Forging A King

by LadyCelestialStar

Summary

Fifth year, Harry's been banished into a painting by the despicable Umbridge. Now he has to find a way back home, and the only way he can do that, is by finding the scattered jewels of the Wizard's Crown. Can his new-found friends help him, or will being with them end his life and chances of ever getting home? Or worse yet, can a possible romance keep him from even wanting to go home? Based more on the LOTR movies than the LOTR books.

Notes

Greetings and Salutations.

This story is one of the rare stories that are completed in the genre of Harry Potter X Lord of the Rings crossover. It was a lot of fun to write this, and I hope that you also had/have fun reading it.

This chapter is very short, yes, it's more a of a teaser than anything else.

Warning: This is pretty much a fluffy story, with hints of drama, some action, and a flash of romance. NO SLASH, just romance.

I don't own Harry Potter or Lord of the Rings.

P.S. This is mostly a based on the movie for Lord of the Rings, most people have seen the movies as opposed to have read the books.
Harry climbed the long and winding staircases back to Gryffindor Tower. He got to dinner late that evening and Ron and Hermione already left to get a jump start on their weekend homework, though Ron left rather reluctantly.

“You’re a Prefect now, you need to set a good example!” said Hermione sharply.

“I’d rather eat a good meal.” said Ron grumbling.

"You've been in here for an hour." said Hermione with a roll of her eyes.

“Doesn't mean I've got my fill.” said Ron with a pout. “There's still a good half a pie sitting there.”

Harry was relishing the peace and quiet that was left to him as he sat and ate his meal in solitude. All their fighting and bickering about Prefect duties was wearing thin on his nerves...he was already stressed to the max and they weren't helping matters. He wished that he had a proper vacation, he wasn't able to even get help to deal with the horrors from the third task.

He got home and was ordered to keep out of the way of his Aunt and Uncle. His friends didn't help matters with their lacking letters to him and their slightly teasing remarks about what was going on. He still hadn't forgiven them for leaving him in the dark, and Sirius and Dumbledore were no better in his eyes. He had written several letters to his godfather and to Dumbledore, letters pleading with them to come and get him, or to come and talk to him at least (that only applied to Dumbledore, he didn't want to lose Sirius). But Dumbledore never responded to him, and Sirius only told him that they'd have a nice talk the next time they saw each other. And when they did see each other, Sirius couldn't remember the conversation. So this piece and quiet was a blessing, to just leave him to his thoughts and without the temptation of shouting at his two friends.

He didn’t see the eyes focusing squarely on him and sending quick glances down to another table. He had no idea about the plot that was brewing.

Once he had taken his time enjoying his treacle, he walked swiftly down the deserted corridors, past the gossiping pictures and the ancient statues, wishing to get to Gryffindor Tower soon. He was tired and wanted to go straight to sleep, hopefully he didn’t have any nightmares to keep him awake, and thankfully, he didn't have any homework left to work on.

He turned down one of the more uninhabited corridors, the paintings in this hallway were all scenery and landscapes, and the statues were that of an assortment of magical creatures. It was a pleasant change from the clanking armors and the chatty portraits.

Suddenly, as he turned a corner, he was slammed against the wall by a blast of red light, knocking him out instantly as his head crashed into stone. He slowly fell to the floor and fell face first onto the cold stone floor.

As he laid there, four people emerged from the shadows and sneered down at the unconscious boy.

"What do we do now, Professor?" asked a blonde teenager, with a malevolent glint in his eye as he looked down at the unconscious figure. "Are we going to lock him in the dungeons for a while?"

"That fool of a Headmaster would send the ghosts out to search and find him the moment he doesn't show in the Common Room, he'd be found too quickly. But I know just the thing. You two, grab him." said a toad faced woman, turning on her heel and strutted down the corridor with the
blonde haired boy behind her, and the two boys carrying an unconscious Harry.

She took them down to the deepest part of the dungeons, even past the potions classroom, and the entrance to the Slytherin Common Room. She walked towards a dead end corridor that not even Draco had traveled down before, torches lining the bare walls and towards the only painting in the area. It was a large yew framed painting saturated in browns, grays, and red. There were men poised and ready to strike with their weapons while what looked like monsters were baring their teeth and fingerling their own cruel blades. Strangely, unlike all the other pictures in the school and magical world, these figures were stationary, frozen in time.

Umbridge waved her hand over the gruesome looking battle painting, filled with blood lust and loss of life, the oils and figures began to swirl, the distorting on itself and a low moan emitted from the canvas.

"Shove him through." said Umbridge with a haughty smile.

"What is it?" asked Draco looking for some reason, uneasy instead of his normal sneering self.

"It used to be a way for the Ministry used to use to punish those who stood against it, when the courts were incapable of seeing their own nose at the end of their face. You'll see what it does." said Umbridge with the same smile. "It hasn't been used in a long while." She added looking fondly at the swirling colors.

"What's it doing here?" he asked quickly, before his lackeys could throw the unsuspecting Gryffindor in the painting.

"Phineas Nigellus placed it here, many years ago when he was Headmaster, and a fine one he was too." said Umbridge with a smirk. "Never questioned authority, or his superiors. He left it here to protect it from the people who would have it destroyed. That man had sense about him, can't same the same thing for the current ones." she finished with a frown. "I found it when I was here, and I always wanted to use it on someone."

Crabbe and Goyle lifted the limp figure up into the air and threw him into the wall containing the painting. As soon as he went through, he came back out again, as if his body was doing a U-turn. But as he came out, Draco and his goons noticed that he didn't come out the same way he came out. It was like he himself had been through the war that took place amongst the oils. He was bloodied, bruised and worn, and he fell limply to the ground.

"Now we leave him, a few floors away though, can't risk losing this painting." said Umbridge smugly. This time she magicked him onto a stretcher and levitated him up the stairs. Draco looked back at the painting with a look of horror on his face. He could now see what looked like Potter's face, amongst the warriors and wielding a bloodstained sword, the strangest thing was...he now had a sparkling crown on his head.
A Gathering of Healers

Chapter Notes

I am very happy that most people like the story, and for those who don't like the story, I'm sorry but I do sincerely hope that you find a story more up your alley. If you have a question or two with the story, please drop me a line in a PM or on Facebook, I'll see your concern a little faster than a review, and you'll actually get an answer to your questions!
Like I said, I’m revising these just a little.

At around three o’clock the next morning, Dumbledore hurried down to the Hospital Wing with a worried, disheveled Professor McGonagall leading the way. It took some doing to wake the Headmaster up as he had been taking some strong sleeping draughts of late, on Madam Pomfrey’s orders due to all the stress that he had been undergoing.

"The last thing you need is a heart attack, Albus. These should help you sleep a little easier." said Madam Pomfrey at the start of the year.

"I'm alright, Poppy." said Albus looking over to his colleague through his half opened eyes.

"You will be once you have a good night's rest every night." said Pomfrey.

“Minerva, are you ever going to tell me what is going on? What is troubling you?” said Dumbledore with a small smile, striding effortlessly after her. He had to admit, he was feeling a bit better since he's been sleeping at night.

“It’s Potter, Albus.” said McGonagall as they entered the Hospital Wing. “We found him on the sixth floor, hidden behind the statue of Icaras the Incomparable just a few moments ago, but he won’t wake up, no matter what we try.”

Dumbledore followed his Deputy over to the bed which cradled an unconscious Harry Potter. He was being covered in bandages and spells silently being cast over him by both Madam Pomfrey and Snape. He was pale, obviously injured, and what looked like…

Lifeless.

“What on earth happened to him?” said Dumbledore, only his eyes betraying the shock he felt. He stared at the boy until he saw his chest rise and fall, not allowing his own breath to escape his chest.

“We don’t know, but I do know that he never made it to the dormitories last night. I had the rest of the staff, except for that vile woman help me in searching the school. I even asked the ghosts for aid, Remus and Alastor also came to help me find him.” said McGonagall pointing to the two men that stood beside the bed. “They were down at Hogsmeade for the evening, thankfully.”
“Why didn’t you tell me?” asked Dumbledore, his voice almost cracking with worry as he walked over and caressed the boy’s cheek. “I could have helped you look, why did no one rouse me?”

“No offense meant, Albus, but you’ve been distancing yourself from him. I didn’t think you wished to help in the search. You certainly weren’t all that concerned when I told you about Potter’s unfair banishment from Quidditch.” said McGonagall sharply.

“I can never abandon him.” said Dumbledore sharply. “I was protecting him.”

“Keeping him away from you, is protecting him? You must be out of your mind.” said Madam Pomfrey shortly as she wrapped Harry’s legs tightly in gauze. “The safest place for anyone is near you.”

“I’ve been telling him that for months.” said Remus with a growl, holding Harry’s limp hand in his own, rubbing the top of the boy’s hand with his thumb, desperately hoping that the touch would revive the lad.

All day, Madam Pomfrey, Dumbledore and Professor Snape tried everything they could possibly think of to try and wake the boy up. Nothing worked, he was dead to the world and his cuts were not healing. They couldn’t even stop the blood flowing freely down from his wounds and onto the white sheets, all they could do was force blood-replenishing potions down his throat and keep on trying.

They called Ron and Hermione down, interrogating them gently about where he went currently, they couldn’t answer or even lend a helping hand with their recounts of the night before.

“We don’t know!” said Hermione tearfully.

“He was still in the Great Hall when we left him!” said Ron.

“Than whatever happened to him last night, was right after dinner.” said Snape with a calculating look at Harry.

“Who could have done this?” said Madam Hooch, looking down at the poor boy.

“Only one person could this.” growled Hermione almost viciously.

“Miss Granger? You don’t mean…You-Know-Who?” said Professor Flitwick with a squeak.

“Not him, he would have taken the child out of here, Potter would be dead if he was the one.” said Professor Snape.

“Harry could have fought back.” said Ron defensively.

“Not likely.” spat Snape. “The Dark Lord wouldn’t just run away from the injured Harry Potter, he’d take him, or end his life, leaving the body for the Headmaster to stumble across.”

“Harry could’ve wounded him.” said Hermione frantically.

“Again, not likely.” said Snape with a sneer. “Only Dumbledore has the power to wound the Dark Lord.”

“But…” said Ron.

“Will you three children please be silent?” said Dumbledore shortly, his patience reaching it end for the first time in a two years.
All three of them turned and looked shocked, yet insulted at the Headmaster.

“This is not helping. There is no right answer, Severus. Tom most surely could have done this; just to hurt me. I was a fool to think that I could rewrite Harry’s and my connection with each other over the course of a few months. The lingering feelings would still be inside his mind, only now, I replaced trust...with hurt, and betrayal. I only gave Voldemort a greater weapon.” said Dumbledore, his hands gripping the metal bar at the foot of Harry’s bed tightly. “I’m sorry, Harry.” a tear began to fall down his face. “I’m so sorry.”

The others stared, for Dumbledore to show this much weakness...he must have been shocked to the core.

“Arguing, and feeling sorry for ourselves isn’t going to fix anything.” said McGonagall shortly yet patting Dumbledore's arm softly. “Potter is still alive, however fleeting that may be. We need to help him.”

“Quite right, Minerva.” said Professor Sprout. “But the question is, what do we do?”

Several days later, there was no change in Harry. He was still unconscious and he was still bleeding from his unhealed wounds. Dumbledore and Madam Pomfrey summoned the best Healing minds in Europe to come and look at Harry. But it was no use, they had no idea either.

“I still say that we should take him to St. Mungos.” said one of the Healers.

“I’m afraid that is not possible, the Ministry has deemed him unbalanced, they would keep him and stick him in their mental ward.” said Dumbledore quickly.

“I just did a mental scan of him, he’s fine. He’s the picture of mental health.” said another Healer as he put his wand away. "He has no mental scarring, horrifying trauma and a moderate touch of depression yes, but other than that his mind is perfect."

“Yes, I know. But the Ministry isn’t.” said Dumbledore, though he was a little taken aback by the revelation of depression.

“Never was.” muttered the oldest Healer there as he sat beside the bed, looking at the boy fixedly from his chair.

“So what do we do? I’m at a loss for what could be the cause of the boy’s sudden comatose state.” said another Healer.

“Letting the public know about the boy’s condition would only make matters worse I’m afraid.” said the older Healer. “Especially with who he is. Don’t need some half-cock youngsters going about thinking that it’s his mind snapping.”

“Sometimes the young ones speak the words of wisdom.” said Dumbledore absently. “But no, you are right, bringing them into the fold might not be the best choice.”

“I’m sorry, Albus, but we are learning nothing, nor are we figuring out anything. All we can say is to let him rest. Away from all the hustle and bustle of a school, and the constant visitation by the students.” said the older Healer, who seemed to be the leader of this small band.

“I understand, thank you. All of you.” said Dumbledore sadly.
“If we think of something, Albus, we’ll tell you.” said another Healer, clasping his hand.

They all took their leave, discussing further, what could have plagued the boy as they left.

Lupin stood beside the bed, and wept silently, looking as if his whole world had collapsed. Dumbledore snapped his fingers and Fawkes appeared in a whirl of fire.

“Remus, take a hold of Fawkes and take Harry to Grimmauld Place; he can rest there. Sirius won't take his eyes off him, if I know him at all.” said Dumbledore weakly.

“Are you alright, Albus?” said McGonagall walking up to him carefully.

“No, I’m not used to being in the dark about something. It frightens me.” he said in a whisper. He turned and looked at Remus who was still standing in place. “Remus take Harry, get him out of here. This school is not safe for him anymore, if someone could cause him this much damage to him.”

Lupin slowly picked Harry up bridal style and with some doing, took a hold of Fawkes’ feathers, and the three of them disappeared.

“Albus.” said McGonagall fretfully.

“I’ve failed him. I couldn’t protect him, even when I was six hundred feet away.” said Dumbledore, tears streaming down his face.

Harry groaned and opened his eyes slowly. He found himself waking up in a shady forest, there was nobody near him, he looked up, seeing the sky partially blocked by the trees around him. He took a deep breath, and he smelled…

“Clean air?” he said thoughtfully. “Cleaner than I’ve ever breathed. I’m nowhere near London at least and this place doesn’t smell like the Dark Forest. What the hell happened?” he looked down. “And where did my clothes go?”

He was standing, alone, in the middle of a forest, stark naked.
Harry walked deeper into the woods, not knowing how he got there and how he was going to get back home. He could vaguely remember the feeling of someone throwing him into the air and then he landed hard onto the grassy ground but other than that, he had no idea.

He debated with the idea of just staying put and waiting for someone to come and find him. But if he had gone this far, laying in the middle of a bunch of woods, then perhaps he should find his own way home. This bit of forest didn’t seem familiar to him, either he was really deep into the Forbidden Forest or he was somewhere completely different, besides, the only ones that would know where to look for him, would be the people that sent him here.

If this was a student prank, done by the Slytherins, then he'd have to wait quite a bit for someone to come and fetch him, be it Hagrid...perhaps a member of the Order...or McGonagall...

If it was going to be McGonagall, he'd better find something to cover himself up with.

But, if no one was coming to get him,, getting back to Hogwarts was his main prerogative, but first things first after all. He needed clothes, or at least something to cover up his lower regions. He couldn’t go back to Hogwarts without anything on or rescued in such a condition, McGonagall alone would skin him alive. This had to be a Slytherin prank, at least he sort of hoped it was, that meant that Hogwarts wasn't too far off then.

He wandered deeper into the woods, now uncaring if someone would see him. What could he do? It was unavoidable; if someone were to come by, (and that was the worst case scenario if he was indeed far away from Hogwarts)he would just ask politely, (while hiding behind a tree or hiding in a bush of course) if he could borrow a set of clothes. Though, and provided he was in the Forbidden Forest, he couldn't quite see someone being here that didn't already live here. He didn't know of any wizards that just happened to pass through the Forbidden Forest just to go for a walk, so someone passing by would mean he wasn't at Hogwarts anymore. Then again, if he still was at Hogwarts, than a centaur could come galloping by at any moment, maybe they’d help him somehow.

There wasn't any point in panicking, and throwing a fit. No one was within shouting distance, he had already tried that and nearly shouted himself hoarse. He simply accepted the situation for all that it was worth, and the situation was...he was somewhere he had no idea where...he didn't have a wand (it was nowhere to be found anywhere nearby or in the surrounding area)...had no food...no water...and no clothes. The strangest thing was, he seemed to not need his glasses, they were no longer on his face and he could see perfectly fine. Perhaps the fall corrected his vision or something about the woods themselves healed his eyes.

His situation was dire, and he had to come up with something really quickly.

He knew that if someone was lost, the best thing was to stay in one place, but that rule pretty much only came in handy if he was camping with others or someone back in civilization knew where he was. No one knew where he was, except his attackers, and he didn't figure they would be so willing to give up his location; so he was on his own. Slytherins were pretty good about not revealing their pranks and not giving into teachers any information.

He wandered about until he reached a clearing in the dense woods. His stomach then began to growl. Damn, he was hoping it would take a while for him to get hungry, it usually took him a longer time than this to get hungry. "Clothes and food then, my lists of needs are getting longer by
"the second." he thought to himself with a grim smile. He didn’t want to wait until he got to the castle, just in case it took him longer than a few hours.

He was hoping with all his might, that he was just in the Forbidden Forest, though...how he survived the night was beyond him, for with the sun out, night had passed him by.

He looked around, "Well..." he thought carefully. “The only way to get both of the things I need quickly is by hunting or fishing. I don’t want to wrap myself up in leaves, just in case I accidentally put some poison ivy on myself by accident. But it’s going to be difficult without a weapon. I don’t even have my wand.” Indeed he did not, he looked all around the area where he landed and couldn’t find his only way of defense.

He looked around for about a half hour and found a limb that had landed on the ground from the upper branches of a tree; he snapped the weaker branches off the stronger part of the fallen limb, until he had what looked like a stout staff, a little knobby and bent, but close enough for his needs. He then looked around the ground and found a sharp-edged stone.

This was the only good thing about all the television that Dudley had watched, especially that MacGyver marathon that was on the American channel they got for free. Harry learned a lot of pretty interesting tricks with simple things that when he showed Ron a few of them, Ron would insist that he used magic and not anything muggles came up with.

After much labor, and a few choice words after he cut his finger a few times with the stone, he made a nice wooden spear. Once again, it wouldn't win any beauty contests, but it was good enough.

“For all the trouble this thing is causing me, I’d better be stuck in here a while. If someone comes in five minutes, I’m going to be pissed.” said Harry. "I'm going to chase them about with this thing."

