach or resignation or arrogance hidden in his gaze. Only kindness and curiosity and acceptance.

And so Legolas agreed, a small tentative smile coming to his own lips as he took the bowl of soup from the outstretched hands.

Frodo grinned back tiredly and walked back to the center of the clearing filled with the rest of their companions, the elf trailing behind him.
Legolas folded himself to the ground, soup in hand, and stared in shock when Pippin and Merry waved cheerfully at him, as if he had always been there, already a part of their group.

The ringbearer settled down beside him and he was treated with one of the most rigorous questioning sessions he had ever endured. The hobbit's curiosity was endless, and Pippin and Merry joined in with much enthusiasm. (The food seemingly reviving them from their half-catatonic state.) Even Boromir joined in at times, asking about elven weapons and tactics.

And then Legolas found himself playing a strange convoluted form of tag with Merry and Pippin, where the hobbits somehow manage to tackle him to the ground. He helped Sam with washing the dishes, enduring the gardener's awe-filled glances with a slight flushing of cheeks. He showed Frodo how to write a few words in Sindarin, and the halfling was happier than the blonde had ever seen him.

And then Boromir was calling him over, and they sparred with the hobbits cheering off to the side. Legolas won, and he briefly feared that Boromir would be resentful, but he was not and let the elf pull him up, congratulating him for the victory.

And then the hobbits were retiring, and Gandalf was asking if he minded relieving Gimli and Aragorn from their watch, a strange twinkle of amusement shining in his eyes. He agreed, despite his own tiredness, and climbed the closest tree, his mind racing with thoughts and feelings and joy.

And then he was grateful- so grateful- that he accepted Frodo's offering. That he had the courage to take the bowl and sit by the fire. For he had finally realized just what the offering meant, that it was not just some soup in a dish that the hobbit had given him, but something else entirely.

It had been an offer of friendship, and Legolas was so, so glad.

...

Chapter End Notes

So, that's a wrap!

Notes:

*I see Frodo as a very curious hobbit, and I can't imagine him not asking a single question about his companions during the journey, especially if one of them is an elf

**Does Middle Earth even use minutes!? I have not a clue...

As always, I am open for any advice or comments that you have to give, and I am so grateful for all the people who took the time to read this. :) 

Thank you!

-The Mashpotatoe Queen
Boromir

Chapter Notes

Hello my peeps! I hope you enjoy!

Takes place before the fellowship reaches The Mountain Pass and the Mines of Moria.

...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The orcs had been everywhere.

Boromir did not remember much from the battle- his concussion had made sure of that- but what he did remember included quite a bit of yelling and screaming and blood, but most of all there were orcs. Everywhere.

They had been ambushed in the middle of the night. He had been on guard with Gimli, and there had had no warning, no sign. One moment it was calm, the world silent around them, and then orcs had crashed in, shattering the quiet with guttural screams and the sounds of battle.

The elf had been asleep (perhaps asleep was not the right word, his eyes had been open in the glazed fashion that immortals called slumber) and so his strange affiliation with the trees had not been able to save them.

It had been a grim fight, their lack of warning causing their enemy to have the upper hand. The group of orcs had been large, and it had been all they could do to drive them off. As it was, their supplies was heavily depleted, and several members of their party had been injured.

(Including himself, but that was of little consequence.)

Their lack of… anything, in truth, made it necessary for a stop at the closest village, which happened to be roughly half a day’s travel away. They needed to replenish their healing supplies, their food stores, their cloaks and their water flasks.

Much had been lost, and Boromir felt incredible guilt for his part in it.

Still, the situation would normally be a simple fix. Aragorn would travel to the town- his knowledge on herbs, healing supplies, and necessities making him the obvious choice- and acquire all that they needed.

The only problem, however, was that Aragorn had received an arrow to the leg, making a day of walking a rather troublesome endeavor.

And that was what had led Boromir to his dilemma.

For the only other member of the fellowship who had any knowing of what the ranger would require was the elf.
The same elf who had an arm strapped to his chest from an orcish blade, who was rather pale from blood loss, and may or may not be poisoned.

(Normally, the archer would not have been injured at all, but he had been the first to jump to the defense of the hobbits, and it had not been an easy fight while all the others warriors had gotten their wits together…)

He could walk for long periods of time though, which was more than could be said for Aragorn.

The moment Legolas had said he would go to the town, however, the man had protested. He had gone so far as to complain to Gandalf, gesturing to the blonde as he made his point. The wizard had frowned and he too had turned his gaze to the slightly exasperated elf and then nodded, agreeing to Aragorn's terms.

The terms being, of course, that Boromir travel with Legolas to the village.

He had gotten off fairly easy from the battle, with only a mild concussion and a myriad of bruises covering his back from being thrown into a tree. Because of this, he was one of the less injured members of the company. This made him a better defender for the hobbits- who were all, thank Arda, basically unharmed- and so he had initially argued against leaving, believing himself of more use by the halflings' sides.

Aragorn had disagreed.

"Legolas can not go to a human village, Boromir, not alone. Especially if he is injured. Many a man fear what they do not understand. They become brash, angry, scared, unreasonable. Elves... elves are normally something in this category. You must go with him."

And maybe he should have argued a bit more. Maybe he should have protested. But there was something in the man's voice, some sort of honest concern, that compelled Boromir to listen.

And so he went.

The town itself was not incredibly large, but it was big enough. There was a small market in the town square, the houses were all simple rustic brown buildings, and the people seemed calm and unobtrusive.

The man scoffed at first, believing Aragorn's precaution unnecessary. There appeared to be nothing of consequence here, nothing that could even remotely hinder the elf.

But then Legolas had actually entered the market, his blonde head held high, his pointed ears on display for all who wished to see, and his blue orbs practically shining in the sunlight.

The effect was immediate.

All the people who had been puttering about but moments before slowed their actions, stopped, and stared. Some of their gazes were filled with awe or curiosity, but most were filled with distrust and suspicion.

The archer was tense, but that was the only sign Boromir could see of Legolas' discomfort. Indeed, the elf walked on through the street as if it was but a casual stroll through the woods, even as the villagers' stares pierced him with startling force.