He looked around, assuming he was still somewhere near the castle or at the least on earth, (dreading the thought that he might be on some other planet due to a freak accident, or a messed up joke,) he had to find some little furry creature to make a meal of. He had never had meat other than beef, chicken, pork, lamb, or fish. Farm raised he knew, but wild animals...this was new on him. He felt that a small rodent or something like that would be easier to take on then larger game, like...deer or bears.

Bears...he didn't want to think of hunting that, he didn't know what to do if he were to run across that, hopefully, he was still in the Forbidden Forest, there were no bears in there....right?

Suddenly, he looked to the right and he saw a deer, it was a young buck, just out trying his new antlers. Harry's eyes grew large, how the hell did he get to be so lucky? This was lucky for him on so many levels, and it gave him the perfect opportunity to practice with the spear, and some familiar meat. Harry gripped his spear and hurled it.

It missed, by at least seven feet too far right, and it had stuck itself firmly into the thick blackberry bush. The deer flinched, looked over quickly and took off. So much for luck.

"Damn, right in the bushes." snarled Harry. He made to retrieve his spear; but a rustle in the bush caused him to stop dead in his tracks. Unsuspectingly, an enormous, wild boar came snorting out of the bush. The spear that Harry had just thrown lodged itself in the rear of the boar. Harry could tell that the boar was not interested in hearing an apology.

"Nice piggy." said Harry meekly. Suddenly the boar charged.
Back at Grimmauld place, Sirius covered the unconscious boy with a thick, fluffy quilt, and ruffled the boy’s untamed hair.

"How could this have happened?" asked Sirius fretfully. “He was at Hogwarts! He was being watched!”

"We are unsure, but we hope to finding the cause." said Dumbledore sadly. “But not before we find the cure to whatever ails him.”

"I still say that Umbridge did it." said Remus angrily.

"You think she's behind everything." said Sirius impatient. “I swear, if we gave the chance, you’d say she was behind the assassination of the Armenian Minister of Magic.”

"She's evil!" said Remus almost shouting. "You know what she's like!"

"I agree, but you say she's behind almost every crime in existence." said Sirius patting his shoulder, but still keeping a hand in Harry's hair. "We don't have any proof, but really? Is she that stupid to hex Harry with Dumbledore so close? I agree with the kids, I say Voldemort is behind this."

“I am still undecided.” said Dumbledore quietly. “I’m going to find the cure first, and then I will focus my attention on who did it. And Merlin help them when I catch them.” his voice grew cold.

Sirius and Remus leaned back slightly. But then, something caught Remus' eye.

“Wait a tick, what’s up with Harry’s fingers?” asked Remus looking down at Harry’s hands. They all looked down and saw blood coming from his digits.

Dumbledore took Harry’s hand gently and examined it. There were lacerations appearing suddenly, as if an invisible knife was cutting into Harry's flesh right before his eyes. “He somehow got a cut, several times, but I don’t know how.” he said in shock.

“How could he have been cut? He’s been wrapped up in bloody blankets the entire time!” said Sirius.

“I do not know….look, even more cuts and gashes are showing up!” said Dumbledore still shocked.

“What the hell is going on?” said Sirius worriedly. They hurried to try and heal the cuts and gashes on the poor boy’s body.

Harry dodged the boar another time but the boar’s tusks grazed his arm sharply, tearing at the flesh. He looked around frantically, trying to find a means of escape. Every time he tried to turn his back on the ferocious beast, the boar would come and attempt to knock him over and gore him with his horrible tusks.
Harry looked around, something he can use to defend himself with. But the only thing he could possibly see that would help him out in any way, was the spear he had made. The trouble is, it was still lodged in the boar’s rump. He had to do something to get it back.

He dodged the boar once more, but when he got to his feet, he picked up a handful of earth. When the boar came back again, he tossed the dirt into the boar’s eyes; he jumped to the side and held onto spear as the boar thrashed about. Finally the spear was ripped from the body of the boar’s hide. Harry took several steps back from the boar, and readied himself.

In a hurried blur, it was all over. The boar was on the ground, bleeding from the stab wound Harry gave it in the throat and the beast was quickly dying. Harry fell to the ground weakly and took several deep breaths. He looked at his arms and legs and saw the wounds he had received, he tried to staunch the bleeding with leaves from the tree above him. Thankfully, none of the wounds were all that deep, which was amazing luck.

After a while, the bleeding had stopped and Harry looked down at his fallen foe.

"Well now that's over, but, what do I do now?" gasped Harry scratching his head. “How do I get what I need? I don’t have a knife.” He looked down at the ground and saw the same rock he used to make the spear. It had formed several sharpened edges, but one end seemed most prominent. Most of the wounds on his fingers came from that edge.

“That’ll do.” he said with a smirk. "But I need a moment to catch my breath."

Once he recovered a little, he picked up the rock. It was some time later, quite a few hours, that Harry managed to get most of the hide taken off the boar and some of the meat. It wasn't the best cuts, or even a remotely clean field dressing, but it was enough to last him a day or so…if he was stuck in this forest for a while.

He cut two holes on either side of the wider parts of the creature, gutted it, washed it in the nearby stream and slipped his slender frame through the holes. He grabbed a thin vine and wrapped it around himself several times. The thing felt coarse, sticky and smelled awful, but it was the best that fate had to offer.

“Note to self, wash this thing daily. Next, I’m going to need some water, and a fire to cook this meat. Last thing I need is to get sick from this stuff.” thought Harry.

Harry closed his eyes and listened hard to the surrounding woods. He could hear running water to the left of him. “That solves that problem, but as for the fire...that's going to require a bit more work.”

He followed the stream till it met with a mighty river. The sight of the river destroyed any hope that he was just in the Forbidden Forest. The river that ran through it wasn’t this wide. He adjusted the makeshift skin bag full of boar meat. If it spoiled before he got the chance to eat it, it was no great loss, he didn't have the fire, so in effect he had nothing except...a loincloth...he was never going to live this down.

If he ever got back to Hogwarts, he was going to find a spell that would replace his clothes and hope that the next time he got kidnapped or whatever, he would be able to cast the spell, with or without a wand.

“Until I can find a way to make fire without matches or magic, I’m going to have to just see if I can survive on berries and nuts.” said Harry wrapping a long piece of vine around his middle, holding the draped hide across himself like a toga. The hide was scratchy and not the best cloth or fur he
had ever felt, but it was all he had. He set out walking towards the setting sun, munching on the blackberries he had plucked from the bush in the clearing.
Harry stretched out on the soft grass in an open meadow, near the road he had just found and had traveled a bit on. He had been heading east for the past three days, trying to find a way back or at least someone else who lived in the area. He came to the conclusion that he wasn’t in the Forbidden Forest, or any where near Hogwarts, especially with the river and whole boar thing. Hermione said something about boars unable to stand magic and that they keep away. He could have misheard her though, he and Ron were in a bit of a contest who could eat the most ham sandwiches, Harry lost big time. Ron couldn’t seem to move his body away from the table without a levitation charm's help.

Over the course of those three days, his staff handling got a little better, and the staff itself became a bit more polished up. Fire was still a chore for him to do though; it took him forever to get the two stones to spark and get a good sized fire going. But when he did, he was able to eat the boar meat he had earned the first day he arrived in this strange place, as well as any fish he caught from a nearby stream. He pitched the boar meat as soon as he had tasted it, he wouldn't be that desperate. Though he ended up just tying a piece of vine to the spear and attaching a worm to the other end.

Catching fish was easier and they tasted a lot better.

Harry smiled up at the sun, the clouds passed over him slowly and gently covered his body with their gentle shadows. Harry yawned and prepared to take a short nap.

“This isn’t so bad, sort of like an adventure vacation sort of thing.” said Harry as he drifted off to sleep.

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“This is horrible!” cried Sirius. “What are we going to do?”

“There is nothing we can do.” said Dumbledore tears in his eyes. “Except wait for Harry to awaken on his own. “

“And give him Blood Replenishing potions almost every hour on the hour.” said Remus sadly, he looked down at the boy, then his eyes grew larger. “You know what’s strange?”

“What’s that Remus?” asked Sirius brushing back the bangs on Harry’s head.

“The wounds he received while he was laying here are healing up, but not the ones he got at Hogwarts.” said Remus looking at the faint scars on Harry’s body.

Dumbledore quickly inspected Harry's hands and then the ones on his body. "My word, you are correct! What’s the meaning of this?” said Dumbledore, a small glimmer of hope in his eyes.

“Maybe he’s getting better!” said Sirius.

“We can only hope.” said Remus.
Harry awoke from his nap by the sound of thunderous hoofs hitting the ground. He looked around, and to his shock it was twilight.

“Damn, slept too long. What the heck’s coming?” thought Harry to himself. As the sound grew louder and Harry could tell that whatever was coming, was getting closer and closer. He heard a piercing shriek rip through the night sky, a chill shot up his spine a cold sense of fear sliced through his body.

*Hide.*

He stood up quickly, ruffled the grass that left an imprint of his body, gathered up his meager belongings and ran to the nearest thick, full tree. He climbed high enough to hide himself from the viewers from below, but he could see them with little trouble. Harry stayed in that tree, until he saw four dark cloaked figures riding on black steeds, heading westward on the road he himself had just laid beside. He was stunned that he didn't need light to see the figures, especially since his glasses were long gone and his vision had apparently been healed to the point he didn't need glasses.

He watched in horror as the figures stopped near the spot he had just laid down in. They converged around the spot for a brief moment.

“*Traveler.*” hissed one of the riders.

“*He does not have it.*” said another.

“*He is not important...on....We must go on.*” said the apparent leader.

They turned back towards the west and rode on. Harry watched them go and waited until the hoof-beats had faded away into nothing. He gathered up his things from the surrounding branches and climbed back down out of the tree.

The moment he hit the dirt, a loud and high pitched shriek met him, he turned and saw a single rider waiting for him in the darkness. Harry looked at him in shock, then his body gave him another order that his mind wholeheartedly agreed with.

*Run!*

He ran.

He ran away from the rider, who pursued him while on his dark steed. Harry tried to lose him in the woods, but that horse could turn every corner that Harry went passed. Finally Harry came back to the swift running river, Harry looked behind himself and saw that the horse and rider was coming quickly up to him. What he did next, he did without thinking, and he wished he had given it a bit more thought.

He jumped in the river, with his staff in hand.

The icy water met him and he was welcomed into the water by a sudden cold shock ripping through his body. He tried hard to reach the surface of the water, having only learned how to swim the year prior, he wasn’t very good at it.

The moment his head broke the water, he started floundering, sputtering and flailing about. He
managed to grab onto a passing floating log and held onto it. He coughed and sputtered loudly, he then looked over to the bank where he jumped into water. The rider was still there, screeching and waving a thin cruel looking sword above its head. Suddenly it turned and galloped away.

Suddenly, Harry’s small body began to move.

“Harry! Are you okay!” said Sirius excitedly.

Harry’s body than began to convulse and he gave several great coughs. Water poured from his mouth and dribbled down his chin.

“ALBUS!” screamed Sirius loudly.

Everyone who was downstairs for their monthly meeting came running up and crammed themselves into the room. They stared in horror as the boy began to cough and shiver.

“He’s…he’s…he’s coughing up water!” said Sirius, nearly going mad with fright.

Suddenly, the water and the coughing both stopped and Harry’s breathing returned to normal.

“What just happened?” said Remus faintly.

Harry continued to cling to the piece of driftwood and floated downstream. But with the coldness of the river, the lower part of his body was quickly becoming numb. Especially as he wasn’t wearing pants.

Finally he heard a shout coming the sides of the river and saw a man running alongside the river trying to keep up with the floating boy. Harry was too busy trying to keep his head afloat and not succumb to a cold sleep that he didn’t hear what the man said. He only moaned and tried hard to grip tighter to the driftwood.

The man dove in and swum out to the youth.

“Hold on!” shouted the man.

Harry moaned again, but his hands began to slip, until he ended up slipping completely into the river. His eyes were barely opened but he could see the man dive under to get him though he could only see the man's shape. The man dragged him back to the surface and pulled Harry out of the water by throwing an arm around the young man's neck.

On the shore, the man knelt on the grassy riverbank beside Harry, who was lying, coughing up water, and tried to rub the young man's legs furiously to get feeling back into them. Harry didn't have the strength to do it himself. The man administered to him, rubbing his larger hands and his Harry's smaller ones to get the heat back to into them. He wrapped Harry up in drier clothes and
started a fire to aid in the youth’s endeavor to warm up, Harry turned to look up at him, all the while shivering.

He had a head full of long scruffy looking brown hair, and the beginning of a beard to go with it. He was tall and lean, and wearing a worn faded green tunic with brown pants and boots. Against a nearby tree, there was a long sword and sheath, pack, dagger, and a bow and quiver. The man wrapped another dry cloak around the youth.

“Are you alright? You could have drowned, if I hadn't come by.” said the man with slight smile. “You should be more careful in the wild....what is it that you were you wearing?”

Harry blushed as he held the cloak tighter around himself, he didn't realize the man had taken his boar hide. He didn't think he'd be this nervous when someone stumbled on him, guess theory and real world reaction really was different. That and he didn't figure someone was going to strip him of his only piece of clothing. “I’m sorry, thank you for saving me, and…um…it’s…well…”

The man looked at the discarded pelt and chuckled. “Boar hide, not very comfortable is it?”

“I get some getting used to.” said Harry edging towards the fire.

“That it does, if you can stand it at all. And you are quite welcome. I am called Strider, what is your name?” asked Strider with a smile as he stoked the fire.

“Harry.”

“Harry? I’ve never heard of a name like that.” said Strider thoughtfully.

“Y-You haven’t? But you're speaking English...” said Harry.

“English? We're speaking Common Tongue,...” said Strider looking at Harry with slight confusion and worry. “I think I had better get more wood for the fire, perhaps you've become a trifle ill...”

He gave Harry his pack, “There is a set of clothes in there, change into them, I will be right back. Do not stray far.”

Harry waited for Strider to leave to change underneath the cloaks. The trousers were big on him, and so was the shirt, the boots were beyond hope for him to try on. He had smaller feet and he’d only trip in them. But they were dry and clean, he was grateful for them.

Strider came back with a large armful of firewood, and a few squirrels that he had flushed out and caught.

“Here we are, you look as if you had not eaten in a while.” said Strider putting down the firewood and preparing to cook the squirrel meat on the fire.

Harry watched as Strider cooked the meat over an open flame, the smell almost made him salivate, he was getting tired of wild berries, fish, and the occasional wild vegetable he felt comfortable risking his health with.

Strider handed him a tin bowl of squirrel meat, Harry took a bite of it and smiled.

“Are you feeling a bit better?” said Strider.

“Y-Yes..but...I wasn't kidding about the English thing. That's what we call talking like this back home.” said Harry.
“And where is this?” said Strider.

Harry looked at the clothes he wore, and what Strider had upon his own body. The tin bowl was crudely made, and Harry took note of the sword and bow and quiver.

“To be honest, I don't even know where I am now.” said Harry looking down, a thoughtful look in his eyes. “What province, or what country...”

Strider looked at the boy. He wasn't built like any other young man he had come across, not of the race of men anyway. Most young men held muscle in their arms and legs and a deep tan from the sun above. He was slender, pale, and had a delicate look about as if the sternest glare could snap him in half. He could pass for half-elven in appearance...if he had the ears and the strength...which he did not.

The lad asked a few questions, but with every negative answer that Strider gave him, the boy looked more crestfallen.

“So, you are lost.” said Strider. It was not a question, but a statement.

Harry nodded.

“Well, I can take you to the nearby town of Bree; you can rest there for a while. I'll be patrolling the border, but I will come and see you and try and help you find a way back home.” said Strider with a smile.

Harry looked up at the man, and smiled.

“I'd appreciate that. I've had some rotten luck so far.” said Harry.

“Falling in the river does sound like horrible luck to me.” said Strider kindly.

“I didn't fall in, I jumped in.” said Harry.

Strider stared. “What in the Valar made you do something so foolish?”

“Valar?” asked Harry in confusion.

Strider blinked, almost stunned silent. “You really are not from around here...but perhaps we will have a history lesson later; now, what made you jump into the river?”

“There was some dark cloaked thing chasing me.” said Harry.

“Dark...a *Black Rider*?” said Strider in shock.

“You could describe him as that, yeah.” said Harry.

Strider stood up suddenly and began to kick dirt on the fire. “We need to go,” said Strider helping Harry to his feet.

“Huh?” said Harry.

“I'll take you to the road to Bree, I need to warn the others.” said Strider.
'The..the others?' asked Harry taking his almost dried staff in hand.

'I have friends that are patrolling the woods, they will need to know about the Ringwraiths.’ said Strider.

'The what?' said Harry in shock.

'Come...follow me.’ said Stirder.

Strider led Harry deep into the woods, taking care to not go too far ahead of the boy following him. It seemed like only a half hour when they reached the darkened road.

‘Here, take this road, and get off the road if you hear hoof-beats.’ said Strider.

Harry nodded.

‘Go to the Prancing Pony, and have a rest, just tell Barleyman, the innkeeper that I will pay for any expenses you tally up. That clasp around your neck should be proof enough for him...if he can bother to remember who I am.’ said Strider in a mutter.

‘Thanks again.’ said Harry with a smile. ‘I'll pay you back!’

Strider smiled. ‘Don't worry about that. I'll just bring a few deer back for Barleyman, that should pay back whatever you happen to do at the inn. Oh...if you notice anyone suspicious, stay far from them.’

‘What?’ said Harry. ‘How am I supposed to tell if they're suspicious or not?’

Strider chuckled. ‘I suppose that is a hard thing to explain. Just...don't take anyone at their word right away.’ said Strider. He chuckled when the lad looked him up and down.

The tall man patted Harry's head. ‘I'll take care of what I need to, and then I'll look for you at the Prancing Pony.’

He turned and began to run down the road, towards the direction of the river. Harry turned to head to Bree, but Strider called out to him.

‘Also, do not try and get into a fight with any goblins! With that little staff, you will not be able to defeat them; run from them if you can.’ said Strider.

 غالبًاً، هناك غول النزل، لكنهم كانوا مستقرين...WEREN'T THEY?

Harry waved, indicating that he heard and walked down his own path. So he had made one friend at the very least, now to try and get to Bree, Hopefully, getting home would be easy.
Reaching the Prancing Pony

It felt like forever just to get to the large gate of Bree. He jumped at the least little noise, trying to heed Strider's warning about keeping away from horsemen, and goblins. Though, the most that he had to worry about all the way to the giant wooden gate of the first town he had come across was the occasional screech owl that flapped in front of him, catching an unsuspecting shrew.