Boromir strided a few steps behind him, gathering little to no attention.
Legolas finally stopped in front of a stall, his soft voice seeming incredibly loud in the utter silence of the square.

"May I purchase some-"

The blonde was cut off by the stall owner's gruff voice.

"No, elf, we don't serve your kind here."

Boromir frowned.

Legolas opened his mouth, his lips shaping questions-"Why?" "How come?" "What gives you the right?" - that would never be uttered, for suddenly the town's people were no longer just looking, but acting. They surrounded blonde archer, their anger and suspicion and distrust welling upwards in a cacophony of sound and madness. There was no sense, no reason, just a solid fear of the unknown.

And Boromir knew. He knew, even as a large man grabbed Legolas roughly by the bicep and manhandled him further into the square, that if the elf wanted to, he could defeat them. He could easily escape from the grasping hands and the angry voices. Despite his wounded arm, despite his exhaustion, despite him being outnumbered twenty to one, the elf could probably kill them all without even breaking sweat.

And Boromir knew. He knew that the elf would not lift a single finger.

He wanted to believe that he understood the blonde's reasoning. They were the intruders. These were men with wives and children, men who had families. This was no war. No battle. These were no orcs or creatures of darkness. These were just people trying to protect one another. If they hated the elf, then the elf would say nothing, for it was not his place to fight. Not a warrior's place to fight. Legolas would not beat up these civilians, not if it could be helped.

It was an honorable cause, truly, and the man of Gondor was grateful that the elf had such restraint. Such respect for life that one would not harm it unless absolutely necessary was an admirable trait, but it prevented the elf from stopping the ludicrous situation, which was quickly getting out of hand.

Luckily, Boromir had no such qualms.

With a heaving sigh and a frown marring his features, the man stepped forward and started working his way through the mob. It was ridiculously easy- these men were no trained warriors- and in nearly no time at all he was in the center of the crowd, all eyes upon him.

Boromir cleared his throat, and using his best commanding voice, he spoke.

"I suggest," it was not a suggestion, and everyone knew, "that you let him go."

"Boromir-"

It was Legolas, and there was something akin to reprimand in his tone. But there was also a hint of exasperation, and only then did the man of Gondor realize that the blonde might have had a plan of his own, one that did not involve him barging his way through the masses and threatening everyone.

He shrugged it off, for it was too late to change anything and there were far more important matters to deal with. For the villager who was holding the elf had tightened his grip enough to make the blonde wince- Boromir scowls when he realized the man was gripping Legolas' wounded arm- and he would not stand such mistreatment of his companion.
Boromir wonders when Legolas stopped being a comrade and became his companion. He also wonders when Legolas stopped being a mere companion and became something of a friend. But he will never know, and the knowledge would be lost to history.

Before either man could do anything, however, the elf maneuvered himself in complicated twist that was far too fast for normal eyes to follow, and then he was free from his captor's grasp. The villager, stunned, simply watched as Legolas walked to Boromir's side, but the man of Gondor knew that soon the villagers would turn violent once more.

He needed to act quickly, when everyone was silent and listening.

Clearing his throat again, he spoke, this time addressing the whole crowd.

"My friend and I mean no harm to you or your town. We come only to buy necessities for the road. Then we will leave."

The people do not disperse, and some hands traveled to sheathed weapons. Legolas tensed beside him, and Boromir searched for words. (His brother was always so much better with them than he.)

The elf speaks before he even got a chance.

"Let us purchase our wares. We shall not attack or fight, we just wish to go through the market in peace."

And there was something in Legolas' voice, some sort of outright sincerity and honesty, that compelled listening. It was Aragorn all over again, but far more powerful. He could see the villagers relax, and their hands retracting from their weapons. Could see there eyes stare at the elf, still suspicious and distrustful, but also with something like respect.

And so they hurried through the town square, the elf randomly stopping to trade quiet words with a stall owner and purchase their goods. The villagers mainly ignored them, and those who approached with malicious intent were quickly scared off when Boromir put a hand on his blade and glared.

Later, when they traveled again through the woods to find their companions and continue their journey, the elf suddenly stopped. Boromir stopped as well, muscles tense in preparation for battle, but Legolas merely shook his head and smiled. Then he grabbed Boromir's hand and placed a small object inside it, something like gratitude shining in his eyes.

And when the blonde continued on, a soft song escaping his lips and fleeing into the air, Boromir opened his closed fingers and stared, for there in his palm was a small yellow flower.

The man's lips twitched, for he knew that the gift represented gratitude and friendship, and he gently placed the blossom in his satchel. Then he chased after the elf, who had gone far in his brief moments of stillness.

The flower stayed in Boromir's satchel, it's petals never fading nor turning brittle; it was eternally caught in full bloom, the magic of an elf running through its veins. It was a small structure of peace and light when the darkness and madness crept in, but it was not enough.*

(If only it had been enough...)

But that mattered not in those few moments, where an elf and a man traveled in mutual companionship. It was but a small gift placed in an open palm, where it would remain for the rest of the man's days.
And in those few moments, it was enough.

Chapter End Notes

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*Can elves do this? If they can, would Legolas be one of the ones able to do so? I have not a single clue. I just- it just happened, okay?

So that's the end of this chapter... Anyways, writing Boromir was kind of tough, but I think I did okay. :) Let me know your thoughts on the matter! Also, if I utterly mess up with something, help me in those instances too.

Anyways, Thank you SO MUCH to all my readers for taking the time to read A Helping Hand, you make it all worth it! :)  

-The Mashpotatoe Queen
Legolas

Chapter Notes

You might be thinking, "Why is Legolas' chapter here? What about Gandalf!??" I'm going to do Gandalf last, cause I have a good ending that sums everything up. So now you get to have Legolas!

Also, I have little to none experience when it comes to losing someone. If the way it is portrayed here seems false, please tell me, and I'll do my best to fix it.

In this chapter, dialogue which is all italicized is elvish.

Takes place when the Fellowship is in Lothlorien

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

There was beauty to be found in Lothlorien.

Legolas could not help but stare in awe at the golden woods. The trees sang with grace and light, and their bountiful boughs caressed him with a gentle joy and soft whispers of comfort.