He looked around nervously as he neared the gate, there was another road that ran alongside the gated entrance. He hid behind a tree, looked up and down the dark road and bolted to the door. The door didn't opened when he pushed it, and it didn't have a handle to pull; it seemed he would have to knock.

He knocked on the large door, hoping someone in the town would hear him, or he'd have to sleep outside for one more night. Since he had found himself...wherever he was...he didn't mind sleeping under the stars. That all changed when those Black Riders came up and scared the crap out of him. Now he wanted nothing more than to sleep somewhere where there's either a lock or a magical barrier to keep them out. Thunder began to roll above him, it was going to rain tonight...wonderful.

From the looks of the gate, it was far from magical, but there had to be something keeping those things out.

Suddenly a wizened old face peered out of a small opening in the doorway, peering down at him. “What do you want?” asked the man gruffly.

“I want to get to the Inn, Prancing Pony.” said Harry looking up and down the road carefully.

The old man snorted. “What business do you have in there? “asked the gatekeeper.

Harry blinked. “I don't want to sleep outside...” said Harry slowly.

Harry didn't figure that it would take a bit of convincing just to get inside the walls and Harry was failing miserably. The man hiding behind the wall mentioned a Cuthlen, he was the other gatekeeper that was on night watch sometimes, he would let anyone in...but not he...oh no...Harry looked like he was up to something. In his ill-fitting clothes and crudely made spear. He wasn't going to let Harry into Bree, and he was going to pass the word to the other gatekeepers to do the same when day broke.

“I'm not up to anything!” said Harry exasperatedly. “Look I'm cold, and hungry, please just let me in!”

“You're wearing a Ranger outfit, you are, and I don't recognize you. Give me one good reason to trust you; you could have robbed a Ranger and stole his clothing, or even killed him. I'd surely lose my position if I let you inside and you were to go on a mad killing spree.” said the gatekeeper stubbornly. “You will not set foot in Bree, my lad!”

Harry stared at the gatekeeper in shock. What in the world could he do in order to prove himself, the day was long gone and he wanted to get inside the gates, just in case the riders came back.

“What do I have to do in order to convince you I'm not a bad person?” said Harry desperately.

The man continued to scowl, but then the scowl slowly turned into a sneer.
“Well, if you want to prove to me that you're a good, resourceful lad, then you can do something for me.” said the man showing his yellowing teeth.

“What is it that you want?” asked Harry warily.

"If you were to prove me right and be a hardened criminal, I'd lose my position and if I'd let you in..." he said, mostly to himself as he looked to the left of the window. He then turned and faced towards Harry again. “I want you to give me enough money to last me, in case I lose my job because of you.”

“I don't have any money.” said Harry. He didn't even know what currency this area used; it could be duck eggs for all he knew. What's stopping me from stealing it back if I get into the town if I am a bad person? he thought.

“Well, fortune smiles on you today. I heard there was a goblin raiding party nearby, but the local patrol stumbled on them and fought them off. As you well know, goblins tend to take pretty things, jewels and such and bring them back to their king. The patrol didn't mention finding the loot box, go find that and I'll let you in. That is just enough to provide for me in case you bring about misfortune to the town.” he sneered.

“ARE YOU NUTS? IT'S DARK OUT HERE! I WON'T BE ABLE TO FIND ANYTHING!” shouted Harry. “I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHICH DIRECTION THEY WERE OR WHAT THE BOX LOOKS LIKE!”

“Then you can’t come in.” said the gatekeeper still sneering. Then, without another word, he slammed the door shut behind him.

Harry stared at the closed door. “So much for thinking people here were as nice as Strider.” he muttered with a frown, he gave the door a swift kick, earning a sharp pain in his right foot. “How the bloody hell am I supposed to find this bloody treasure?” he said darkly. “This is turning into one of Dudley’s ruddy video games.”

He looked around into the darkness, crossing his arms. “Looks like I’m sleeping out here tonight again.” said Harry. “Hopefully the other gatekeepers tomorrow aren't as insane as this guy.”

He made his way to one of the briar bushes, hoping to perhaps find some protective shelter in the thicket. It wouldn't keep the rain away that was threatening to come down, but perhaps it would keep him out of sight.

He made to take off his coat and drape it over himself, but something caused him to stop. He heard a faint melody on the wind, played by what sounded like ever changing instruments. He looked around, wondering where the music was coming from.

“The smart and wise idea would be not to follow that sound, not with those Riders and possibly goblins out here. But…I’ve really have nothing better to do with my time till morning hits, and that’s ages away, and I'm going to get soaked anyway.” said Harry to himself. “Maybe there's someone else out here, and maybe they have a tent or something...and hopefully they'll share it with me.”

So, he went onwards towards the music.

He went into the small wooded area on the left of the road and continued on until the music grew louder and louder, he placed small rocks in the shape of arrows to point his way back to the gate tomorrow morning in case he went too far.
Once the music had grown to an immense volume, he saw a light flickering in a large clearing, despite the impeding rain, a campfire had been made. A pungent smell met his nostrils and he plugged his nose with his hand, whatever they were cooking, he didn't want any.

He entered a large clearing, but the coast was far from clear. There were five creatures huddled around a small fire, cooking what looked like...a human leg. He looked over to another figure, a man tied to a tree a gagged with a dark leather like fabric. He saw, to his horror, another creature, much like the ones tasting the leg roasting over the fire, pressing a burning brand into the man’s bloody stump and staunching the flow of blood. The dark leather fabric cutting off the man’s painful howling, man looked seconds away from fainting.

The creatures were horribly twisted and ugly looking. They had scraggy looking clothing and what appeared to be odd looking metal earrings in their faces. Their mouths were black and their teeth jagged and edged like a shark. They were fighting over the cooking stump, licking the flesh and slicing off chunks of it.

*Are these...goblins...but they don't look anything like them!* thought Harry in horror.

One of the goblins looked up over to Harry and gave a screech, causing the others to look 'round as well. They gathered their weapons and leaped over to the boy, poised to strike.

Harry tightened his grip on his spear and brought the butt end of it up into the first goblin’s chin, causing him to land hard on the ground, and there it staggered to it's feet once again.

Something strange had happened during that first goblin's attack, and it still was happening. They were rushing towards him, but sluggishly, he was able to deflect their attacks and strike faster at them than they could. It was as if someone had turned on a slow motion tape of goblins fighting while he himself seemed to move normally.

A second one came and swung it’s machete looking dagger down a millimeter from where Harry’s nose was. Harry dodged out of the way, and slammed the spear into the side of the goblin’s head. The third goblin looked warily at Harry as if frightened by the speed that Harry was fighting. Harry turned and faced the goblin and raised his spear, ready to strike. The goblin gave a screech, turned and ran, the other followed close behind, time began to speed up again back to normal.

Harry pulled his arm back and prepared to throw the spear into the goblin’s back. But he stopped, slowly he lowered the spear to his side. Then he heard a muffled moan, he looked round quickly, he remembered the man, and thought he needed more attention than the goblins.

Harry hurried over to the man and cut his bonds and gag with the tip of his spear. The man coughed, sputtered and clutched at his burned and bloodied leg; his hands shaking and his face pale.

“Arrgh...!” moaned the man in pain; he collapsed heavily into the bark of the tree.

“Easy...you'll be okay...I think...” said Harry throwing his coat over the man.

“Why didn’t you kill them?” he gasped out weakly. “Why did you let them go?”

“I think I’m lucky enough to be able to knock them out to be perfectly honest. Killing them, there was no need, they were running away.” said Harry trying to help the unfortunate man to his feet. He handed the man his staff so he didn't have put all his weight on the young man, but had to awkwardly help him upright as he picked up a crude looking pack.

“To be so young and foolish,” gasped the man. “It's best to kill them before they can harm
someone else.” said the man thickly.

Harry didn't answer. Instead, he took another conversational path as he followed the path of stones he had laid down on the ground. Noticing how strange it was that the music, as it once was quiet further away from the clearing, was still the same volume as it was back where the goblins were. Even stranger as there was no musical instruments in the clearing with them. “How did they catch you like that anyway?” asked Harry, hoping to learn what not to do in the future, when walking around in the wild. Following strange music was becoming one of the rules.

“I was merely heading into Bree, to sell my wares, I’m a potter.” said the man trying to stifle a scream as a painful throb ripped through his body.

Harry held back a “Me too.”

Harry gave the man a moment to rest against a nearby tree, the man had to be intense pain, but he needed a Healer, doctor, whatever the hell they had here. If he couldn't get some help soon, the man wouldn't last much longer.

“Could you help me into Bree? I’ll give you something in return.” he said trying to convince Harry to help him, though he didn't know he wouldn’t have to waste his precious breath. Harry had no choice but to get the man some help. Without some help soon, the man wouldn't last much longer.

“Sure no problem, you don’t need to give me anything… but getting inside might be a bit of a chore. I’m not allowed in until I give the that the gatekeeper a lootbox of some kind.”

“But that’s what I wanted to give you! I stumbled on it, on my way here, but it seems they too were trying to find it.” said the man urgently.

This really is one of Dudley's damn videogames...

He handed Harry the pack.

“We'll look into this later, once we get to the gate.” said Harry.

“Take what you want first, if the gatekeeper only get's a coin or two he'll never know.” said the injured man, beginning to gasp and pant. “Please, take it, take what you want from the box, if you don't take it out now, you won't find the time to get anything.”

“I don't want anything...” said Harry as he opened the pack. Inside were a few cruel knives, and some pieces of rotting meat; but something else caught his eye.

There was a jaggedly carved box inside the pack, and when his hand touched it, he could feel the vibrations of the melody that hung in the air pulse through his body.

“This is it?” he said picking up the small box. “This is the bloody treasure?”

“I guess I should be thankful to that small box for my rescue.” said the man, gritting his teeth. “If you hadn't been asked to look for it, I would have been devoured by those damnable creatures.”

“Oh right, sorry about that. Hang on.” he made to heave the man upright, but the box suddenly grew hot in his hand.

“What the hell?” said Harry as the box began to glow, as well. Out of curiosity, Harry opened the chest, inside were a bunch of coins, some jewels and something that caught Harry’s attention immediately. It was a glistening opal, not the biggest jewel in the box, in fact it was one of the smaller ones. But something about it registered in his mind, as to what, he didn't know, but he
pocketed that lonely jewel.

“Why not take more?” asked the man, his voice barely above a whisper now. “You've earned more than that.”

“I know, but we need to get into Bree, and he won't let me in without paying him off.” said Harry Shrugging as best he could under the weight. “I'll just take that one stone.”

“Paying off what?” asked the man.

“Never mind.” said Harry.

They managed to make it back to the gatekeeper and it took several knocks on the door for him to even peer out of the little window.

“What do want?” he asked sourly.

“I've got someone who needs help,” said Harry quickly, and when he noticed the man made no sudden movements, he sighed. “And I've got the stupid box.”

Immediately, the door opened. “Show me.” he said quickly.

"No, you let us in first." said Harry sternly as he gripped the box tighter.

The man grumbled loudly but allowed them to pass.

As soon as the gatekeeper opened the door, Harry helped the one-legged man inside and shoved the box into the man's hands.

"Take it." he snarled and helped the man into the main drag of the town.

"You didn't tell him you took something out?” said the man with a strained smile.

"He'll never know, and he sure isn't the original owner of the jewels and coins anyway." said Harry with a smirk. "And he owes me for giving me grief. “

“Never mind. Do you know where there's a healer or something?” asked Harry continuously lugging him around.

"Take me to the Inn, they'll fetch one." said the man, still gritting his teeth.

"You're tougher than me, I'd be screaming if I loss my leg." said Harry looking down at the still smoking stump. “Which Inn?”

“The Prancing Pony.” said the man.

“I was heading there myself.” said Harry with a grim smile.

The man gave a strained chuckle, "Fortune smiles on the both of us!” suddenly he pointed to a building with a sign that said "Prancing Pony." It even had a horse carved into the wood of the sign. "In there. It the best one in town." he wheezed.

Harry could feel it, the man was quickly losing his strength.
Harry opened the door quickly and headed up to the counter, where a large man with a bushy mustache stood there.

"Can you help him?" said Harry sweat pouring off his face from the strain.

The man looked down and saw the burnt stump that the injured man had acquired and ushered them quickly into an adjoining room. The innkeeper laid the unfortunate man down on the bed in that room and wrapped his leg in bandages. He sent one of his employees off to fetch the healer.

Harry sat towards the back of the room, keeping safely out of the way, fingerling the opal in his hand.

About an hour after the healer had arrived, the barkeep walked over to him.

“He's going to be confined to a bed for a good long while, but the healer says he should be able to make a full recovery, if you had been just a few minutes late, he wouldn't have half the chance he has now.” said the barkeep. "Breman told me what you did for him, you're a brave young man for going to save him. If you want, you can have a night's stay here for free." said the man with a smile. "Barelyman's my name."

Harry blinked, "Uh, thanks Barelyman, but um...why would you give me a free night's stay, I didn't help you." said Harry.

"Breman's my wife's brother. So, you did do my family a favor." said Barelyman with a smile.

"Oh...well...um...I need a job, do you have anything?" said Harry. "I'm not from around here, and I think I'd better settle down somewhere till I find out what the heck I'm supposed to do."

"Heck?" said Barleyman slowly.

"It's something we say where I come from.” said Harry quickly.

"Oh, you live far away?" said Barelyman curiously.

"Yeah." said Harry.

"And you can't figure out how to get back?" he said, not really believing the young man

"No, I'm going to need some help from...well...someone exceptionally wise." Harry didn't want to say wizard or witch, not knowing if this place had such people.

"Oh, I know someone like that, goes by the name of Gandalf, wizard he is." said Barelyman.

Harry's eyes flashed with excitement. "Where is he? Where can I find him?" he said quickly.

"Well, he hasn't been around five months or so. He'll pop up." said Barelyman. "As for a job, well I need someone to be our cook, ours sort of passed away, she was a spry old girl." said Barelyman, rubbing his chin. "Can you cook?"

"Yes, sir, I can. I've cooked for my family for several years." said Harry. "I'll take a shot at it."

“Huh?” asked Barelyman.

“Nevermind.” said Harry.

"Oh, well, Good, I can give you room and board for your services. If you do a good job, I'll give
you some coins to get whatever else you may need." said Barelyman kindly.

"I really appreciate it, do want me to start tonight?" said Harry.

"No, you've done enough tonight. Best give you the night off. You start tomorrow."
said Barelyman with a kind smile. “I'll also get that box that you gave to the gatekeeper for you, if he's taking bribes to let people into the town, we sure don't want him guarding the door.”
Harry woke up refreshed in his newly attained room, it was a little small, but compared to his old cupboard and the room he had at the Dursleys, it was a suite. There was a good sized bed, a trunk at the foot of the bed, a pitcher of water and a bowl on a small table to wash his face in.

He yawned hugely and put the clothes that Strider had so kindly had given him, back on. He had slight trouble trying to remember how the tunic was supposed to be tightened up, but he manged to get it in the end. He happened to notice also, that there were a pair of simple boots beside his bed, much smaller than the large ones he had borrowed from Strider.

*The innkeeper must have given me these, that was nice of him, but jeez they're hard to lace up. I thought dress robes were hard, these things make those look easy.* thought Harry as he fumbled with the laces.

He leaned out of the window and saw the sun creeping up over the horizon. He didn't hear anyone outside stirring, so it still had to be pretty early in the morning, too early for most people. He went carefully downstairs, so as to not disturb anyone from their restful sleep. he headed downstairs to find the kitchen.

He saw a large spacious barroom with several tables with chairs and large booths around the walls of the room. The room looked reasonably clean, but well lived in. No wonder the man from last night said this place was the best, it felt like another home in here. He went down a small hall, and through a pair of swinging doors to find the kitchen.

He looked around the modern appliance deprived kitchen and noticed that the stove was nothing that he was used to back home, it was beyond antique. He remembered reading in primary school about how people way back in time managed to cook, so he had some idea and he hoped he didn't set anything on fire. He grabbed some firewood from the small bucket beside the stove and tossed it inside. After he managed to get the stove going, fixing it so he didn't have large amounts of smoke belching out, (he had to push open the upper part of the split door to get rid of the smoke), he looked around quickly and saw a young boy come knocking on the still closed part of the door with several large baskets full of eggs and different vegetables.

"Here's your food." said the young man holding up the large baskets.

"Oh...um...thanks...but...I don't have any..." said Harry.

"Money, sir?" said the young boy helpfully.

"Yeah, I just started here last night..." said Harry apologetically.

"Mr. Butterbur has a tab at our stand sir, he pays for it every week." said the small boy grinning hugely.

"Oh, well. Alright then, um...I don't have a tip for you this morning but the next time you deliver, I'll try and have something made for you." said Harry.

"Thank you sir!" said the small boy with a bright smile and then left.

"Sir?" thought Harry with a smirk. "I'm maybe three years older than you."

He grabbed the pots and pans and placed them on the now hot stove. He cracked several eggs and
fried them up on the pan and tossed a few rashers of bacon in for good measure. While that was going on, he decided to make a few old fashioned muffins that Uncle Vernon's old boss used to love. Thankfully, Harry never needed a muffin pan in order for the muffins to raise the way he wanted them, (only because Dudley sat on all the ones Aunt Petunia had and disfigured them) but it did take him several months in order to get them the shape he wanted, all it took was a little ingenuity and a bit of bendable metal. Now he had it down to an absolute science.

Barliman Butterbur was snoring in his bed upstairs, suddenly he began to have dreams full of eggs, bacon, ham, toasted bread and something that smelled like cooked blueberries. He jerked awake, and began hoping that the delicious smell hadn't just existed in his dream. He was happy to smell the same smell in the real world and changed quickly, then he headed downstairs.

He entered the kitchen quickly and found the young man he had just hired working very hard making breakfast for the guests at the Inn.

"Morning Mr. Butterbur, what can I get for you?" said Harry taking a large amount of muffins out of the oven.

Harry smiled as the man stared hungrily at the very ample breakfast that laid before him. Suddenly they saw one of the younger barmaids that worked at the Inn, stick her head in.

"Mr. Butterbur, I've got people here wanting breakfast." she said meekly, than she saw Harry, blinked slowly and then quickly blushed.

"Come on in and get it, or do you take orders?" he asked Mr. Butterbur.

"No, no, we serve whatever we have on hand." said Barelyman looking up from the muffins sitting on the table.

"Well, then...uh..." Harry looked at the

"Anya." said the barmaid shyly.

"Well, Anya, I'll set up the plates you take them out." said Harry with a smile.

About an hour later, Harry was helping the scullery maid wash the dishes when a large man came stomping in, his nose stuck in the air with superiority and smugness. It took everything Harry had not to send a pea flying up it with a spoon.

"You the vagabond that made my breakfast?" said the man smug voice.

"No." said Harry, not looking at the man. It was too early in the morning to be overly pleasant to someone that wanted to be a complete prick.

"No? What do you mean, no?" asked the man shortly.

"I didn't make your breakfast, I made everyone's breakfast. Not just yours." said Harry with a smirk.

The man snorted with disgust. "Best keep that tongue in check boy, if you want to get ahead in life. I might not just offer you a better job."

"Oh, really?" said Harry drying his hands on a rag and turning to face him.
"Ah! Changed your tune have you?" said the man with a smirk. "I'll give you a silver penny per day, if you come and cook for me."

“What a generous offer.” smirked Harry as he put the rag down. He didn't know much about the economy or money exchange, but frankly, Mr. Barelyman was going to handle his room and board, give him a few gold coins for spending money...a silver penny a day wasn't much...Besides, Strider, the only other person that he had met in the place told him to stay here.

“Come along then." said the man turning on his heel.

"I never said that I would come with you." said Harry quickly.

"Well you'd be a fool not to." said the man with a smirk turning to face the youth.

"I'd be a fool to take the job, I think." said Harry. "I'm declining your offer; please leave my kitchen."

The man's face turned a sickeningly familiar purple and stormed off. Harry shook the vision of his Uncle's angered face out of his mind, and continued on with his work. Anya had watched what had transpired from another door leading into kitchen.

Anya was happy for the green eyed man in the kitchen when his breakfast was devoured greedily by the numerous people who had smelled the wafting scent of the muffins, eggs, and bacon. It didn't matter if they were guests at the Inn or they were mulling about outside. They sniffed the air and came right in, ordering a plate of breakfast for themselves. Mr. Butterbur, hadn't seen this much interest in the food of the inn for a while.

Anya couldn't believe how drawn she was to the strange young man. His fair skin, that reminded her of the time she had seen an elf for the first time, but his skin was slightly darker, his wild, darkblack hair that stuck up in several places, and his eyes. His brilliant green eyes, she could hardly look at them without blushing. His eyes, they didn't match how young he was, (they appeared to be the same age) but his eyes held a sort of tortured wisdom about them.

She was happy to see that the fat old brute Bill Ferny was put in his place by someone of their generation. He was such a loud mouth bully that anyone that managed to get one over on him was considered a hero by quite a few people in town. So far, only the wizard Gandalf and the Ranger Strider seemed to put him in his place. She loved watching now all three of them give Bill Ferny a piece of their mind, but she had to ditch and run quickly and hide whenever Mr. Butterbur would come around. She didn't want to be punished for spending more time watching the green-eyed man than on the guests.

But the innkeeper was well aware of the young woman's desire to watch the youth. He knew she was smitten with the lad, and he wasn't too upset by it. The boy seemed like the sort that would wander off at the drop of a hat, and Anya being the prettiest girl in Bree, he wouldn't wander too far if the lad was like any normal young man if he happened to notice her aspiring affections. If she couldn't get him to stay, nothing would.

So he didn't do anything to deter the romance that was sure to follow.

Harry had worked at The Prancing Pony for three weeks, keeping the people of Bree happily fed and introducing them slowly to different sorts of culinary treats. Anya had tried several times to drag Harry out of the kitchen and out on an outing, but Harry wouldn't go anywhere. If he wasn't in
the kitchen, keeping tabs on his earnings (including the jewels and money from the goblin loot box), or out in the market finding new ingredients, chatting with a few of the more exotic looking guests he was looking at the opal he had gotten from the small box on his first night in Bree.

Something about the jewel resonated deep within his heart, it was as if he could hear a small voice trying to call out to him from within. Unbeknownst to anyone at The Prancing Pony, he had gone outside of the protective wooden walls and took on bandits and stray goblins. His fighting skills over time greatly improved, well, improved as in the sense that he might not need luck to disarm or defeat a goblin, but that wasn't the most important thing that Harry had noticed.

When Harry would take the opal with him out to a fight, time would slow down and enable him to dodge a blow that would normally not allow him to escape. When he wouldn't take it with him, he would need to be extra careful and extra vigilant. After that discovery, he decided to keep this small jewel with him at all times, less he lose this amazing treasure.

It wasn't just good for battles, it made him able to keep up with the rush of food that kept coming in almost all day long.

How did this stone work? What made this stone do what it does? Where did this stone come from? So many questions, now all he needed was the answers, but first things come first, he had to find a way home, when the heck was Gandalf going to get there?

He was taking a break one day in the kitchen and gazed at the shimmering jewel in his hand. Anya came in and saw Harry sitting on the stool, staring at his hand.

"Did you cut yourself, Harry?" she asked looking concerned.

"No, why do you ask?" he said looking up at her, not bothering to hide the jewel.

"You're staring at your hand." she said.

Harry looked down at his hand and then back to her, his brows knitted in confusion. He held it up for her to see, "Tell me what you see?"

She stared at him. "Just your hand doing this." she mimicked what Harry was doing, the only difference was, was that he was holding an opal.

Harry looked at the jewel curiously and then pocketed it. "It's nothing really, what can I do for you Anya?" he said looking up at her.

Anya blushed heavily and turned her head. "Mr. Butterbur said that you could take the rest of today off."

"Another one huh? Alright, guess I'll go wander about the town then." said Harry.

Anya gave a small nervous cough, "I was thinking that..." she fumbled with her hands nervously.

Harry looked down sadly, he didn't want to do this. He had to get home, he had to be able to leave this place...if he got...involved...with anyone...it would be just too hard and he knew that. However he managed to get here, what was the odds that he would be able to bring her with him, and what sort of life would she have? Here it was easy, just backpedal to more primitive times, Anya...she'd have to learn a whole lot of technologies, mannerisms, and possibly a whole other way of speaking. He still said somethings that they didn't understand, but he managed to explain it or phrase his words a bit more carefully.
"Anya..." He ran his hand over his face. "I can't..."

"Why not?" she said hurtfully. "I..." tears began to form out of her eyes and with a sob she ran out of the door.

"Anya!" shouted Harry, he chased after her. When he made it outside, he managed to see a part of her skirt turn the corner past the Inn.

"Crud, she's faster than I am!" said Harry as he sprinted after her.

He chased her throughout the town of Bree, knocking into the old gatekeeper who hurled insults at him (he had lost his station and was now a keeper at the stables). Finally he managed to track her down towards the end of Bree, near the gate that Harry had never gone out yet. He found Anya sitting on a small bench, under a large tree, weeping bitterly.

Harry slowly walked towards her, then sat down next to her.

"Anya?" said Harry.

"Why don't you like me?" she said, still crying bitterly. "I...I..."

"I like you!" said Harry quickly. "I really do like you, it's just...I'm not from here."

"I couldn't care less!" she said.

"I do care. I can't let myself...I need to get home, and I...I might not be able to find the strength to get back if I...have to leave someone behind, I don't think I could leave." said Harry, his voice cracking.

"Then don't!" said Anya wiping her eyes.

"I left friends back where I came from, a sort of family, and most of all...the man that killed my parents is still back there. I won't stay here, allowing him to live another moment." said Harry, his voice cold.

Anya looked at Harry in shock. "I...I didn't know...I...understand now."

"Do you?" said Harry.

"I...I lost my parents too, Mr. Barleyman was kind enough to give me work...my grandparents were killed by goblins a few years ago. After losing them, I know what that pain is like and I could hardly stand it when it happened. I'm sorry..." tears still fell down her cheeks.

Harry sighed deeply, "One of these days, I'm going to have to go through that door." said Harry pointing to the nearby exit of Bree. "And I won't be coming back, because I can't, I can't let my heart keep me a prisoner here." Wow, that was corny, I won't blame her for snickering at that.

"So, you have to keep your heart a prisoner instead?" said Anya.

Harry looked down, but said nothing.

"I feel sorry for you, you need love, but you can't have it." said Anya laying her head on his shoulder.

There the both of them sat for the rest of the day. Anya cried, while Harry stared into space, wondering how he was going to get home, and how he could make this parting a little easier when
the time would come.
One lazy afternoon in the Prancing Pony's kitchen, Harry was taking out a large loaf of Honey bread from the oven when a voice came from the doorway behind him.

"Seems you made quite a stir in this town, Harry."

Harry turned around and saw Strider, leaning against the door frame and smiling.

"Hey, Strider, what brings you here?" said Harry beaming back at him. It was nice seeing a familiar face, several people came in to compliment his cooking, but this was the first familiar face he knew before coming to Bree. Though a better face would be either Remus, Dumbledore or someone like that.

He couldn't remember the last time he felt this good and relaxed, no one was out to kill him, he didn't have to keep looking over his shoulder for anyone, his mood was elevating by the minute.

"I am meeting a friend here, what about you?" said Strider sitting down at the table. "I did not expect you to find a trade so soon."

"Well the first night I came here, I was told about a wizard named Gandalf. I thought he could help me out." said Harry with a smile.

Strider blinked but he smiled. "I have heard tales of him too, maybe he could help you. But like I said earlier, you've made quite the name for yourself in this area. Even travelers heading out of Bree and passing through the Shire say that if you want the best food, you need to head to the Prancing Pony."

Harry smiled softly. "I'm not all that great at cooking."

"Try telling that to the people of Bree, I believe they've put on ten pounds since I've last seen them. But you haven't..." he looked at Harry's still lithe frame.

"I burn it off easily." said Harry quickly.

"By training, I shouldn't wonder, I can tell in your arms that you've been practicing." said Strider with a smirk. "Good boy, some of the young men in Bree are ample opponents for a boy your size." said Strider with a smile. (Harry looked away at that.) "Best not let your skills get dull."

"I try not to. Want some lunch?" said Harry. "I managed to get quite a few fish yesterday, and I wanted to try a new recipe. Want to try it? I finally got the sauce right."

Strider looked at the fish that was placed before him with a wary eye. It didn't look to be the normal fish dish he was used to, there was now something thick and white over the carved up pieces of fish.

"Don't tell me you're afraid to try something new." said Harry with a smirk, digging into his own fish. He took a bite and closed his eyes. "Yeah, I think it's about as good as I can get it. If I had the spices and roots back home...Still, it's not bad."

Strider looked at Harry and then down at his fish, slowly he picked up the fork and skewered a piece of fish on it. He picked the fork up and placed it in his mouth. Suddenly a multitude of flavors erupted in his mouth, he had to cover his mouth, to stop himself from gasping and from the
food to leap out of his mouth.

He gulped the fish down his throat and gasped loudly. "Any chance on second helping?"

Harry laughed, "You saved my life, you can have as many seconds as you want."

After Strider had eaten his fill, Harry reached into his pocket.

“I found something a little strange the other day, mind giving me some advice on it?” asked Harry.

“I will do what I can.” said Strider with a twitch of a smile.

"Can you tell me what you know about this?” he held out the tiny opal.

Strider looked at his hand, and picked up the opal. "What's so special about this jewel?” asked Strider. “Other than it is very beautiful.”

"Thank goodness you can see it. I thought for a moment I was the only one.” said Harry.

"No one else can see it?” said Strider quickly, looking at the stone and then Harry.

"No, not Mr. Butterbur, Breman or Anya. For some reason, they can't see it, I thought Breman did, but he only saw me put my hand in the box it came in. I am really glad you can, though.” said Harry. "Any idea why no one else can see it?"

"No, when Gandalf comes, you'll have to ask him." said Strider handing the jewel back to Harry.

"Have you noticed anything strange about it?"

"As a matter of fact, yeah. When I have it on me or even nearby...like a few feet, and I'm fighting goblins or whatever they're called...”

“One moment, you were battling goblins?” said Strider his eyes slightly wider.

“Uh...yeah...” said Harry uncertainly.

“And you're still alive?” said Strider looking at the youth in shock. The boy didn't look strong enough to take on someone twenty pounds heavier, how could he take on vicious, barbarically trained goblins?

“It's all because of this stone, they seem to slow down, and whatever they send my way, I can dodge it easily.” said Harry. "Even back home I've never seen anything like it."

Strider rubbed his grizzled chin. "Neither have I. Interesting little bauble though. Best keep it safe. How did you happen to come across this stone?"

"It was the first night I came here, stupid gatekeeper wanted a small box a trio of goblins were holding onto. I told him that it was dark and that I wouldn't have been able to find anything. Well,” Harry thought about telling Strider about the music he had heard, but he thought better of it. It would only be a repeat of his second year, and he could live without that, thank you very much.

"It was a giant stroke of luck that I found those goblins, not just for me, but for Breman. He was captured by those things and they were...." Harry looked at Strider, who was absent mindedly picking the small pieces of fish off the plate and eating them slowly. "That part can wait till later, but I knocked out the goblins and Breman had the box on him. He gave me the box and I found the jewel inside, along with some other ones, but that one sort of...attracted my attention."
Strider continued to look at the jewel in Harry's hand curiously. He looked utterly baffled at what that jewel could be and what powers it could possess and why it possessed the power to slow time. It seemed Harry was not going to get his answer today.

Over the course of next few weeks, Strider took Harry out into the woods outside of Bree and trained up his fighting skills. There was no swords smith in Bree, but Harry, with the money he had earned as the Prancing Pony's cook, he managed to buy some steel and paid a blacksmith to take the rock off and place the steel bit on the tip of the staff, making it a very deadly weapon indeed.

After a very grueling workout, they leaned against a tree and drank from their small canteens deeply.

"You're getting better, Harry. You're really getting better." said Strider with a slightly proud smile over at the young boy panting heavily beside him.

"Do you know how annoying it is, to see you not even breaking a sweat, and I'm over here dying of asphyxiation?" panted Harry.

"You're talking in your world's speak again." said Strider witha smile.

"I...can't...breathe..." panted Harry.

"Ah...well...I've been trained, and I've been fighting orcs, goblins, invaders of our borders, and trolls for many years. You only just started." said Strider kindly. "Come on, lets go again, this time, don't let me trip you."

It was almost sunset when they both came back into the walls of Bree, they would have continued but Harry had to go back to the Prancing Pony to make dinner.

"What's for dinner tonight, Harry?" said Strider.

"Let me think, I have quite a bit of chicken from the butchers, I haven't made anything from chicken lately." said Harry rubbing his shoulder. “I don't think I have the strength in my arms to try anything really adventurous.”

Later on that night, Harry, after making a very ample dinner, came out into the public area of the Prancing Pony and looked around. He saw Strider, now doning a dark traveling cloak and hood with his pipe sitting out of the dark hood, smoke spiraling languidly out of the hole. He looked quite menacing, more so than normal, Strider seemed to have a touch of dramatics in him when he wanted to be frightening to any newcomers to the Inn. He was about to go over and tell him how scary he seemed to look, but saw the look in his eyes, they were cold and fixed towards someone over to the other side of the room.

Harry followed his eyes and saw a table of four children...drinking ale?

Harry was in shock, and it wasn't till he saw two of the four children pick up a pipe and put it to his lips, that he hurriedly made his way over to their table. Before he could reach them, he ran into Mr. Butterbur.

"Well, Harry, we don't rightly see you come out here, what seems to be the matter." said Mr. Butterbur with a smile.
"Them, those kids." said Harry pointing to the four at the table.

"Kids? There are no goats in here, are there? Oh, you said once that that means children too...what children?" asked Mr. Butterbur, he turned and looked at the table Harry pointed to. "Oh, those aren't kids, those are hobbits."

"Hobbits?" said Harry stunned. "What the heck is a hobbit?"

"Well, they're just a smaller version of us, just with curly hair on their feet." said Mr. Butterbur plainly. "They're decent folk. Real laughs. C'mon, I'll introduce you." he took Harry by the elbow and pulled him towards the table.

Two of the four...hobbits...looked up startled, but the other two were smiling up at the pair standing beside the table.

"Good evening little masters, I'd like you to meet our cook, Harry. He's new to these parts."

The two that were smiling pointed at their plates. "You made dinner?"

"Yes I did." said Harry. "Did you enjoy it?"

"It was delicious!" said the two of them together.

Harry noticed the other two hobbits stared at him in wonder and what looked like apprehension. The brown haired one, he seemed a little...worn...While the other one looked at him suspiciously.

Suddenly Harry was grabbed by his elbow and dragged to the center of the floor. He looked behind himself and saw the butcher, drunk off his ass.

"C'mon Harry, sing a song from your homeland!" he said drinking from his tankard deeply. Cheers came rising from all around the pub.

"You wouldn't like the songs from my country." said Harry raising his hands.

"Come on Harry! I'll ask Mr. Underhill to sing if you will. Hobbit songs aren't a thing to miss." said Mr. Butterbur clapping his hands.

Harry groaned and rubbed his eyes. He looked helplessly over to Strider, but to his dismay, he saw him with small smile on his face. Great, he wasn't going to get any help from him, or Anya. He noticed that she stopped dead in her tracks, with a load of glasses on her tray. What was he going to do, he'd have to sing now.

But what was he going to sing? Rock and Roll? His voice couldn't handle all that yelling and shouting. Pop? They'd never understand it, and from what he saw on their beliefs, they'd lynch him for how most of the songs go. Country? They would never have the faintest idea what a tractor or pickup truck would be. Show tunes? That's the safest route to take. Now which one?

"C'mon, boy! Let's hear you sing!" said Mr. Butterbur. "What are you going to sing?"

"Well, it's an old song, a really old song." said Harry, thinking of a song quickly. "Well, from where I come from it is."

"What's it called." said Mr. Butterbur.

"It's called 'Whistle Down the Wind'." said Harry and wishing to get it over with as soon as possible. "Sorry if I sound...horrible."
"You won't!" said a small voice somewhere in the pub. Harry noticed Anya turned bright red.

He sighed deeply and then, he sang.

The entire pub went silent, Strider himself was staring at the young man in disbelief. This was music where he came from? It sounded so...soft, like a bird's song, then it switched to the melody of a wolf's howl, then back to a bird's serene chorus. And Harry thought he would sound terrible? Who lied to this lad?