He closed his eyes, for once more there was a traitorous wetness lingering there. No beauty in the world could heal the grief that weighed down his very soul, because Mithrandir was gone – dead – and no one would ever be able to bring him back.

Gandalf had been his friend, and his heart shattered with every beat at the thought that the old wizard was lost to him.

And he wished he would have done something, anything, for surely he could have saved him, could have prevented the fall, surely he could have done the impossible…

Legolas swiped angrily at his eyes; he was not going to cry. Not again.

(Too many tears had already been shed, and Gandalf would hate this. Hate them mourning and crying, and grieving for him. He'd want them to laugh and reminisce and be thankful for the memories, thankful that he led a good life. He'd want them to be happy. But that didn't matter, and his heart ached despite knowing what the wizard would want.)

He sighed, for all the nature and light was wonderful, as if he could finally breathe again after the darks of Moria, but it wasn't enough. Every piece of beauty he saw was a reminder that Mithrandir was no longer there to enjoy it as well. A reminder that Mithrandir was lost to them, never to return…

And it was so hard to breathe when your throat is clogged with tears.

He swiped at his eyes again.

Letting loose a shuttering sigh, Legolas turned around and headed back to camp. He had thought… He wasn't sure what he had thought. Perhaps that some time alone would allow him to let go? Perhaps that solitude would help cure his grief? Perhaps spending time away from the mournful eyes
of the fellowship might stop his own eyes from reflecting a similar sadness? He didn't know.

*He didn't know.*

(He silenced the whisperings in his head that murmured, "Mithrandir would have known...")

When he had almost reached the small clearing that had somehow become their campsite, he realized that he could hear voices that most definitely did not belong to his companions.

Unless, of course, all his companions had suddenly learned elvish.

Legolas frowned and marched towards his friends, pushing his grief to the side. Because the words he heard were not of the kind sort, and they did not belong anywhere near his companions.

"-disgusting mortals-"

"-can't believe our Lady would allow-"

"-look how-"

When Legolas finally came upon the sight that awaited him, his frown deepened. The guards who were meant to act as a precautionary measure had abandoned their posts, and now stood in small groups, snidely speaking of the fellowship in elvish, their haughty looks and glances making the hobbits uncomfortable, even if they did not understand what was being said. Gimli was letting loose a constant stream of angry mutters under his breath, his ire towards the situation obvious, and Boromir was seated against a tree, a scowl marring his features

(Aragorn was nowhere in sight- the man had gone to secure an evening meal- otherwise the situation would already have been handled, he was sure of it.)

Legolas felt his own anger rise, for even though they were irritable and frustrated at their situation, his friends still all had that saddened glint in their eyes. They were in *mourning*, they were grieving for Mithrandir, and these elves had the *audacity* to fling around petty comments about *race* of all things! They didn't even have enough honor to speak in Westron, so that his companions could defend themselves! **

(He wondered if he might have been one of those elves once upon a time. He hoped not. He hoped that he had been better than that. That he had not so pathetic as the elven guards who stood before him.)

It *disgusted* him, and he would not stand for it.

A single glance around revealed that he had gone unnoticed- of course he had, he was a *wood elf*, not even in Lothlorien would the trees betray him- and so Legolas straightened his shoulders, raised his head, and stepped out of the woods with the best imitation of his father's glare he could muster.

"And just *what* do you think you're doing?"

Everyone who was in the clearing turned their gaze to the blonde, eyes widening from what they saw. For there was Legolas, every bit of an elven prince that he was meant to be. His back straight, his head high, and his face plastered with the most condescending and terror-inspiring look that any of them had ever seen.

This was not the elf that they had traveled with, this was someone else entirely.
Someone else entirely who just so happened to be glaring the elven warriors who had been mocking them- the Fellowship knew of their mocking, even though they knew not a lick of elvish- into submission.

"We were just-"

"I know what you were doing! You were abandoning your posts. I want to know why."

"We-"

"Speak Westron, or speak not at all."

The elven guards went silent, for they were terrified of angering the blonde demon in front of them further. Unfortunately for them, they would not escape the situation so easily.

"You were not mocking the ring-bearer and his companions, were you? For surely you know that the fate of us all depend on them, and that such things would be most disrespectful."

The warriors of Lothlorien stood stock-still, their faces the perfect picture of how cornered prey would look upon its predator.

Gimli muffled a chortle into his hand, for he alone realized what was going on.

The rest of the fellowship looked on, confusion written into their expressions.

Legolas ignored them all, and gave the elves in front of him a truly wicked smile, one that spoke of future torment and embarrassment.

"I see…"

Everything was quiet for a few moments, and the guards worked hard on not shaming themselves further.

None of them dared to meet Legolas’ eyes.

(His Ada would have been so proud.)

"You will report to your commanding officer and give a full report on what you've done. I will speak with Haldir later and we will decide on your punishment. Dismissed."

Legolas turned away and he only had to wait for the briefest of seconds before he heard the sounds of scurrying feet rushing away. Only then did he let his shoulders relax and the mask to melt off his face.

They would not be bothered again.

The blonde turned to face his companions, cringing at the confused looks that were bestowed upon him. He opened his mouth to explain, but he was cut off by a deep, booming laughter.

"That was great, laddie! I didn't even know ya had it in ya!"

When Gimli was only met with silence, he turned to the rest of his fellow mortals, wiping away tears of merriment, and exclaimed, "Didn't you see their faces?! Those tree-huggers didn' know what hit them!"

And then they were all laughing, but it was the kind of laughter that only existed after endless
sadness. It was happy, yes, but there was also something broken about it, and the sound was bitter sweet.

(They all wondered what the wizard might of thought at the situation, whether he would laugh alongside them or scold the archer for his ridiculousness. They all wondered, and they all felt their hearts ache with grief.)

And hours later, when the merriment had died down and the fire burned low in its hearth, they sat together in the darkening night. They were quiet and saddened, but they were the fellowship nonetheless.