The minstrel in the back of the pub looked at Harry in awe, he didn't have the faintest idea how the song was to be played, but Harry didn't need the help really.

When he was done, the pub erupted into a staggering applause. Harry smiled sheepishly and scratched the back of his head. "Can I sit down now?" said Harry with a smile.

"Sure you won't sing again?" said Mr. Butterbur.

"Absolutely not." said Harry and he went to go sit at the bar. "I'll have my usual."

"What do you drink?" asked one of the hobbits coming up to the bar, asking for a pint of ale. "I've got some money, I'll buy."

"Apple cider." said Harry.

"Apple cider?" said the hobbit.

"Yep, it's that extra Vitamin C that gives it the kick!" said Harry with a smile.

"What's Vitamin C?" asked the hobbit.

"Never mind." said Harry. "I'm not old enough for ale or beer for that matter." said Harry as he drank from his own tankard.

"How old are you?" asked the hobbit.

"Well, adding up the time I've been here, I'm still fifteen going on sixteen." said Harry.

"Wow, and they let you work here?" said the hobbit.

"Never asked, never told." said Harry taking a drink again.

"Good idea. By the way, Peregrin Took is my name, but everyone calls me Pippin." said the hobbit holding out his hand.

"Harold Potter, but you can call me Harry." said Harry with a smile and shaking hands with Pippin.

"Harold?" said Anya with a bright smile. "It sounds so...exotic."

"Not where I come from, it's pretty common." said Harry. "Anya, and Pippin are much more exotic and rare than mine is."

Anya smiled shyly. Pippin laughed.

"You should meet my cousin, right over there, Frodo Baggins. He's my second cousin, once removed on his mother's side." said Pippin turning and pointing to the hobbit with the worn look, which then turned into panic.
"Baggins? I thought Mr. Butterbur said his name was Underhill." said Harry quietly. Suddenly, Mr. Underhill, or as it turned out to be, Mr. Baggins hurried over and took Pippin by the shoulder. Pippin turned quickly and that knocked Frodo off balance and toppled backwards. Harry noticed a small band of gold fly into the air and then fall onto one of Frodo's outstretched fingers.

Suddenly, Frodo vanished.

Harry stared at the floor in shock, then the noise of frightened and shocked patrons grew larger and larger. Harry reached down and felt the small hobbit's leg, he moved his hand up and felt the small ring on the hobbit's hand and tried to take it off. But he was sent flying backwards into the wall!

His head slammed into the wall and he slumped onto the floor as stars blinked in front of his eyes. Anya came over to see if Harry was alright, and helped him to his feet.

Harry scrambled back over to the hobbit and he met Strider rushing over to the spot that held an invisible Frodo Baggins. Without warning, Frodo came back into view and was promptly dragged out of the room by Strider. They turned into the corridor, making sure no one was following, Strider made to go up the stairs, but Harry stopped him.

"Kitchens are closer Strider, only Butterbur and I have the keys when that doors are locked, and the walls are thicker, no one can hear us." said Harry.

"Good idea, your instincts are getting better." whispered Strider. They half dragged half carried Frodo down to the kitchens and closed the door behind him.

"Aren't you going to lock it?" said Strider quietly.

"Not if his friends want in I won't, after they come in, then I'll lock it." said Harry.

"Want do the both of you want?" said Frodo sounding worried as he watched the two taller people watching the door and locking the door to outdoors.

"You'd best be more careful, Mr. Baggins that's no mere trinket you carry." hissed Strider.

"I don't know what you're talking about!" said Frodo. "And my name is Mr. Underhill."

"It won't matter what you call yourself, they already know who you are and what you carry!" said Strider shortly.

"You mean those riders?" said Harry quickly, then a cascade of footprints came towards the kitchen door. The door crashed open and there were the other three hobbits, two had a chair lifted above their heads and the other one looked like he was ready to go ten rounds in a boxing ring.

"LET HIM GO, OR I'LL HAVE YOU LONG SHANKS." said the sandy haired one.

"What about me?" said Harry pretending to be hurt.

"I trust you." said Pippin, not taking his eyes off Strider and not lowering his makeshift weapon. "You didn't drag Frodo in here."

Strider rolled his eyes, then looked at the sandy haired hobbit. "You have a stout heart, but that won't save you."

Harry locked the door as he ushered the hobbits into the kitchen. "Those Black Riders are coming, aren't they?" said Harry, as he removed the chairs from the two smaller hobbits.
"They are. One person in there," said Strider pointing towards where the pub was. "will have told the enemy where to find you. We need somewhere to hide until it is safe to leave Bree."

Harry thought quickly. "There's false wall, back here." said Harry moving swiftly amongst the people in the kitchen. He felt around the western wall and stopped, he felt the small grooves in the wall he was looking for and pulled it out. Inside was a small stove, a few blankets, pillows a dark stone patterned plank covering the lone window. There was a removable knothole in the wood to see out into the street.

"Found it on accident, I was just putzing around." said Harry.

"What?" asked Strider.

"Uh..messing around..."

Strider still looked confused.

"Goofing off?" said Harry trying to explain what he meant.

Strider's face did not change.

"Exploring the kitchen to the fullest extent without any real reason behind it?" said Harry.

"Ah." said Strider smiling. Then he looked at the door that was sliding open. "I know of this room, this pub used to be a safe haven for us Rangers, but only during the time that Barleymen's father was the owner of the Prancing Pony" said Strider.

Then a knocking came from behind the locked door. They all tensed up and stared at it, Strider even unsheathed his sword a part of the way. Harry and Strider hurried over to the door and through a small peep-hole Harry saw that it was both Mr. Butterbur and Anya. He opened the door carefully.

"Harry! What's going on?" said Mr. Butterbur, "What happened to that Mr. Underhill?" then he saw Frodo half in half out of the secret room. He pointed his mouth opening and closing it.

"They're in danger, I thought I'd hide them in there." said Harry.

"Hide them from what? And how did he disappear like that?" said Mr. Butterbur.

"The second question I won't answer, but the first I can." said Strider, "Their persuers come from Mordor."

"Save us." said Mr. Butterbur faintly. Anya fainted, Harry managed to catch her and placed her gently in a chair beside the fire.

"They won't stay here once I'm gone." said Frodo.

"Well you know your own business maybe, but I wouldn't take up with a Ranger just out of the Wild." said Mr. Butterbur.

"They have no choice!" said Strider shortly. "Unless they want a fat inkeeper that only can remember his name because people shout at him all day!"

Harry looked between the two feuding men. Finally, after they resumed bickering, he had had enough.
"Alright! Stop this arguing! Mr. Butterbur, please trust him, we all don’t have much of a choice, and anyway, you sort of owe him." said Harry.

"What do you mean that I owe him?" said Mr. Butterbur shortly.

"If it weren't for Strider, I would never have lived long enough to see Bree." said Harry with a frown.

Mr. Butterbur stuttered but fell silent.

"And Strider, insulting him is only going to waste time, and he's providing the hiding space."

"Come on, let's get these guys in the secret room. Mr. Butterbur, get Anya back home, it's not safe for her here. I'll go upstairs with a tray of food, I'll make it look like they're upstairs. I'll set up some decoys up there, just in case." said Harry grabbing a tray and loading it with bread, ale, fruit and cheese. Then he hurried out of the door.

Mr. Butterbur and Strider stared at the young man as he left the kitchen.

Hours later, Harry, Strider, Pippin, Frodo and other two hobbits, (Harry and Strider learned their names were Sam and Merry) quietly hid in the secret room in the kitchen. While the hobbits slept, Harry and Strider sat and listened intently to the sounds emanating around the Inn.

Then a shriek pierced the night's death like silence. The hobbits woke up quickly.

"What are they?" asked Frodo quietly.

"They are called the Nazgul." said Strider. "Neither living nor dead. They serve the dark lord Sauron. They hunt for one ring. The Ring, Frodo, you now have."

"Why does he want the ring Frodo has?" asked Harry.

For the rest of the night, Strider told Harry, (the hobbits had gone back to sleep, for Frodo and Sam had already heard the story, and Merry and Pippin had heard it from Frodo) all about the legend of the One Ring and it's dark master.

"Crap." said Harry shaking his head, ignoring Strider's confused look. "Your dark lord sounds thirty times more worse than ours.

"There's another one?" said Strider in surprise.

"Back where I come from, but he's pretty tame compared to yours. The war we're fighting is on a much smaller scale." said Harry. "So, your Dark Lord, how are you going to go about to get rid of him."

"We need that ring, and we must cast it into the fires of Mount Doom." said Strider. "Problem is that Mount Doom is in the heart of Mordor. It will be no easy task."

"It never is." said Harry.

The next morning, Harry, Strider, Merry, Pippin, Sam and Frodo gathered supplies to leave Bree. Harry told Mr. Butterbur that he was leaving with the small band.
"I've got to find a way back home somehow, Sir. And Strider told me last night that he could take me to see Gandalf." said Harry.

"I understand." said Mr. Butterbur looking shocked, and slightly saddened. "Let me tell you one thing, lad. You were one of the best cooks I've ever had, I don't know what we're going to do without you." Harry could tell the man was trying not to cry in front of him as he handed Harry a pack of extra food and even some newer clothes, it seemed he had been preparing for this day.

"Thank you sir, and you don't need to worry about anything." He took out a small leather bound book. "I wrote down all the recipes that I used here, and a few I came up with." said Harry with a smile. "The new cook will be able to make your favorite muffins.'

Mr. Butterbur took the book gently, a few tears fell down his chubby cheeks. "Thanks lad. Now you be careful, and try and come back someday."

"I'll try, but I really can't promise anything." said Harry with a smile.

They loaded up the pony that they had bought from the cantankerous Bill Ferny and headed out towards the gate leading into the east.

"HARRY!" came a yell from behind them. Harry turned around and suddenly he found Anya throwing her arms around his neck. "Where are you going? What happened last night?"

"I'm leaving." said Harry not meeting her eyes.

"What? Now? But..." said Anya, tears in her eyes.

"It's the only way I can get home, and I want to help Strider, and them." said Harry nodding towards the hobbits, he didn't notice them adverting their gaze elsewhere to give them both privacy. Strider was making doubly sure that all their supplies were all there, not looking at either of them.

Without warning, Anya kissed him fiercely.

Harry's eyes widened in shock, but then, against his will, his eyes closed and he kissed her back. Thinking about it again, it wasn't against his will, he ran his fingers through her blonde hair and held her around her small waist with his free arm.

When they pulled apart, Anya saw a sad look in his eyes.

"You just made it really hard to go back home." said Harry in a whisper.

"Then don't go." said Anya.

"I have to, I have to...at least try..." said Harry.

"Come on Harry, we have to go." said Strider.

Anya released her hold on Harry and watched him slowly walk out of the gate. She looked down at her dress and saw a small envelope in the pocket of her apron.

She opened the envelope and found inside a letter.

*Dear Anya:*

*If you get this letter, that means that I'm leaving now. I want you to know, whatever happens, I'll*
never forget the time I've spent here. I will miss you, maybe some day I'll come back this way again. But I ask, for your sake, don't wait for me, I want you to be happy.

In my room, under the floor board that I've marked with a lighting bolt, I've left a present for you. It took me a while to make it but I hope you'll enjoy it.

Your's truly,

Harry.

Anya watched as the gatekeepers closed the gates, then after Mr. Butterbur escorted her back to the Prancing Pony. She walked slowly up to where Harry had slept, and sat on his bed. She sniffed and began to cry. He was here, and now, he was gone, probably never to come back. What was she going to do?

Suddenly, she looked down and saw a lightning bolt scratched onto the wood of the floor. She thought back to the note and slowly moved the plank. Underneath was a small satchel and a box. Inside the bag, was a small amount of gold coins. It was half of his pay that he had earned here and most of the jewels from the goblin lootbox, and then she looked at the box.

It had carvings on the top and on the side, it was not expertly made like some of the dwarven things she had seen, but it was pretty, this must have been what Harry and that one dwarven guest were working on when she saw them huddled over a table. When she opened it, it played a soft tune and after a while she recognized it as a bit of the song he sang in the pub the night prior. She held the box close to her chest and wept.
The small band of travelers moved swiftly about the wild, leaving the road as quickly as possible and doing their best to keep out of site for the most part, not trusting any traveler that could possibly meet them on the road. They stopped only at night, and the fire they would create would be small and surrounded with a sort of teepee like barrier to keep the flames from being seen off in the distance. Strider had added something that even hindered smoke from being visible to sharp eyes.

Harry managed to catch a rabbit, (though that was out of sheer luck). He had been taught how to set a snare and stepped back to examine it, and the rabbit jumped out of the bush behind him and ran right into the trap. Strider dressed it, and Sam and Harry roasted it slowly over the flames. Strider was proud of how Harry was able to catch the rabbit, but Harry didn't tell him how the events occurred.

Harry sprinkled a few herbs he had found along the paths they had traveled down, Harry at first didn't recognize some of them, but Sam pointed them out to him and helped him experiment with their flavors and scents. Sam was, in Harry's opinion a great teacher when it came to gardening. Though they didn't have the time to plant posies or anything, Sam just pointed out where herbs and vegetables were hidden in nature's garden

Strider came back after patrolling about, looking for any stray bandits, or any trace of the Ringwraiths. He saw no signs that they were within the immediate area, and began to head back. He smelled the scent coming from the rabbit and smiled.

"Even out in the wild you're a champion cook." said Strider sitting down, but keeping his sword held tightly in his hand.

"It was actually thanks to Sam here, he helped me find the herbs I wanted." said Harry with a smile towards Sam.

Harry took out several small wooden plates and placed pieces of meat on them. After a few bites, Merry and Pippin tried sneaking food off of Harry or Sam's plate, they didn't dare try Frodo or Strider's plate, Sam would attack them if they had gone after Frodo's plate, and Strider had already smacked their hands. After they enjoyed their very delicious meal, the Hobbits laid down to sleep till morning.

Strider peered around into the darkness and listened intently to surrounding woods.

"How many days till we get to where we need to go?" asked Harry handing him an apple from his bag.

"Eight days or so," said Strider looking up at the stars quickly. "It all depends on the swiftness of these hobbits. Though I can't put much stock in them being quick."

"Well no, not with such short legs, but they make for it, by keeping up with you and your tireless pace." said Harry with a smile.

"You're keeping up just fine, and you're aren't all that tall." said Strider with a smile.

"Runnings a hobby of mine." said Harry with a shrug. “According to some adults, I should do it more often than I do already.” He sighed and looked up at the stars.
"Thinking of the young barmaid?" asked Strider with a fond smile.

"Only during the day, during the night, I think about home. " said Harry still looking up at the stars. "I miss the castle, my friends, the teachers, Sirius..." tears slowly fell down his face. "I'd give anything to go back home."

"What about Anya?" said Strider.

Harry sat in silence for a short while. "I don't want to leave her, but it's better this way, me leaving. What sort of happiness could I give her, especially if I keep thinking about home and where I come from...she could get really sick from how unhealthy my home is." said Harry thoughtfully.

"Hmm, you could be labeled as noble as a lord, Harry. I know a few people that could use some of your nobility." said Strider with a smirk.

"I don't know about that." said Harry with a faint blush. "Do you want me to keep watch tonight?"

"No, I'll keep the watches, I know what to look for, and hear for." said Strider, "Unless you wish to learn?"

Harry smiled "I'd love to, that way you can get some sleep." said Harry.

"I can go days without it, but if you insist." said Strider.

Hours passed as Strider taught Harry all what the sounds in the night meant. Towards the dawn, he quizzed Harry in what the sounds meant. Harry managed to only get two sounds out of twenty correct.

"Well, looks like it'll take another night or two of teaching to get you familiar with the most common of sounds." said Strider kindly.

"If I ever do." said Harry with a slightly guilty smile.

They travelled all that day, Harry yawned twice but after splashing his face with cold water from a stream they had passed, his stamina and alertness rose.

"There's where we will rest tonight, Weathertop. We Rangers visit this place once a year, to pay homage to our fallen ancestors. If anyone comes, we will see them." said Strider.

He took them to a secure cave on the side of Weathertop and told them to stay put. He handed the hobbits small swords.

"Take these." said Strider.

"What about Harry?" asked Pippin.

"I've got a spear." said Harry holding it up. "I'll be fine."

"Take one anyway." said Strider handing Harry a larger worn sword."Stay here, until I come back." said Strider and then he left. "Keep out of sight."

The hobbits passed their time by telling each other tales about some people named Bilbo, Thorin, Balin, Dwalin, Kili, Fili, Dori, Nori, Ori, Oin, Gloin, Bifur, Bofur and Bombur. Once or twice, they
mentioned Gandalf, but it was either fleetingly, or if he was the champion of that particular tale.  

"A skin changer?" asked Harry, the hobbits jumped slightly, he had remained silent all throughout the tale telling.

"Yeah, he can turn into anything he wants. He usually turns into a bear though." said Sam excitedly.

*Sounds like a animagus to me.* said Harry thoughtfully.

The day flitted past quickly, thanks to all the stories that the hobbits told. Both Frodo and Harry remained quiet, and listened to the stories. Soon, Frodo slowly leaned against Harry's side and fell asleep. Thanks to the ring, Harry felt a sudden deep burning feeling come in from where Frodo was touching him. Harry didn't want to disturb him, so with the aid of his cloak he moved Frodo and helped him to lay down. "Keep your voices down, fellas. Frodo's resting," said Harry quietly.

"Oh, alright." said Sam quietly.

As the dusk began to approach, even Harry began to nod off. Suddenly the crackle of a fire woke him with a start, Frodo awoke as well.

"What are you doing?" hissed Harry.

"Toasting tomatoes and nice crispy bacon." said Merry with his mouth full.

"We saved some for the two of you." said Sam extending a plate with another one being filled with the food.

"Put it out you fools! Put it out!" said Frodo standing up and stamping on the fire with his curly-haired foot.

"Oh, that's nice!" said Pippin. "There's ashes in my tomatoes!"

Suddenly a shriek cried out into the night. They all stood at the edge and looked down. They saw four cloaked figures coming up the hillside, towards Weathertop. Harry remembered those cloaked figures from the episode by the river. They needed to run, and they needed to run now.

"Run! Go!" shouted Harry as he shoved them towards the stairs.

He followed the hobbits closely and didn't stop until they were at the center of Weathertop's summit, despite the wind and the shrieks, a faint melody came upon the wind.

It was the same melody as before when he found the opal...if that was the case, was there another stone like the opal in the close vacinity?

Harry looked around curiously and saw a shimmering light coming from a small alcove in the stone. He hurried over and saw, nestled amongst the stones, victims of decay, a small glittering Amethyst jewel, lying amongst the rubble.

He picked it up and looked quickly around back to the hobbits, fear splashed across their faces. He saw the hobbits huddled in the center of the open summit of Weathertop turning apparently looking around for their persuers. Cursing himself for being distracted, Harry hurried over to the hobbits but suddenly a blade came out from behind a pillar, thanks his hand in his pocket, touching the opal in his pocket, Harry dodged the sword as the blade came swooping over his head. He dodged a blow from another Nazgul and hurried over to the hobbits.
He stood in front of all of them. "Get out of here, I'll hold them off." hissed Harry to the hobbits behind him.

"We want to help." said Merry.

"Don't argue." whispered Harry. Then he noticed something that froze his blood. Frodo had almost finished putting on the ring.

"NO!" cried Harry. But his yell fell on deaf ears, and it soon became deaf air. Suddenly, another sword came out of no where and sliced through the top of his spear, knocking off the point. He ducked down, but couldn't avoid the swift kick to his face. Harry got slammed into the nearby wall and landed hard onto the ground. He struggled to get back on his feet and watched in horror as one of the Ringwraiths stabbed the empty air, but he knew that Frodo was there.

A scream cut through the terror filled area, and Harry staggered to his feet, bringing the sword that Strider gave him out. He swung at one of the Nazgul, but the sword was knocked out of his grasp.

Strider came out of between two ruined pillars, with a sword in one hand and a flaming torch in the other. Harry hell to the ground and picked up his fallen staff and quickly touched it to Strider's torch and it caused his to slowly begin to flame. It seemed that fire was the only thing that was going to work against them. His grip on a sword was too weak to think of using it against these Black Riders.

While Strider slashed the Nazgul with his sword and ignited the cloaks of the riders, while Harry could only set fire to the Riders in black. Suddenly, the Ringwraith that Harry was trying to battle, knocked Harry's torch completely out of his hands. It clattered to the ground, landing in a puddle, it quickly extinguished itself and rendering it now useless.

The Nazgul raised its sword and prepared to deliver a fatal blow to the teen. Harry absent mindedly reached into his pocket and tightly gripped the amethyst stone. Then, without warning, a flash of lightning came streaking down and struck the sword that was held high into the air.

All the electricity in the bolt of lightning was sent through the Ringwraith's form. The Nazgul flailed about and then fell to the ground. Harry looked at the shimmering purple stone in his hand and gripped it tighter.

"Only one way to find out." said Harry quickly. He gripped the jewel tightly again and looked to a Nazgul over towards the other three hobbits. Another bolt of lightning came crashing down and struck the Ringwraith and stopped it in it's tracks, and blasted him backwards and off the tower.

The hobbits hurried over to Harry and they stayed beside him, but when they saw Frodo reappear, Sam hurried over to be beside him. Harry, Merry and Pippin watched as the final Ringwraith fall off the side of Weathertop, with his face on fire. They all hurried over to Fordo's side, he was on the ground, gasping and crying out in pain.

Strider bent over the injured hobbit and examined the blade that did the damage that crippled the small hobbit. "He's been stabbed by a Morgul blade. It's beyond my skill to heal, he needs Elvish medicine." said Strider.

"But it's six days to Rivendell, he'll never make it!" said Sam fearfully.

Harry looked worriedly at Fordo, who was draped over Strider's shoulder. Will he make it?
Back at Grimmauld place, Sirius sponged Harry's forehead and worried about Harry. What was going to happen? He just flew into the air twice, and slammed himself against the wall, without even a single warning.

"Harry," said Sirius, sobbing uncontrollably as he cooled the unconscious lad's head, "For God's sake, wake up, please, just wake up."
In Grimmauld place, Sirius, Remus, Dumbledore and the rest of the Order stood around Harry's bed. Harry laid, resting peacefully, on the bed, he hadn't woken up at all since he had been struck down mysteriously in Hogwarts.

He was still wounded and suffering from grievous wounds, but the peaceful countenance he had, there was no pain shooting through the boy's body.

"Have you found out anything about what caused it Albus?" asked Moody looking down at the young man. His hand tensing on the staff that he had in his hand.

"Not exactly; due to some extensive research and quite a few owls sent to the correct people, I've learned that other wizards and witches in history have had something like this similar happen to them." said Dumbledore, his face pale. He could tear his gaze away from the face of the young man.

"How did people wake them up?" asked Remus. "Is there a cure?"

"And a way to stop the bleeding?" said Sirius, gently pouring a red potion down Harry's throat, being careful not drown the unfortunate lad.

Dumbledore looked towards the wall, his eyes misting. "No. They never found a way to wake them up. People just...decided...to put them out of their misery..." his voice breaking.

"What kind of people would do that?" said Tonks fretfully.

"They were Ministry officials." said Dumbledore. "They made the commanding decision, sometimes against the family's wishes."

"Why would they? It's not their place!" said Emmeline Vance who was also in the room.

"We do not know why they did it, but they did. And some how, Umbridge found out that Potter's fallen prey to the same thing." said McGonagall standing behind Dumbledore. "How I am unsure, she was never in the Hospital Wing, Severus never mentioned it and no students other than the Weasleys and Granger know about him being this way."

"She wouldn't! She wouldn't tell anyone!" said Tonks.

"Yes, she would, if it were to discredit Potter, or to get him sent away." said McGonagall bitterly.

"And killing him is the most efficient way of silencing him." said Moody darkly.

Sirius looked over to Remus, his eyes wide with fear for his grandson. "You know, now I'm not so sure you aren't right about her."

"I knew she was behind it." muttered Remus.

"Unfortunately, we have no proof, but we are keeping an eye on her. Till she stumbles and makes a mistake, we can do nothing. But I have left strict orders that any detention with her is to be monitored by at least one of the ghosts, or an invisible house-elf." said Dumbledore.
"He's safe here though, right?" asked Sirius, now holding Harry close to his chest, rocking him gently.

"Yes, no one can get in here." said Dumbledore with a smile. "Harry's safe."

"But how can we...how will we wake him up?" asked Remus frantically.

"I don't know, but I'm not going to give up." said Dumbledore. "Also, I need to talk to Mr. and Mrs. Weasley."

"Why?" asked Sirius hotly. "I'm taking care of him!"

"Don't worry, I'm not going to send you away from his side, but I just need to talk to them, they need to remove their children Hogwarts." said Dumbledore.

"What? Why?" asked several of the Order members.

"With Umbridge knowing what had transpired with Harry, she could use certain means to finding Harry." said Dumbledore.

"You mean torture?" said Kingsley.

"Wouldn't put it past that old hag." said Moody. "Let's get the kids out of there now, and then ask the Weasleys to remove them later."

"That's a good idea, Albus." said McGonagall. "I'll go and fetch the children." she hurried out of the room.

"Wow, it's not often she agrees with you Moody." said Remus.

"Took me by surprise." said Moody.

"What's wrong Kingsley?" asked Tonks. Kingsley was silent and was staring down at the youth with a questioning look.

"If Harry's been asleep for so long, how come he's not losing any weight?" asked Kingsley staring intently at the unconscious figure. "And how is he developing muscle tone?"

"You're right!" said Tonks, "he looks like he's getting stronger, and he's getting just a bit taller, since I've last seen him!"

"Yeah, I noticed that too, but he's still asleep, I'm more worried about him not waking up." said Sirius.

McGonagall hurried back to the castle and went straight to the Teacher's Lounge. In there was Snape, Sprout, Flitwick and Hagrid all enjoying a piping hot mug of tea and talking. Hagrid was telling Flitwick about some help he needed with some of the hedges that seemed to have developed a desire to move about the grounds and confuse some of the younger students. Snape was trying to bargain with Sprout for some of her more rare herbs to make a new potion he was developing.

Thankfully, Umbridge was nowhere in sight.

"Oh, Minerva! How is Potter?" asked Flitwick.
"The same, but we need to get the Weasley children out of here." said McGonagall quickly.

"Why, what is wrong?" asked Sprout in shock.

"It's Dolores, Albus thinks she may interrogate them to find Potter." said McGonagall.

"Why would she care?" asked Snape.

McGonagall told the other teachers what Dumbledore had discovered and the suspicions. That straightened up the other teachers quickly.

"Well, the twins are serving a detention with Madam Hooch, polishing the broom handles. They decided to set off fireworks in one of the boy's bathroom, Smith still has a burn on his...well...rear..." said Professor Sprout.

"Miss Granger and Mr. Weasley would most likely be found in the library, they've been in there since the attack. They've been trying to find a way to wake Mr. Potter up." said Professor Flitwick sadly. "I've been trying to assist them in any way I could."

"Ginny is the dorms." said Hagrid, "Me and her were talkin earlier and I took her up there."

"I'll go and get Miss Weasley, Filius would you go and get Miss Granger and Mr. Weasley, Pomona?" said McGonagall.

"I'll go and get the twins from Madam Hooch, she'll understand, she's very fond of Potter." said Professor Sprout.

"Good, Severus, Albus would like you to make more blood replenishing potions." said McGonagall, hesitantly Snape nodded.

"What about me?" asked Hagrid.

"Do you have any more of those tail hairs from the unicorns? We could use those to try and heal Harry's primary wounds by putting them in the bandages," said McGonagall. "Also, have we gotten back on friendly terms with the centaurs? Their healing potions and herbs wouldn't hurt."

"Sorry, Professor, but Umbridge and the Minister ain't helping matters by insultin' them every chance they get." said Hagrid sadly.

"Well, once all this clears up then we can finally make amends with the centaurs. But right now, we need to get Potter back to the way he was." said McGonagall.

Hermione and Ron were working tirelessly in the library, trying to find some way to wake Harry up.

"Damn! There's nothing! We've been looking in these books for days, and there's nothing!" said Ron slamming a book shut.

"We can't give up, Ron! We need Harry back!" said Hermione, her eyes bloodshot from crying and lack of sleep.

"I know, but...what can we do, if Dumbledore hasn't been able to find anything out?" said Ron.

"Don't you remember second year? He didn't know about the location of the Chamber of Secrets"
"and yet we found out." said Hermione.

"That's different, he was there the last time it was opened. But we don't have a single stinking clue what to do!" said Ron hotly.

"Miss Granger! Mr. Weasley! Where are you?" came the squeaky voice of Professor Flitwick

"Over here sir." said Ron.

"Come along quickly." said the Charms Professor in a hurried whisper. "We need to get you and the other Weasley's out of here."

"Why what's wrong?" asked Ron putting the book down on a passing rolling trolley enchanted to put the books away automatically.

"No time to explain, I've been dodging Umbridge all the way here. She must have some notion that we are here to fetch you, here, we must use the secret passage. It's best to avoid her at all costs." said Professor Flitwick. He hurried over to the architectural section and pressed a small knothole on the bookshelf. Then the entire shelf swung forward revealing a spiral staircase beneath it.

"Come along quickly!." said Professor Flitwick.

"I've never known this secret passage way before!" said Hermione.

"We teachers have our own secrets Miss Granger." said Professsor Flitwick with a smile. "But quickly there is no time to lose! I will escort you to the Headmaster's office."

"Wait! Harry's things!" said Hermione. "If she tries to go through them..."

"We've already sent them on ahead." said Professor Flitwick, "All that remains is getting you children out of here for your safety. Now come along!"

In no time, and through several different secret passageways they never knew existed, they found themselves up in Dumbledore's office. Fred, Ginny and George were already waiting for them.

McGonagall was just putting the finishing touches on a portkey. "Alright, gather around. We need to get you out of here as soon as possible." said Professor McGonagall.

"Why? What's the hurry?" asked Ron.

"It's Umbridge, we think she may want to interrogate you to find out where Potter's at." said Professor Sprout.

"But, why would she care?" asked Fred.

"Best tell you later, come along now." said Professor McGonagall, "take ahold of this book and get going. It's for your safety."

"Are we going to where Harry is?" asked Ginny.

"That's right." said McGonagall trying to beckon them forward, then Professor Flitwick gave a loud squeak.

"She's coming!" said Professor Flitwick worriedly.

"NO MORE DAWDLING!" came Dumbledore's uncharacteristically thunderous voice bouncing
off the walls of the room, he wasn't present, but he was still no less in charge of the school. "Take the portkey!"

In a whirl of color, they were gone.

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Harry, Strider and the hobbits made their way, as quickly as they could to Rivendell, but it was getting to be a bit of a hassle. Frodo kept feeling colder and colder and they had to wrap Frodo up in everything they had. That is, until Harry figured out what small purple stone did.

He spoke to Strider quietly one night as they both tended to Frodo: "I found another stone."

"Really?" said Strider as he looked down at it. "Does this one do something?"

"It seems to be able to control the weather, at least lightning anyhow." said Harry.

Then Frodo groaned slightly and gasped. They turned towards him and wiped his brow and placed some ethelas on the injury and rewrapped the grievous wound.

"He's still getting colder, and we have no more blankets." said Strider.

"Let me try something." said Harry giving the purple stone a little squeeze. Suddenly, the night went from being cool to become pleasantly warm. Strider stood up and backed away in shock, then he stopped.

"It's warmer all of a sudden." said Strider looking around quickly.

"Yeah, I sort of raised the temperature a little bit. Don't know if it will help him." said Harry sponging Frodo's head.

Strider looked at the stone in Harry's hand warily. "You seem to be depending a lot on those stones. You need to rely on your own strength and wisdom, not magic. Even Gandalf doesn't use magic unless he absolutely has too."

"But why not use them?" said Harry slightly irritated, hadn't the stones helped him, and hobbits? Back home, they used wits and magic to do their work, physical strength...well...no one really used that; unless you count being able to withstand torture.

"In some situations, you won't be able to have time to use the stones, your first instinct should be to defend yourself, get to secure enough place, then you can use magic." said Strider.

"Don't see you being able to use magic..." muttered Harry darkly.

"Use them to find out the extent of their powers, but only use them in the direst of emergencies." said Strider wisely, choosing to ignore the impertinent mumbling of the young man.

Harry crossed his arms and snarled, but then he sighed. "Fine."

"You won't regret it, Harry." said Strider carefully. "And you will find your fighting skills become even more improved, by not using those."

"But the situation we're in is an emergency though." said Harry.

Strider thought quickly. "This is true, so until we get to Rivendell you can use the stones. But afterward, use them sparingly."
"Fine." said Harry turning his head away.

Strider smiled. "Trust me, its for the best, you'll find that magic cannot solve all problems, it helps yes, but in the end, its your wit that may change the fate of many."
Harry and the rest of the small band made their way swiftly, deeper into the wild. But almost with each passing hour, Frodo was getting worse and worse. True, warming the air helped Frodo a little bit, but it still wasn't enough to keep him from feeling the creeping cold that seemed to creep from his shoulder and grip at his very soul.

"We need to hurry, we're running out of time." said Strider trying to urge Bill the pony on. The unfortunate beast was not the prize of the herd, and certainly not worth half the money they paid Bill Ferny for it, but the beast still worked diligently to keep pace, thanks to Sam's coaxing.

Just then, Harry had an inspired thought, time.

He reached into his small pouch and pulled out the tiny opal, and tucked it into Frodo's feverish hands, trying hard to resist the electric shock that rang through his body. For a strange reason, he couldn't seem to touch the poor little thing without suffering damage to himself.

"Hold onto that, until you get to Rivndell." said Harry in Frodo's ear.

"I..I c-can f-feel it, bu-but I can't see it." said Frodo looking down at his hands, his face turned from weariness to worry, was he losing his sight, or his mind?

"Yeah, well, no surprise there." said Harry quickly. "Don't let go of what's there, whatever you do." said Harry earnestly. "You have to trust me on this."

With great resistance, he held Frodo's hands and coerced the stone to slow down time for the hobbit, not knowing if willing or commanding the stone would do it, but spending almost all his hope for this miracle.

Immediately, Frodo noticed that the growing pain in his shoulder seemed to lessen and slow it's throbbing, and the coldness was even beginning to slow down.

"What?..." said Frodo.

"Nevermind, don't worry, just hold onto it, it'll help." said Harry reassuringly.

They traveled for one more day, until Frodo couldn't stay in the saddle much longer, and they were still two days away from Rivendell. They needed a miracle, and unfortunately, Harry's opal and amethyst weren't of much more use, but Harry still tied a handkerchief around Frodo's hand to hold the opal in place.

Strider and Sam had left to go and find some more of that healing herb, Kingsfoil, that seemed to have ease Frodo's suffering. Harry stayed behind with Frodo and the other hobbits, trying to reassure the hobbits that Strider was going to do all he could for Frodo.

"Is he going to die?" asked Pippin worriedly.

"Not if Strider can help it. Shh! What was that?" asked Harry quickly. He turned to face the threatening darkness and picked up his brand new staff. He lost his first staff, but thanks to Strider, (late one night while the hobbits were sleeping) they found a good stout branch and Harry had managed to recover his metal spear tip before leaving Weathertop.

He gripped his staff tightly and faced the sound of the approaching noise. Then he saw a horse and
rider come through the thicket of trees. Then Strider and Sam came out from the woods behind them.

"It's alright, Harry, she's a friend." said Strider coming up quickly, pushing the staff's metal tip down. "She's the daughter of Elrond."

Harry looked at the woman slowly, but kept his spear up slightly.

"Wise child." said the woman coming into the firelight, Harry's mouth hung open dumbly. She was beautiful, the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, even Fleur would pale in comparison and that was really saying something.

"She really is an elf." whispered Sam.

This is an elf? thought Harry in amazement. I'll take her over Winky and Dobby any day of the week.

Harry shook his head furiously and tried vainly to snap himself back to the tasks at hand, he managed to come back to the present at last when the woman and Strider lifted Frodo up off the ground. They carried Frodo to the horse, but neither one of them got on, they stood there talking in soft voices, and in some strange language.

Finally, he heard Strider say, "Ride hard, and don't look back." The beautiful woman commanded the horse, in that same strange foreign language and took off.

Sam was not happy.

"What are you doing?" he shouted. "Those wraiths are still out there!"

Harry looked at Strider and noticed that he had a flash of worry of on his face.

"If Frodo can get to this Rivendell place any faster, than it's all for the better, she was riding pretty quick. What do we do now, Strider? Do we follow them tonight and tomorrow?" asked Harry.

"If I were confident about how rested the hobbits were, we'd leave right now, but we'd best spend the night here." said Strider.