And seeing the tired brows and slouched shoulders, Legolas could not help but think again on what the wizard would have wanted. And he was certain, so certain, that whatever he would have wanted, it would not have been this. Not these tired, empty gazes that reflected nothing but grief.

And so he cleared his throat, gathered his courage, and said quietly to the air, "Gandalf once helped me escape from my room."

All eyes were upon him then, but he pushed on; he would not be cowed just because they stared at him with saddened eyes. He would not. He owed it to the wizard to at least try.

"My Ada had locked me in, for I had stained his hair a bright pink," here several snorts interrupted him, and he could only smile somewhat sheepishly before continuing on, "and it would not wash off. He was rather… displeased."

More snorts infiltrated the quiet air.

"Mithrandir had somehow sneaked into my chambers, and we escaped into the woods by climbing down a nearby tree. Never have I seen such a sight as Mithrandir attempting to maneuver himself in a tree! His beard kept getting caught in branches and twigs, and he almost dropped his staff four times. He kept cursing under his breath, and I learned many a new word that day."

This time Pippin actually giggled, a quiet chuckle that seemed to cut through the gloom.

"By the time Ada found us the next morning, he was furious. I ended up spending the next week working with Mithrandir as kitchen helpers, although I am afraid it backfired a little bit. To this day, I am not allowed in the palace kitchens."

And they laughed, a little broken and tired but there none the less, and Legolas smiled at his accomplishment.

His smile faltered when silence reigned it all been for naught? Would they all sink back into their grief and mourning without a fight? Would it have been better if he had not said anything at all?

And then Pippin spoke up, something fragile in his tone that had not been there before.

"Gandalf- Gandalf used to make the best fireworks…"

And so it continued. The fellowship talked long into the night of their fallen companion. They spoke of his kindness, his greatness, and anything else they could think of. Stories of experiences long since passed and queer words of wisdom that were once shared.

And it wasn't perfect, far from it, but it filled the hole that had been torn into their hearts, created an essence of normalcy, and perhaps that was enough.
And so laughter danced and tears were shed, and the tired broken souls were healed- if only for a little while- piece by piece and word by word.

Piece by piece.

Word by word.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, so some of you might think: why don't they just go and tell on the rude elves? What would they say? "Oh yeah, some of your elves were looking at us funny and saying stuff we couldn't understand." That wouldn't go down well. As to why the don't outright attack the elves, it's a mixture of grief and the fact that the were already hardly let into Lothlorien, attacking its resident might get them kicked out. It made sense in my head.

So there you are! I don't know why, but I really like the ending on this one.

Anywho, I hope you liked this chapter, and I would like to thank ALL readers who took the time to read A Helping Hand.

Again, always open for advice and comments, and I am so grateful to all my readers.

-The Mashpotatoe Queen
Here we are! LAST CHAPTEEER! :D It had been such a pleasure to write this for all of you, and your continued support and encouragement has really touched a place in my heart.

To all those who reviewed, THANK YOU! You have really made this all worth it, and I am so happy to have heard your comments and your ideas on this story. It means the world to me, and you all have made this possible.

To all who Kudosed and read, you guys are AWESOME! Thank you for encouraging and supporting me in this way, and I really hope that I lived up to your expectations.

To all future readers, may I just say a huge Thank you for choosing to read through A Helping Hand, and that I really hope that you enjoyed yourselves. You make this experience absolutely incredible.

Now let's get onto the story! :D

Takes place when Legolas is around 13/14 human years.

The steel of the knife was cold against his neck.

Legolas gritted his teeth as his leg gave out from underneath him- again- and repressed a pained yelp. He wouldn't give his captors the satisfaction. He wouldn't.

The man dragging him along grunted and pressed the knife closer to his throat, causing a trickle of blood to escape from pale skin.

Legolas tensed, every muscle freezing even as his leg cried out in red hot agony. A flicker of fear trailed down his spine, and he tilted his head back as far as it would go.

The knife followed.

The man leaned in close, his revolting breath warm on the blonde's pointed ear.

"No funny business, elf."

Silently, he gave the slightest of nods, hardly daring to breathe.

And then they were off again, every step bringing a flaring agony up and down his leg. The knife never wavered, but Legolas doubted he could have made an escape either way. The only reason he was still standing was the arm around his waist, gripping tightly and keeping him upright. He could hardly walk, much less run. Without the support, he would have long since collapsed.
As it was, he may just collapse with the support. The pain was blinding him, and every trip and stumble caused darkness to encroach on his vision and his ankle to scream in protest. He was exhausted, and every muscle throbbed.

They were still under the boughs of Mirkwood, and that was why the men who surrounded him were being so cautious. They kept glancing around at their surroundings, as if expecting elves to jump out from behind the trees, which was ridiculous; they were wood elves, if anything they would be jumping down from the trees.

It did not matter though, for their would be no elves- jumping down from trees or otherwise- at all. Not unless Legolas was very lucky, and judging on how his life had been going so far, he was not lucky at all. For it was Midsummer's Eve, and every elf would be within the palace gardens, feasting and laughing in celebration.

All elves, of course, except one.

And that was what had led Legolas to his situation in the first place. For his father had locked himself away once more, hidden within his chambers and letting none enter, not even his only son.

And it had hurt. It hurt to be shut out and ignored, especially on that night. A night that was meant for friends and family. A night for remembrance and merriment. A night to be together and to enjoy one another's company.

Legolas had not spent time with his father that night. He had not spent time with his father in a long time.

And so he had left, to go and see his only remaining family member who he could talk to, even though he never received any response.

At least he felt as if she listened, for that was more than could be said for his father. (And how sad was that, that someone who was long gone listened closer than his living father did?)

It was a small clearing, one that held a slightly overrun garden and an old gnarled tree, one that had lived to see many a century. It was quite a distance from the main palace, but he could never bring himself to care.

It was her final resting place, the place where they said she had spent all her time and all her efforts into maintaining the flower beds. The place where she went to be in peace.

There was no body, of course. But this was where they had held her ceremony. Where they had hoped to leave her in peace, one last time.

And since the somber gathering, no one had entered and no one had left the quiet glade. It was left untouched, for none dared to ignore the King's wishes on leaving the clearing well alone.

No one except Legolas, that is.

Because he had figured that it would not be fair for him to lose both parents. It wouldn't be fair to leave him utterly alone in the world. Losing one parent was terrible, but losing both was devastating.

For his father was stone, alive but not truly there. He merely existed and went through the motions, and on every occasion he could, he would lock himself away, hiding from the world and lost amidst his grief and misery. No matter how hard Legolas begged and pleaded, no matter how hard he tried - and he had tried so, so hard- nothing could convince the King to attempt living once more.
He merely survived, and left his young, grieving, confused son to grow up alone and completely miserable.

And so Legolas had reached out.

It was not his father who reached back.

He had climbed the aged sentinel, humming a lullaby with long since forgotten words under his breath. The tree greeted him, resonating warmth and comfort. The young blonde had sunken into its embrace, grateful for its steady presence.

And he had talked, in quiet, wistful tones, he had talked.

"Hello Naneth…"

He had spoken of his day, of his father and his schooling. He spoke of his archery and how he was the top of his class. He spoke of all the things he could think of, and then some more, for he had no one else to speak to them about.

And he knew, he knew that there was no actual lingering spirit there. That his mother's soul had long since passed on. But it helped, it was comfort. And he needed all the comfort he could receive, for none would be given from his father, and none would be given from anyone else.

(No one dared approach the prince, in fear they would be punished, they simply watched with pitying looks from afar...)

It was a long practiced ritual, one that Legolas had done many times. Afterwards, when he had spoken all that could be said, he would do his best to clean up the garden, and then he would head home, back to cold lifeless hallways and a cold, lifeless father.

(Or- when life at the palace became a little bit too much- he would spend the night in the tree, wrapped in it's protective embrace, but that was neither here nor there.)

It had been all going as usual- indeed, he had been about to return and enjoy the rest of the festivities- when he had heard the crying.

It was a child’s cry, one that spoke of fear and terror, and Legolas could not help but react. He was armed with only his bow and quiver- for even he was not a fool enough to walk in the forest alone and unarmed- but that should have been fine. Warrior Patrols always took extra care to destroy each and every Spider's Nest during festival nights, and without the spiders, he had assumed that there was really no other danger.

That was his first mistake.

When he had finally found the source of the cry, his eyes were drawn to the small boy who was tied tightly to a trunk of a tree. The child- he could not have been more than five- was screaming his head off, and large, messy tears streamed down his face.

For a moment, Legolas had wondered how a human boy had found himself in Greenwood, and why he was tied up.

Then the child and released another keening wail, and he had decided to think upon it later. He would free the boy first and calm him, for his noise level was loud enough to draw the attention of any nearby predator.
That was his second mistake.

He had dropped down from his tree, intent on his task, and took a step towards the young human, who was crying all the louder at his appearance.

That was his third, and final, mistake.

For his focus was so tuned to the small crying boy in front of him, that he forgot to pay attention to the world around him. He did not listen to the trees' warnings, nor did he listen to the many sets of breathing that filled the oddly silent glade, signalling that he was not alone. And so, he stepped directly into a trap.

A large, metal trap that slammed shut upon his leg with a sickening crunching noise. A large, metal trap that caused him to collapse to the ground with a scream tearing from his throat, hot fiery lashes of pain running through his body in a constant stream of agony.

Through some small miracle, he had managed not to sink into unconsciousness, and through bleary eyes he saw the boy get cut loose by a large man with ratty brown hair. There were men everywhere then, poking sticks to the ground and disarming various traps. The constant snapping noises was one of the few things Legolas could register through his pounding head.

Still, he wasn't defenseless, and so he made to grab his bow.

The man placing a knife at the boy's throat in obvious warning had stopped him from getting any farther than that. The man shouted at him, and Legolas tried to understand the rough words through the fog, but it was lost to him. Lost in a hurricane of pain and torment.

When a different man, one with a scruffy red beard, mimed taking off his weapons, Legolas had tensed and shaken his head. He was not such a fool as that.

Wrong answer.

The child had whimpered, the sound unseemingly loud in the silence that had formed. It was a standoff, a single wounded elf amongst a crowd of men, and a small innocent life was the bargaining chip.

Legolas was never one to waste innocent life.

And so he had dropped his weapons, his muscles moving as if they were made of lead, and watched as the men swarmed him. Everything was distant, and a shadowing darkness was taking over his vision.

Then there was hand gripping him, maneuvering him, grasping his leg and pulling. And there was pain, so much pain, and he couldn't think straight. The world was wavering and spinning slightly, and chaos was descending in confusing whirls of sound and movement.

But there was a moment, a single brief moment of clarity, where Legolas could focus on the world around him, and he saw a small sickly man- one that looked far too much like the child to be anything else but his father- pick up the boy and hold him close, his relief palpable in his posture. Their eyes met, and the man seemed guilty and tired and so very done with it all. And Legolas dared to hope.***

And then the man turned away, the young child in his arms, and the hope vanished into the wind.

A hand had grabbed his leg then, squeezing painfully tight on the crushed bone, making explosions
of color burst beneath his eyelids, which then became a strong, brilliant white. Legolas' breath hitched and then was released in a long, piercing scream that echoed in the night air.

And then there was nothing.

Nothing at all.

When Legolas had awoken, his leg was crudely bound and he was being dragged, a knife pressed against his throat. A dirty gag was in his mouth, and his wrists were tied together behind his back with a scratchy rope. He had feebly struggled, for the grip was tight and uncomfortable, and the smell was repulsive.

The moment he moved, however, pain flared up and down his body, and he had quickly stilled, eyes closed and his breath escaping through his nose with rapid, heavy movements.

The ratty brown haired man had spoken to him then, explaining the "rules." He was to stay silent, keep walking, and follow all directions given to him. If he were to defy any of these rules, he would be punished.

Tired, in pain, and having no clue what else he could have done, he had nodded- the barest tilt of his head- to show his consent.

And so they had went, making their way cautiously through the darkened trees. Legolas' leg was throbbing and pain-filled tremors raced up and down his battered body, making it near impossible for him to keep up with the brutal pace that had been set.