"What about Mr. Frodo?" said Sam, Merry and Pippin both looked fearfully up at Strider and Harry.

"He's safe with Arwen." said Strider.

"Oh, is that her name?" said Harry with a smile. Strider raised his eyebrows and Harry noticed the sides of his mouth twitch.

"I would presume to try if I were you." said Strider with a smirk.

"She's way too good for me." said Harry throwing his hands up into the air.

"And she's older than the both of us put together." said Strider.

"Huh?" said Harry in shock. "Really?"

"Oi!" shouted Sam. Harry and Strider turned and looked at the hobbits, who were strapping on their packs and putting out the fire.
"We want to go and be with Mr. Frodo." said Sam sternly, helping Merry and Pippin stand.

"Sorry, Sam." said Harry grabbing his own knapsack. "We're leaving."

"Are you sure, you can go on tonight?" said Strider. "Are completely sure you are rested enough?"

"We will, wether we can or not." said Merry.

"Stalwart answer, come on then." said Strider with a small smile and led them off into the direction that Arwen had taken Frodo.

They traveled all night and onto the next day, barely stopping for food, but choosing to eat on the way. If Strider had seen a fruit bearing tree or a bush full of plump ripe berries, he would quicken his pace, and gather up the provisions, and then when the Hobbits and Harry came to them, he would hand them out and continue on walking.

Since the loss of Hobbit to their party, Strider made a revision of his advice about the stones, he wanted Harry to not use them until they had reached Rivendell, so that Gandalf could give his council on them. Provided if Gandalf was there.

Strider decided to teach Harry swordplay during the evening hours when the hobbits were asleep collapsed on their bedrolls and slumbering deep. Harry was eager to learn, but he discovered very quickly that he wouldn't be left with bruises like fighting with his staff.

Strider treated a long cut on Harry's leg. "You're getting better, but you need to move your feet, don't just stand there."

"Bad way to learn that." chuckled Harry. Soon, Harry's leg was wrapped up and he was fast asleep, leaving Strider to sit and think. He didn't trust those stones that Harry was finding, but something stirred deep inside him, telling him that they were alright, and perfectly safe, but he was still unsure.

And being distrustful towards strange objects is what keeps folks alive in the world.

As they traveled onward the next day, Harry heard music again, was it another stone so soon? Compared to the alternative, he would greatly prefer it. He followed the sound looking around quickly. And there it was, a part of the worst alternative, the small opal, glittering amongst the washed ashore river rocks.

"Strider!" shouted Harry loudly. Strider came up to him and looked at the small jewel in his hand.

"Is it the same one?" asked Strider peering into the youth's hand, looking up and down the river, peering for any signs.

"It is, he must have dropped it. I hope he made it to Rivendell alright." said Harry standing up.

"The tracks lead from the other side of the river towards Rivendell, only one set of hoofprints, so they eluded the Riders at any rate. It's only a few more hour's walk from here, come on. The sooner we get there, the sooner we'll find out, if he made it safely and without further trouble." said Strider.

They forged the river that laid before them, Harry and Strider had to carry the hobbits over to the other side, for they almost got swept downstream. Then they continued on, Strider and Harry were now more concerned then they had before and hurried onwards, leaving the hobbits to run at full speed behind them.
Soon they stood on top of a large cliff and they looked down into the valley.

"Rivendell, the hidden valley of the elves." said Strider. Harry looked down at the peaceful valley and a bright smile stretched across his face. He could see waterfalls, large beautiful buildings, lovely, full trees and a smell of wildflowers wafted up to his nose. He could see himself growing old in this valley, and could see himself loving every minute of it. Soft and peaceful it was here.

Sam was fidgeting, wanting to stay and look at the view from the ridgetop, but wanting to go down and be with his Mr. Frodo.

“Don't worry, Sam, I'm sure he's fine.” said Harry, with great effort he put confidence in his voice.

They made their way slowly down into the valley, barely stopping to enjoy the scenery any further than they already had. They continued, going swiftly up to the house, (Sam, almost breaking into a run) but someone all of a sudden stepped out from behind a tree.

"Halt." said the man holding up a bow and arrow, the latter pointed straight at Harry's head.

"Peace, friend." said Strider holding up his hand, not choosing to speak in Elvish to ease the hobbits and his young friend.

"Ah, Aragorn, apologies, we've had strange creatures and folk coming near our borders and the guard has been intensified. It is strange company that you keep this visit." said the elf with a smile down to the hobbits.

"I'm trying to escort them to Elrond, I would have had Gandalf in our company, but..." said Strider.

"Do not fear, we know what befell him. He's here, and anxious to see you and the small ones. But he didn't warn us about your companion here." said the elf nodding towards Harry.

"We met him in Bree." said Pippin. "The same as Strider."

"Is he trustworthy?" asked the elf looking at Harry closely. Harry took a step back as the elf invaded his personal space.

"Send him through and we'll see. If he's evil, he'll be flung into the river like the others that try and invade Rivendell." said Strider with a smile.

"Thank goodness I'm on your side." said Harry with a nervous smile. As he looked down off the bridge and into the raging waters beneath.

The small company made their way further down the path and came upon the gate of Rivendell, and there to greet them was Arwen, not in the practical garb she did wear, but dressed in a flowing white gown. She stood beside someone who had shared some of her features standing beside her, and then an old man dressed all in grey standing on the other side of the man beside Arwen.

"Harry, this is Gandalf the Grey." said Strider with a smile to the old man. "And Lord Elrond."

"You look just like Dumbledore." said Harry staring at Gandalf with his long white beard and bushy eyebrows.

"Who's that?" asked Gandalf narrowing his eyes slowly.

"Nevermind. But that really doesn't bode well for me to get home." said Harry.

"Do you live far away?" asked Gandalf looking curiously at the youth.
"You have no idea." said Harry with a grim smile.
Rivendell

Harry couldn't believe it, he had finally gotten to meet Gandalf, and it was quite a shock when he
saw that he had resembled his own mentor, Dumbledore.

Reminds me of that show, Mrs. Figg loved, the Twilight Zone." thought Harry.

"Where's Mr. Frodo?" asked Sam quickly, Harry jolted back to reality. Or at least the closest thing
he could get to reality.

"He is inside, he will be alright, Sam." said Gandalf smiling slightly down to Sam and patting his
shoulder, "Lord Elrond is healing him quite well."

"How can he, if he's right there?" asked Pippin nodding towards Elrond.

“Show respect, Peregrin Took.” said Gandalf raising his staff slightly.

"I've done all I can for now, but I must get back soon to change the dressing on his shoulder." said
Elrond with an amused smile.

"Why didn't you meet us at Bree, Gandalf?" asked Merry, trying to save his cousin from getting a
swift smack in the head by Gandalf's staff.

"I was unable to meet you due to a...unexpected delay." said Gandalf gently despite the fact he was
trying to tap the top of Pippin's head sharply, but the hobbit wasn't standing still. "But I am here
now."

"Thanks goodness for that." said Strider unloading his sword and pack.

"Amen." said Harry with a smile.

Elrond and Gandalf looked at the youth in confusion and then each other.

"I'm tired, I can't wait to sit down." said Pippin sinking to the floor, exhausted by both the traveling
and dodging Gandalf's staff.

"You don't like to focus on one thing too long do you?" said Harry with a smile as he leaned on his
spear.

"He never does." said Sam rolling his eyes. “He flits around like a hummingbird.”

"Come along then, I'll take you to your comrade." said Elrond with a smile to the weary travelers.

They followed him in silence, the hobbits and Harry looking side to side eagerly as they took in the
beauty and the majesty of Rivendell to where Frodo was resting. When they arrived at Frodo’s
room and saw him lying on the bed, Harry wouldn't have called it resting.

Frodo had sweat pouring off his temple and his breathing was far from steady. His hands were
clenched onto the bed clothes and he was writhing under the thick blankets. Harry had to flinch
when he saw him.

"It was a good thing that he got here in time, another few hours, he would have been lost." said
Gandalf somberly.
Harry looked at him quickly. Had the opal helped? Or did it not make any difference?

"What's wrong with him?" asked Pippin faintly.

"The point of that Nazgul's sword is making it's way into his heart." said Arwen, helping her father lift the dressings on Frodo's wounds. "But with the aid of my father, he is beginning to mend. It won't be long until he is well again."

"Thank goodness." said Harry. Suddenly a low growl came from the three hobbits and Harry laughed.

"I was waiting for that." said Strider with a smile. "Not stopping for lunch and meager meals along the way...I'm surprised it hadn't happen sooner."

"We didn't want to stop." said Sam shortly.

"Speak for yourself, I was getting a mite hungry." said Pippin.

"I threw you two apples." said Strider with a roll of his eyes.

"The second one bounced off his head and landed in a stream, he couldn't catch it." said Harry with a laugh. "I can fix that growling stomach." He looked over to Arwen, "Where's your kitchens? I'll go make them some food."

"You cook?" asked Elrond with an amused smile. "You appear to be more of a young warrior in training than a cook."

"Man of few talents." said Harry with a smirk.

Arwen laughed softly. "I will show you the way."

After Harry had left, although not before Strider sent him a pointed look and Harry nodded with earnest, Elrond turned towards Strider "Strange youth."

"Strange, yes, but...he's very endearing." said Strider with a fond smile.

"How far away is his country?" said Gandalf. "I don't recollect seeing a youth like him before and if he needs my help in getting home..."

"Nowhere in Middle Earth, or in the surrounding lands." said Strider.

"How did he get here?" asked Elrond frowning slightly.

"He does not know. He just remembers getting knocked out after he had supper and he ended up in what sounds like the Shire." said Strider, "I had to fish him out of the river as I patrolled those lands."

"Did he give you any clues? Perhaps it is a land that we elves have heard of." said Elrond.

"He mentioned a city called Lundun." said Strider.

"Well Elrond?" said Gandalf, the name meant nothing to him, and did not stir any memory he could recall.

"I have heard of a place called that. But it was quite a long time ago." said Elrond. "He told me of it." he looked at Gandalf.
Gandalf looked away, his eyes misting slightly.

Meanwhile, Harry had followed Arwen down into back of Elrond's house and walked into a wide and open room.

"This is some kitchen." said Harry in an awed whisper.

"We have venison over there, and vegetables and fruits over there." said Arwen gesturing around the room, "If you need something, Willadow, our cook will help you."

An elven lady with snow white hair turned and smiled at Harry.

"Thanks." said Harry with a bright smile to the both of them. He turned and walked towards one of the smaller pieces of venison, hanging above his head. No, I'd best use this bigger piece, Strider might be hungry as well. thought Harry.

"May I have this?" said Harry.

"Of course, you may use whatever you wish." said Willadow with a smile as she continued to pluck the grapes off the stems.

He took the medium sized piece of meat down and began to carve it up. Now to come up with something, with all this stuff.

Some time later, Sam, Merry, and Pippin were sitting beside Frodo's bedside, while Strider, Elrond Gandalf discussed about Harry's strange homeland and the mysterious jewels that he possessed.

"I don't trust them." said Strider. "They don't seem natural."

"They are as natural as the air we breathe." said Gandalf. "If they are what I think they are."

"I think so as well." said Elrond nodding.

"What do you mean?" asked Strider.

Elrond and Gandalf looked between each other and then back to the Ranger.

"They were once owned by the great king Meandenbor, an ancient, powerful wizard." said Elrond.

"Then how did Harry get them?" asked Sam. "He didn't mention any other wizard but Gandalf."

"I'd like to know that too." said Harry coming into the room with a large tray.

"That didn't take you long." said Pippin standing up quickly and taking a plate, his face breaking into a wide smile.

"Working at The Prancing Pony helped with that little skill." said Harry handing Sam and Merry their plates. "You hungry, Strider? I've got you a plate."

"What did you make?" asked Strider.

"Venison with um....Blackberry Wine sauce." said Harry looking hesistantly at Elrond.
"Uh...Willadow helped me find your wine cellar, and she pointed out the least favored wine."

"Very good." said Elrond. "Though you are welcome to whatever we have here."

"I didn't want to push it." said Harry with a smile.


"Mmmf, this is delicious." said Pippin shoveling the food into his mouth.

Elrond looked at the young hobbits as they ate with fervor. He looked at Strider who also was putting a fork to his mouth. "He's right." said Strider with his eyes shut and a smile on his face.

Elrond looked at the plates in disbelief. He looked at Strider. "Might I?"

"Here take mine." said Harry holding his plate up to Elrond. Elrond shifted the three juicy blackberries off to one side, and placed a forkfull of venison in his mouth. He usually only ate venison if his guests were omniverous and at dinner, but he did want to try this young man's cooking. His mouth was ablazed with the succulent flavor of juicy blackberries and the sweet taste of wine dancing with the venison.

"How old are you?" said Elrond looking at Harry intently.

"Um, I'm still fifteen." said Harry.

"I still can't believe you can cook the way you do at your age." said Strider taking a bite of his own venison.

"Had to learn really young." said Harry,

"Might I see those jewels that you have acquired?" asked Gandalf as he took a bite of the venison on Strider's plate. "If you don't mind."

"Sure, here you go." said Harry, he placed both jewels in Gandalf's hand.

Gandalf inspected them carefully, holding them up to the light.

"They are his." said Elrond.

"Are you sure?" asked Strider.

"I cannot see them, that is proof in itself." said Elrond. "Those jewels can only be seen by either a wizard, or king. I'm not a king of elves, so I cannot see them."

"So how come Strider can see them?" asked Merry.

"We will tell you at another time." said Gandalf absently.

"So are they safe to use?" asked Harry. "Strider doesn't trust them very much."

"Very safe." said Gandalf. "But guard them carefully. I know of two people who would dearly love to possess them all."

"Saruman and Sauron, I'll wouldn't spend time to wonder." said Strider.

"Precisely. If either of them find out that they've been found, they won't rest till that have both the
ring and the jewels." said Gandalf.

"I'm sort of regretting using the amethyst on those Nazgul things now. But how come they didn't go and find the opal Frodo had? All they would have to do is follow the music." said Harry.

"What music?" asked Strider.

"The music they play when I put them somewhere beside the pouch on my hip." said Harry. "I didn't want to tell you, just in case, you know...didn't want you thinking I was mad."

Elrond and Gandalf looked at each other swiftly, but then turned back to Harry. "We may have just arrived at a way for you to get home, but it will be quite challenging." said Elrond.

"My life is just one casual stroll after another." said Harry shaking his head. "What's the point in having a boring life I suppose. What do I have to do?"

"I would advise you to find the other eleven stones that are scattered about." said Elrond. "By bringing the jewels of the Great Meandenbor out of hiding and then bringing them back here."

"Why bring them back here?" asked Harry.

"I will show you." said Elrond. "Aragorn, you'd best follow as well, it might help you in the future. One may never know."

Uncertainly, Harry and Strider followed Elrond and Gandalf out of the room and outside into the bright sunshine.

"This way." said Elrond leading the three men off into the eastern side of the elven valley. Soon they found themselves beside a gentle steam traveling down the side of the large hill and a large open, what loooked like to Harry, a gazebo. Elrond stopped short and ushered the two younger men onward.

"Go." said Elrond. "And pay your respects."

Harry moved forward slowly and saw that there was a cherry wood coffin, with a crystal clear cover over it, serving as a see-through lid. Inside, he saw what seemed to be a man sleeping peacefully underneath it.

He was a tall man, wearing a flowing gold cloak with red ornate embroidery. He had a short blonde beard and curly hair hiding beneath a golden crown upon his hair. Strange thing is, there was no jewels in his crown but quite a few holes could be seen. Harry felt something stir in his mind, as well as his heart, what was this feeling? And his head felt slightly heavy.

"That is King Meandenbor." said Elrond.

"He was my mentor a very long time ago. One of the best teachers I had ever had. He taught me, with great power comes great temptation, and I must resist it's alluring offers." said Gandalf, a tear trickling down his nose. "He also taught me, that while I may hold fears, I must also face them."

"This is his final resting place, though he would have wanted to have been buried in his own kingdom, but that was not possible." said Elrond.

"Why not?" asked Harry.
"His kingdom is now known as Mordor." said Gandalf sadly. "Alas, it is not the lush paradise it once was, his murderers destroyed it."

Harry looked down at old and beloved king, something didn't make sense. "He looks like he's only....been gone for a few days."

Elrond gave a dry chuckle, "The clear substance that separates us from him is diamond. Our final present to him was do give him a peaceful rest, the dwarves molded the coffin and Gandalf enchanted the casket so that time would not stake its claim on him."

Harry's eyes rested on the crown and the different shaped holes around the base of it. "Do I put the jewels inside now?"

"No, keep them, you may need them. But when you find all thirteen, bring them here, if you are able. That way, he will be whole again." said Elrond.

"He loved them, did he?" asked Harry. "But how does bringing the jewels here, help me get back home?"

"There is one jewel, it is said that when it comes in contact with the others, it will grant the wish of whomever owns them. It should be able to get you home."

"And I'll just bet, it'll be the last one I find." said Harry rolling his eyes while he pulled out the small jewels in his hand and looked at them. "What have I got to lose, I sure ain't coming up with a way home."

"Good lad." said Gandalf with a smile.

"If he was so powerful, how did someone kill him?" asked Harry.

"I am not sure how they managed it, but I can remember that terrible day. But alas it's a long tale, especially as I would rather you know more about him, let's have a seat." said Gandalf. They walked over to another gazebo and sat down on the cool stone benches. Gandalf took out his long pipe and lit it with the tip of his staff.

I gotta get me one of those, thought Harry looking at the staff. That would make this whole adventure so much easier.

"Well, it was a long time ago, even farther back in time than the Last Alliance, and long before the Dark Lord Sauron forged the one ring. The land of Mordor never used to look like the poisonous and forbidding realm it is." said Gandalf thinking deeply. "It used to be as lush and green as this country." he said looking around Rivendell.

"He had ruled over the entire Middle Earth for many centuries, giving aid to the Ents and the Entwives."

"The what?" said Harry with a raised brow.

"Tree herders." said Strider quickly.

How can you herd a tree? thought Harry shaking his head. It's not like they're sheep or something like that!

Gandalf continued. "When the men had a problem with land dispersion or who owned what found sheep, or the dwarves who couldn't ever seem to fix on a price on their toys and armor, they would
see the King. The elves wouldn't require help for the most part but he would give it when and if they needed it. He'd stay busy convincing dragons to stay in their mountains and not venturing far from their homes, keeping the goblins in their caves and offering travelers a safer route to take on their journeys."