Never had he felt so miserable and aching. Everything hurt, and his world was layers upon layers of torment and agony. Never had he felt such suffering, never had he felt so alone.

Never had he wished for his Ada more.

They walked on through the entire day, and by the end of it Legolas could hardly move. He was limp with exhaustion and pain, and his leg felt as if it was on fire. He did not struggle when they tied him to a tree, he simply went lax against its trunk, his eyes closed, as if by shutting them he could shut out the world.

Rest would not come to him, however, for his captors were intent on celebrating their capture. They kept approaching him, jeering and mocking with malicious glee. And Legolas tried to ignore it, he truly did, but it was hard to ignore hands pulling your hair and voices speaking loudly into you ear. It was hard to ignore when you were beaten to the brink of unconsciousness over and over and over.

He did not speak though. He did not beg, he wouldn't give them the satisfaction. The only noises he released were soft keening cries of pain and small whimpers when his injured leg was jostled, for those noises he could not keep silent.

And when at last all the men had gone to bed, when at last even the guard had fallen into slumber, when at last he was well and truly alone, then Legolas had cried.

They were small silent tears, not loud or jarring like the wails of the human boy, but they trickled down pale cheeks just the same.

( He wanted his Ada. He wanted his Naneth. He wanted to go home… )
Legolas was scared. He was terrified, in truth, but he knew not what he could do to ebb his growing panic, and so he simply pressed himself as tightly as possible to the tree behind his back, absorbing all the comfort he could.

(He just wanted to go home…)

And when at last he fell asleep, it was a dreamless, exhausted slumber.

His eyes were closed.

The day after was filled with even more walking, and Legolas felt even more horrible than the one before. He was constantly sweating, and his leg was screaming at him in an endless stream of agony.

He had fallen unconscious more than once, only to awaken a couple hours later in a flurry of confusion. The lack of water and food was making his head pound and his thoughts to flutter around in dizzying patterns, and he was tired. So, so tired.

They reached the edge of the woods by mid-day.

The sun was shining down upon the, and were he in any other situation Legolas might have enjoyed the view. As it was, his bleary eyes just slipped shut, both in despair and because the light hurt.

They were at the edge of the forest, and it would be near impossible for anyone to find him once they left the wooden canopy. They had two days of a head start, and they could go any direction to any place. Even the best of his father's trackers would have difficulty tracing their steps.

(He wondered if anyone had noticed his absence.)

(He doubted it.)

The men around him were cheering and slapping each other on the backs. Legolas was trying to keep on his good leg, but he kept getting jarred with every movement his captor made. With barely the strength to remain upright, the young blonde had to grasp the man's wrist tightly to avoid collapsing to the ground.

The jostling movements were playing havoc on his weakened mind, and he had to fight the urge to be violently sick. The world was spinning around him in dizzying circles, and he was being tossed this way and that in the man's grip.

He clenched his eyes shut, trying to escape all the sensations that were attacking him. He didn't want this. *He didn't want this.* He just wanted to go home.

He wanted his Ada.

*Desperately.*

He wanted to sink into his father's embrace and never let go. He wanted to hide away from the world and feel safe and secure and comforted again. *He wanted his Ada.*

He would take anything over his current situation.

At the very least, the knife was away from his throat, that was one good thing amidst all the terror and horribleness.
Everything else was miserable, though.

Just as he thought this, however, a loud voice cut through the men's chatter.

"I'm afraid I must ask you to release the elf."

Blue orbs snapped open, the blurry gaze revealing an old man garbed in grey. The thick beard and tall staff revealed the figure to be a wizard.

A wizard that Legolas just so happened to know.

Hazily, he wondered how Mithrandir had found him, but then the knife was against his throat once more, and he was more focused on craning his neck as far away as possible.

What a shame, he had rather enjoyed being able to move his head freely... Ah well, it appeared as if all good things came to an end.

Was he delirious?

He wasn't sure, but he felt rather delirious. Or at least, he thought he felt delirious.

Focus, Legolas, he scolded himself, and then forced his mind to pay attention to the world around him, despite the overwhelming urge to just slip away into reverie.

Valar, he was tired.

His captor was walking now, hauling him away from the forest. (The trees were crying, why were they crying? He didn't like it when they were upset...) The rest of the men surrounded him, creating a wall between him and the wizard. The humans were yelling at Mithrandir, warning him that if he took a single step in their direction the elf would meet his early demise.

The bearded figure stayed still, watching with sad eyes as the men dragged the young elf away.

Legolas felt hot, all over, as if a great forge was burning inside of him, but he also felt cold at the same time, his body shuddering with chills. His head pounded and his stomach was clenching and unclenching repeatedly in ways that made him want to throw up. His leg throbbed in tempo to the beating of his heart, wave after wave of pain crashing its way through his body.

Was he ill? Elves did not get sick, but he felt almost exactly as Lord Elrond had described, and the blonde could not think of any other reason for his misery.

It didn't matter. None of it mattered. He did not care if he was sick or not, or how it had come to be. He just wanted it to stop.

Mithrandir would stop it, a small voice whispered in his mind. And so he looked, searching for the familiar pointed hat that was nowhere to be found.

Legolas felt his heart sink. Where was he? He did not leave, right? He would not abandon the young elf like that, not when he was so very clearly in trouble. Right?

Right?

He hoped not, and that was all he could really do.

Time passed, and the men slowly grew less tensed and careful. The blonde was unaware of what was going on around him, slipping in and out of consciousness as the world of reality faded into half
formed thoughts and broken memories.

It was in those moments that the wizard attacked.

Gandalf had followed the group from a distance, waiting for their guard to drop before he struck. He had only one chance, and he planned on using it wisely.

A brilliant flash filled the clearing, throwing all the men quite a distance from Legolas. They landed hard, and they stayed still on the ground even once the light had faded.

And without the grip across his lithe waist keeping him upright, Legolas too collapsed to the ground, a small cry of pain escaping his lips. Once there, he curled into the tightest ball he could manage, attempting to shut out the world for a while. He felt tired, so tired, and so very sore. He was freezing and boiling and everything hurt. And he never wanted to move again, except perhaps to his bed, where he would have liked to sleep for all of eternity. ****

Old gnarled hands insistently pulling him up prevented him from completing those dreams. His bonds were cut-tingles of pain filtered through his hands as they were finally allowed blood circulation- and his gag was removed, and he breathed properly for what seemed the first time in years...

And there was a voice, one that seemed oddly distant in his mind ("Come now, Legolas, it's time to rise. We mustn't tarry long here, and I have no doubts that the spell shall wear off soon enough. Up now, Legolas, I know it hurts, I know, but you must get up...") and he would have ignored it- he wanted to ignore it- were it not for its familiar tone. He knew this voice, and he knew it was important to do what it said.

And so he stood, heavily leaning on the elderly figure besides him and panting hard, but upright nonetheless.

The wizard whistled, loud and piercing and right next to his ear, and Legolas could not help but flinch away and whimper. It was too much, everything was too much, and he wanted it to stop. Why wasn't it stopping?

Gandalf hushed his young charge, trying to soothe him in any way he could. They were not out of the danger zone yet, and he would rather not have to fight a band of men. Still, Legolas' wounded leg was hardly treated, and the amount of blood that had soaked through the cloth was worrying.

The child's forehead was burning against his shoulder- indeed, her could feel the heat through the fabric of his robes- and a glistening of sweat shined on the elf's brow in the midday sun. Despite all this, Legolas shivered in his arms, pressing himself against the wizard as if he was the only warmth left in the world. His face was as white as a sheet, only two heavy blotches of color on his cheeks.

Glancing down at the young blonde's fever-glazed eyes, Gandalf knew that the wound was most likely infected, and that blood loss was a high possibility. The young blonde would need medical attention- and soon- but before he could receive it, they would have to leave his kidnappers far behind.

When at last the horse arrived, the wizard sighed in relief. The elf had gone limp his grasps some minutes before, and his eyes were closed in unconsciousness. (Thank goodness elves were so light, for even his old bones could handle Legolas' weight.)

As it was, it took several unsuccessful attempts and a lot of quiet swearing to get Legolas to stay upon the horse's back, and every time the young elf was jostled he would let loose a keening
whimper and would try to curl into himself.

The reactions tugged on his heart strings, but the wizard was nothing if not persistent, and soon enough they were both on the horse.

The blonde stayed quiet and still throughout the entire journey, which was concerning but not entirely unexpected, and when they arrived dazed blue orbs merely flickered open before shutting tightly once more.

The wizard dared not enter the forest while Legolas was injured, for though Greenwood was not yet as shadowed as it would come to be, it still held many dangers, and to bring a wounded elf under its boughs could have proven to be a very bad mistake indeed.

And so they stopped, and made a small camp amongst the borders of the woodland realm. They were concealed beneath a large willow tree, and a small stream trickled merrily but a few minutes away.

It was a good enough spot for Gandalf, and so he set to work.

A flickering campfire was brought to life, and a pot of water from the brook was brought to a boil over it. Next, the wizard gathered all the bandages and clothes he had and laid out his meager herb supplies. He created a simple sedative that hoped- helped with the pain, and gently coaxed it down the prone figure’s throat.

Then he reached for his charge's wounded leg, and as tenderly as he could he slowly unwrapped the blood-soaked bandages. (The blonde whimpered as he did so, but made no move to stop him, for his mind was buried deep in the lands of unconsciousness.) When the injury was revealed, Gandalf could not help but close his eyes in sadness, for no child should ever have to endure such hardship.

The bloody gashes that circled Legolas’ calf were inflamed and swollen, the lack of proper rest and care preventing the elven body from healing itself as it normally would. Even as he watched, bright red droplets escaped the open wound and dribbled down to the mossy floor below, staining the ground with the blood that should have never been spilled.

It would need stitches, to prevent the young blonde from losing even more blood, and quite a few of them too.

Gandalf was not a healer. He knew not the intricacies of healing potions and all the various ways to wrap a wound. He could not identify a milady with a single glance, nor could he complete a delicate surgery. But he was a traveler, a warrior, a wizard, and, most importantly, a maia. He was not a healer, no, but he had learned much in all his journey’s, and that would have to be enough.

Besides this, besides all of his self reassurances, long would the screams haunt his mind, and he would never forget the pained dazed eyes staring up at him, begging for an end to the necessary torture…

By the time Legolas awoke properly, the campfire had burned itself down into a soft amber glow, and light in the sky had long since faded into the darkness of night.

For a few moments, he felt terror run amok through his veins, for he feared himself to still be in the hands of the men, and stuck once more in his cruel bounds.

But then he realized that there was no rope binding his wrists, nor any cloth gagging his mouth. Vague recollections of a figure garbed in grey came to him, as well as the faint memory of the feel of rough cloth against cheek and the smell of pipeweed tickling his nose.
And pain. He remembered the dreadful pain of something piercing his leg, over and over again. The agonizing tremors shuddering through his battered body as he was viciously attacked by the endless torment.

But there was also an old, gruff voice- one that was calm and soothing amidst his sufferings- and it was so very familiar.

And so tired eyes peeped open, and a cracked voice called out into the quiet air.

"Mithrandir?"

"Yes, Legolas, I am here."

Blue orbs closed once more in relief, and the youth spoke to the elder once more, his voice softer now that his fear was put to rest. He was not alone, he was free and safe. All would be well.

"Good…"

His escape to the realm of dreams was cut off by a hand on his cheek- still flushed with color but not so harshly as before- gently patting in order to keep him awake.

"Come, Legolas, you must stay awake, for at least a little while. You must drink, and eat if you can."

Wearily, he let the wizard help him into a sitting position against the willow's trunk. The blanket-When had that gotten there?- that had been tucked around him pooled across his legs, but he paid it little attention. For there was water- cool, blessed water- and he was far too busy drinking all he could to care. His throat was so dry and parched, and he was so busy drinking that he did not notice Gandalf's concerned look.

(Had they given the poor elfling anything to drink at all?)

Once he had drank his fill, the elf pulled the blanket upwards so that it rested around his shoulders, for he suddenly felt cold. He then tenderly took the bowl of broth that was offered to him and sipped at it.

His hands were shaking though, and every muscle felt as if they were lead. His movements were sporadic at best, and it was not surprising when the bowl dropped to the ground, splattering its contents all over the mossy earth.

Legolas stared at the mess, his eyes still glazed with the remains of his fever, and felt tears of frustration well up in his eyes. What was wrong with him? He couldn't even do something as simple as holding a bowl of soup! And why did he feel so horrible? He was absolutely freezing but also incredibly hot at the same time, and his head was pounding and everything was sort of dizzying and his leg throbbed with every breath he took. And his throat was sore and scratchy and he was tired, so very tired, and he wanted to sleep, even though he had just been sleeping, and…*****

A hand was on his shoulder, warm and comforting, and he looked up, startled. Blue met blue, and when the wizard saw his inner turmoil, he pulled the younger into a gentle hug.

And Legolas didn't know why he was crying- Why was he crying!?- but he was, and Mithrandir's shoulder was getting wet and he should really stop before he embarrassed himself any further, but he couldn't, didn't want to, for he had missed this. He had missed it so much, those soft comforting touches that had somehow become extinct in his life, and he could not quite make himself let go of the wizard's embrace.*****
And then the story was pouring out of his mouth, one babbled word at the time. About his father and his coldness, the loneliness of the palace, the crying boy and the horrid metal trap. About his mother's grave and the endless walking and how it had hurt. How it had hurt so much. And how he had been scared, so very scared, on what would come to pass, and how he had been terrified at the thought no one had even noticed him missing.

The wizard listened, silent and understanding, to the whole sorry tale. His gaze saddened, for he stared at the elven child before him who was so desperate for the love and approval of his father. He stared at this kind and gentle soul who loved so fiercely and completely, for the soul had almost been snuffed out, because the child had felt the need to seek his dead mother for comfort when his own father had turned him away.

He was sad, so sad, for he knew Thranduil loved his son. That the elven king loved his son more than he loved life itself, and that the only reason he shut the child away was his fear that he would lose another of his loved ones to the cruel world because of his own foolhardiness, even if the loss of his wife was through no fault of his own.

(And Legolas was so much like his mother... Perhaps too much for Thranduil's grieving soul.)

Legolas was just so good. Such a kind and happy and wonderful child, and Gandalf could not help but think:

*Oh Thranduil... Can't you see what you are missing out on?*

Not once did he interrupt, not until Legolas started speaking of his fear that he had been forgotten, abandoned, by his own father. Then he spoke.

"My dear boy, why do you think I am here? Your father sent me out looking for me!"

And the blue orbs that stared up at him were so very hopeful...

"Really?"

"Yes, he was half mad with worry..."

And Legolas ducked his head, something incredibly fragile in his eyes, and the wizard smiled.

"Mithrandir?"

"Yes, Legolas?"

"May I rest now?"

And for the first time in days, the wizard laughed.

The young elf gave a sheepish smile, but looked extremely relieved when he nodded his consent. In practically no time at all, the blonde had curled himself into a ball on the ground- one hand reaching out of the blanket to rest on a tree's trunk- with his eyes glazed in elvish slumber.

And later, many days later, Legolas finally arrived home. He was bone exhausted, and all he truly wanted to do was curl up in his bed and sleep, but then King Thranduil came running out into the entryway, where many a elf had come to greet their wayward prince, his panicked blue orbs wide in desperation and fear, and spotted his missing son.

And then he was rushing forward, and Legolas was hobbling forwards as well- as quickly as his still
tender leg would allow- and then they met, and his father was hugging him tightly to his chest, only pulling back to plaster tiny kisses all over his son's face, and rocking him back and forth, back and forth, having not a single care for all the shocked stares that were upon them.

Legolas hid his face in the crook of his father's neck, for once more his eyes had become wet. And he was holding onto his Ada as tightly as he could, melting into the embrace as far as he could go, but that was alright, for the king was doing just the same, and there they stayed for several long moments, breathing in the comfort of being safe and whole and together once more.

And there, in those few perfect moments, Legolas remembered the wizard's advice, the words of wisdom that Mithrandir had spoken when he had told his fear of being abandoned. Of being left alone in the world. Of being hurt and captured and tortured once more.

"I am going to tell you something, young Greenleaf," he had said," and you would do well to remember.

This world that we live in, it's filled with many terrible, terrible things, and many terrible people. And going through life, you are going to get into situations where you meet these terrible people, and see these terrible things.

And you mustn't worry about it, nor be fearful for it, because wherever you go, whatever you do, there will always, always, be someone who is willing to offer a helping hand."

And he was right.

... 

The most useful asset of a person

is not a head full of knowledge

but a heart filled with love,

with ears open to listen,

and hands willing to help

-Unknown

...

Chapter End Notes

And there you have it, my peeps! The end of A Helping Hand

*I made this celebration up. Do elves celebrate Midsummer's eve? I don't know…

**There's a bit of a Frozen vibe going on here, I apologize…. "Ada? Do you want to stomp on Dwarves' heads? It doesn't have to be a Dwarf's head…"
***Yup, this was the child's father. The bad men were using him and the kid in order to catch the elf, and then they let them go. Hope that was clear enough...

****I too feel this urge at times, and in these times I become a human burrito.

*****I imagine that the first time being properly ill, even if it is caused by infection, can be really confusing and horrible for an elf. Especially for one as young as Legolas is in this chapter.

******I hope no one thinks this is OCC. The reason I put it in here is because Legolas is really young and has just been through something incredibly traumatic, and I feel that he wouldn't be able to just let that go with no comfort. Also, he's wounded and feverish and beyond exhausted, and I think almost anyone would be crying at this point.

And now we have reached the end. This has been such a joy to write, and I would like to thank each and every person who took the time to read this story. You guys have made this completely worth it. As always, I am happy to accept prompts, advice, corrections, and any and all reviews. Thank you so much for taking the time to read A Helping Hand, and I hope you enjoyed! *Hugs*

Signing off until next time,

The Mashpotatooe Queen

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End Notes

Hope you enjoyed! Thanks for reading!

Till next time,

Mashpotatooe Queen

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!