"How did he do that?" asked Harry.

"He made pathways, and placed an enchantment on them in order to keep them protected." said Elrond, "since his death, the paths have become overrun with thorns that seem to regrow the moment you cut them, or avalanches that seem endless."

"But while Meandenbor was alive, all of Middle Earth was at peace, lands prospered and families flourished. Even the goblins were beginning to become socialable, and that in itself told everyone that it was a time of great peace.

"He was a great mentor to the wizards, and a ruler. His power and kindness knew no bounds and he was dearly loved by his subjects."

"But what about the Kings of Gondor, and Rohan?" asked Strider.

"There were none, there was, at the very most, mayors and village leaders and that was enough."

"I don't remember reading about this in any of the old books." said Strider looking confused.

"No, I don't believe you ever would have. For when Sauron and his Dark master killed the king, they removed any traces of him. Except for what people remember, the jewels, and his body, there was nothing left of him. No fond memories of the peace we enjoyed, or the desire to set things back to the way they were." said Elrond.

"Would you want to?" asked Strider.

"Now there are rulers of men, it would be almost impossible to go back to the older days, but the peace of mind, knowing you didn't have to train in the arts of war was a pleasant feeling." said Elrond.

"How did Sauron and...whoever...get the drop on him?" asked Harry.

"Get the what?" asked Gandalf.

"Uh...How did they take Meandenbor off guard?" said Harry, correcting himself.

Gandalf sighed. "It was his birthday, he was going to be three thousand, five hundred and twenty four that day. The Pelennor Fields were bustling with brightly colored tents, banners and tables full of food and presents that seemed to stretch out for miles. No matter how humble, everyone was invited." said Gandalf. "I remember that day so well, I was getting my fireworks organized, all were his favorites, when people began to wonder."

"Wonder about what?" asked Strider.

"Why King Meandenbor hadn't arrived at the party." said Gandalf, "Normally he would have arrived by that time and greeting all the party-goers. People were volunteering to go and escort the king to the festivities. But suddenly, then came a great noise over near where the King's palace was. Suddenly a bright flash of light erupted over the sky, and then it split up into multiple beams of light, shooting off into different directions."
"The jewels." said Strider.

"Correct." said Elrond. "I thought they were lost forever. He must have used the last of his strength to keep those jewels away from them, from falling into the wrong hands. But if you could possibly find them, then perhaps, with their great power..."

"Aside from getting me home, what will happen?" asked Harry.

"You might make the coming battles a might easier." said Gandalf.

"Coming battles?" said Harry staring at Gandalf hard.

"You will be told soon enough." said Gandalf, "though it is not your fight, you don't need to lend us your aid, if you don't wish it."

Harry stood up and walked out of the gazebo, and looked up at the sky.

"What's wrong Harry?" asked Strider.

"Back home I was already what felt like the center part of a war. Now I'm going to be fighting in another, on top of the one that haunts my dreams." said Harry.

Gandalf and Elrond looked between each other, uneasily.

Harry then turned around and had a manic smile on his face. "Where do I sign up?"

"After what you said, you want to fight?" asked Strider in shock.

"My whole life is filled with pain, danger and worry, why start living a peaceful life now?" said Harry with a laugh. "And besides, how would I get home?"

"You could always live here, and after the danger has passed, then you can start your quest to find them." said Elrond. "Being so young, it may be best that you stay."

"But you said that if Saruman or Sauron were to find these," he held out the small stones. "then we'd be in trouble. If I keep on traveling and going about the countryside, it would be harder for him to catch up with me, as opposed to sitting in one place." said Harry with a smile.

Gandalf looked thoughtful. "That would be a safe choice. You would not be able to hold off the hordes of Mordor when Sauron learns that the stones are here." he said looking at Elrond.

"I hope you aren't leaving now." said Elrond standing up and looking at the boy. "We must discuss things further."

"He's staying here, until we get a plan in motion." said Strider quickly. "Best not go off in a hurry, you don't even know where to start."

"Exactly, you'd best stay here for the time being." said Gandalf.

Sirius sat beside Harry's bed as usual, watching him closely. It was only when Remus came around that he would allow himself to rest, and that would be in the bed next to him. Ron was happily in Sirius' old room, his first night in there, they found Ron gaping at the different bikini clad girls. Bill had to cover the pictures in order for Ron to even attempt to get some sleep.
Remus sat in the chair on the other side of Harry's bed, reading from a book on unusual curses, hoping to find something that might help Harry. The Weasley children and Hermione had both spent the day talking to each other in hushed voices and looking grave. Finally Sirius had had enough and sent them from the room.

"IT'S DEPRESSING ENOUGH IN HERE! I DON'T NEED YOU ADDING TO IT!" shouted Sirius.

"You shouldn't have shouted at them." said Remus looking up at him as he slammed the door at the children's backs.

"I was getting tired of it. Especially Hermione. She just won't shut up." said Sirius shortly.

"She's only trying to help." said Remus. "Though I will admit, she needs to lay off the counter-curses. She seems to think that we haven't tried almost everything."

"She's getting close to having her mouth spellotaped." said Sirius.

"Do you want me to keep watch tonight? You should get some rest." said Remus.

"No, I'm fine, you'd better get some sleep. I'll be fine." said Sirius.

"If you're sure, need anything, just sing out." said Remus closing his book.

Sirius sat in the candlelit room and watched Harry's chest rise and fall as he breathed. Like everynight for over two weeks, he silently prayed for Harry to wake up.

Sirius' eyes began to droop slightly. Then he heard a sort of tinkling chime coming from out of nowhere.

"Wh...what is that?" said Sirius looking around quickly. Then a bright flash came from the foot of Harry's bed, slowly climbing up to Harry's head, Sirius looked quickly and saw something extremely odd, once the light was gone.

"Harry? Why are you....why do you have a crown?" asked Sirius in a whisper.

Soon, Dumbledore and Remus came rushing into the room.

"What was that?" asked Remus.

"Look, on Harry's head." said Sirius. "I'm not too sure where that thing came from."

"Dumbledore?" said Remus. "What is that?"

Dumbledore looked at the crown and his face paled.

"It can't be...it's impossible..." said Dumbledore weakly.

"What is it?" asked Sirius.

"I've seen that crown before, but..." said Dumbledore. "I haven't seen it, in so long."
Harry spent his days wandering aimlessly between the libraries of Rivendell, the paths in that peaceful valley, and the kitchens.

In the kitchens he had experimented and created several different treats and dishes, all of which Merry and Pippin were happy to taste test for him. They kept popping into the kitchen and if they weren't busy nicking food from Elrond's normal cook, they were sneaking some of the food he was cooking.

"Quick before he looks." whispered Pippin as Merry snatched up some candied chestnuts.

"Why not just take the bowl?" asked Harry from where he was busy cutting vegetables and sliding them into a large pot and stirring it's contents.

Both of the hobbits froze in place, looked at each other, grabbed the bowl full of chestnuts and ran swiftly out of the room.

"They seem to love your food." said Willadow with a smile.

"I think they take mine only cause they know you'd take after them." said Harry with a laugh.

"Only if they took Lord Elrond's food like last time." said Willadow with a laugh. "I think young Peregrin Took is just getting back to sitting down again."

When Harry wasn't cooking, another pastime he enjoyed was exploring the valley he was now staying in. He'd lay on the banks of the slow moving river and slept peacefully until night would fall, or until Strider came out to fetch him. But for the most part, wherever his paths in Rivendell took him, he'd always find himself wandering over to where King Meandenbor rested. He'd sit with his back to the rest of the valley and just meditate on the casket, and it's owner.

"I'm not too sure I can do this." said Harry looking down at the body of the king. "How am I supposed to find those jewels when they could be anywhere?"
"That is why you need this." said a deep voice.

Harry started and glanced around nervously, he didn't think anyone else was following him. He looked around but couldn't find the owner of the voice. But he looked back at the casket, and saw a small compass lying on the top of the diamond cover.

"What's this?" said Harry.

But the voice didn't return. Harry looked at the small compass, at least it looked like one. It had a needle like a compass, but there was no north, south, east, or west directions on it. On the crystal face, it had what looked like a rising or setting sun etched into it. He turned it over slowly and saw a small golden inscription.

To find my power, in the helping hour.
Take heart and follow the course.
And make everlasting power yours.

Harry looked at the compass and the inscription with an uncertain look.

"How can this thing help me?" asked Harry out loud.

He took the compass with him as he left the gazebo and headed back into Elrond's house. He made his way swiftly to the elven library and took out the books that Elrond had written about the king and his jewels.

He looked in every book Elrond had, but he couldn't find anything that sounded like the compass that now laid in his hand. Should he trust it? His mind told him he would be a fool to do so, but his heart told him to go with it.

"What could it hurt, and besides, I'll ask Gandalf about it at dinner. That reminds me, I need to make something special for the occasion." said Harry to himself.

For indeed it was a special occasion, not only had Frodo finally woken up and was healed almost completely, it was told that several representatives of the different races of Middle Earth were
going to arrive and soon they would discuss the fate of the ring that Frodo bore to Rivendell.

While Willadow made different dishes that appealed to elves, men and dwarves, Elrond had come to Harry earlier in the day, while Harry was dipping his toes in the gently flowing water.

"Would you care to make a dish from your own country?" said Elrond with a smile.

"I'm not too sure if I can." said Harry scratching the back of his head. "Some of the ingredients I would need, might not be that readily available."

"Like what for example?" said Elrond.

"Garlic?" said Harry.

"I believe we have that in our gardens, it is a good healing bulb." said Elrond. "Willadow uses it sometimes for seasonings in her food but not all that often."

"Oregano?" said Harry.

"We have that as well." said Elrond. "Anything else?"

"Guess not, I know you have the rest. It'll take me a while to remember how to do it and how to make it from absolute scratch."

He headed down into kitchens after he pocketed the small compass. He walked into the kitchens, greeted Willadow and wrapped an apron around his middle. He grabbed the ingredients he would need and began to make what he had intended to make.

As the representatives arrived, a faint smell came from the northern part of Elrond's house and it tickled their noses.
"Greeting Legolas, I hope you had a safe and peaceful journey?" said Elrond with a smile.

"It was pleasant enough, what is that aroma on the winds?" said Legolas as he looked around trying to discover the origin of the smell.

"A visitor staying here is making a dish from his own land. What is your opinion thus far?" asked Elrond.

"It is...different...I cannot wait to see what it actually looks like." said Legolas. Then he unsaddled his horse and strode proudly into the Great Hall.

A few hours later, a small band of short yet stout bearded men came marching up to Elrond's steps. Elrond, was already outside, seeing them coming down the small path along the cliffside.

"Ah! Master Elrond, we've arrived at last!" said one of the older looking men.

"Greetings Master Dwarf." said Elrond kindly. "How was the journey?"

"It was long, but not uneventful." said one of the younger dwarves. "Had a run in with a few goblins who tried to ambush us."

"Are you injured?" asked Elrond with concern as he looked at each of the dwarves before him.

"No, we are fine, our injuries were shallow and mere bruises." said one of the dwarves. “But I fear the goblins might have a few mortal wounds back where they lay.” he added with a chuckle.

"Well, at the very least, please rest until the day after tomorrow, we will hold council then. Tonight, we will have a feast to welcome you all to Rivendell." said Elrond.

"Sounds good." said one of the dwarves gruffly. They stomped heavily on the steps into Elrond's house.

Elrond turned to follow the dwarves inside, when he heard a galloping of hoofs coming towards
him. *It seems all the guests are arriving in the same day, very good.* He saw a strong looking man come riding up to him, a shield upon his back, with a sword and horn on either side. He climbed off his horse and opened his mouth to speak, but Elrond cut him off.

"Boromir son of Denethor, I believe?" said Elrond.

"Yes Lord Elrond." said Boromir, his eyes showing slight surprise.

"Welcome to Rivendell, your horse will be well cared for, please rest here, we will hold council the day after next." said Elrond gallantly.

"Thank you." he said trying to sound humble and followed Elrond inside the Great Hall.

Merry and Pippin made their daily raid on the kitchen when they saw what Harry was cutting up on a wooden cutting board.

"What is that, Harry?" said Merry putting his nose close to the large circle of bread, red paste and cheese.

"It's called a pizza back where I come from. I just hope it turned out okay." said Harry as he lifted a slice up to mouth and bit into it. He chewed slowly. "Hmm, it could use a bit more garlic in the crust, what do you think?" said Harry slicing up another two thin pieces and handed them to the two small hobbits.

The two hobbits looked at the thin slices and gingerly smelled them, looked at each other and then took a small bite.

"What do you think?" repeated Harry. He was answered when the two of them picked up the entire slice and ate them greedily.

"I take it, it's fine." said Harry with a smile. "I'll just add some of this to the next batch." He took a small green herb and began to dice it up. Once Merry and Pippin had finished eating the rest of it, he handed them a sprig of the herb to each of them.
"Take it and chew it, it's parsley, it will counteract the garlic." said Harry with a smile. "Trust me, people will thank you for it, if they've ever had garlic before."

Later on that evening, Harry walked into what the elves called a party, but it wasn't anything like the parties he had been to at Hogwarts.

The music was slow, he could hear three different songs going on, and they didn't have much to do with each other. People were telling stories about wars, and dragon plunders on one end of the room and the other end people were eating and drinking wine.

"Hello Harry." said a voice coming from his left. Harry turned and saw Strider, walking arm and arm with Arwen.

"Hey Strider." said Harry happily. "Lady Arwen." he said with a bow to Arwen.

"Merry and Pippin brought out your dish, though after they got after it with the help of Sam and somewhat Frodo, there wasn't much left." said Arwen with a laugh.

"I took some, as did Elrond, it was delicious." said Strider with a smile. "I've never had something like that before."

I'm glad I added the extra parsley thought Harry as he smelled Strider's breath and did not detect any garlic. "Have you seen Gandalf or Elrond? I wanted to ask them about something." said Harry looking around.

"They are over there, but you may want to wait, they seem to wish privacy." said Arwen pointing slowly over to a secluded corner.

"Alright." said Harry nodding.

Harry walked slowly around the room and took in the different assortment of people. He was introduced, by Strider and Arwen, to different people. Legolas of Mirkwood, who seemed unable to remove his gaze from Harry's eyes. To Boromir, who merely sniffed in disgust when Strider spoke his name. Then finally Gimli, who shook Harry's hand warmly and told him that he found
Harry's pizza good, but a little flat and without meat.

"A dwarf needs red meat in order to keep up one's strength." he said proudly.

“I'll keep that in mind if I cook for you again, Mr. Gimli.” said Harry with a smile.

"Harry!" shouted Pippin, "Come here, we want to introduce you to somebody!" he then began to drag Harry off to one of the circles where stories were being told.

"Legolas, why were staring at him?" asked Strider as he grabbed Legolas' elbow.

"His eyes, they...looked like the leaves of Mirkwood." said Legolas to Strider. "Is he a Half-Elf?"

"No, he is of the race of men." said Arwen.

"A shame, he'd of made a fine husband for my sister." said Legolas.

Arwen and Strider looked at him.

"My father will not allow anyone but an elf to marry my sister." said Legolas quickly. “He is fair enough, and she enjoys a graceful meal.”

"I hope she finds her true love." said Arwen with a smile. “No matter what race they are.”

"What demeanor does he posses?" asked Legolas.

"He is...different." said Strider. "You'll like him."

The night went on, and Harry had been introduced to several different people that were staying in
Rivendell, Elrond, Strider and Arwen introduced him to the different dwarves and elves, while the hobbits introduced him to Bilbo Baggins.

"Hey Bilbo, this is the person we told you about." said Merry.

"Ah! So you are the young man that they had met in Bree?" said Bilbo taking Harry by the hand and shaking it warmly.

"Yes sir." said Harry with a smile.

"Glad to make your acquaintance." said Bilbo. "Imagine, all this fuss over a simple bauble."

"From what I've been told about it, it's far from simple." said Harry. Harry looked over and saw Gandalf and Elrond come out from their secluded corner. "Excuse me."

He made his way slowly over to where Gandalf and Elrond were. "I've got a question."

"Yes lad?" said Elrond with a smile.

"Do you have any idea what this is?" he asked and handed Elrond. Elrond took it in his hand and examined it carefully.

"It has the king's sign on the crystal face." said Elrond, "I've never seen it before."

"Where did you find it?" asked Gandalf.

Harry told them how he discovered it.

Elrond looked at the compass thoughtfully. "I'm not sure what to say to you, but I recognize the symbol so it was a possession of King Meandenbor."
“Though, how it came to just appear...it is not something I've heard of before.” said Gandalf slowly. “Least not nothing in this part of the world.”

“But what purpose it serves, according to the back of this, it has something to do with the jewels. Perhaps it will lead you better then the music will.” said Elrond

"I hope so, I don't want to have to strain my ears to listen for it.” said Harry with a smile.

"Harry!” said Merry running up to him. "Come on! We told Bilbo you could sing and he wants to hear you!"

"Then you can tell a story!” said Pippin.

"Seriously, you don't want me singing again.” said Harry trying to pull out of both of their grasps.

"Don't be silly! Come on!” said Pippin.

"You'll want to hear this.” said Strider walking up to Elrond and Gandalf. "It shocked me when I heard it the first time."

"What is the song called?” asked Bilbo.

"Well, uh...trust me it's one you don't know." said Harry shaking his head. "But it's called 'Can You Feel the Love Tonight'"

"Then sing!” said Pippin.

Harry sighed, but began to sing. Everyone else that had been either listening to another story or song, or doing the actual storytelling or singing, suddenly stopped and turned towards the youth.

Elrond and Gandalf stared at Harry as he sang, while Strider chuckled at everyone's awe-filled eyes.
"Like I said, it will take you off guard." said Strider with a smile.

"How can he have a voice like that." asked Arwen in shock.

"I don't know, but he's gifted." said Strider.

Once he was done singing, several people applauded him and Harry blushed, much like he did at the Prancing Pony.

"Now a story!" said Pippin sitting on the floor.

"A story?" said Harry.

"Yeah, a tale from your home!" said Merry.

"I'm not very good with stories. And beside, from what I can gather, yours are all about history, I'm not all that clear on my country's history and I can't tell a thrilling tale to save my soul."

"Then tell us about your life!" said Pippin.

"You...you wouldn't be able to...well...understand..." said Harry.

"Give it a try." said Bilbo kindly.

"Well....um....this may take a while...." said Harry.

"We have all night." said Elrond with a smile.

"...well...I grew up in town called Little Whinging." said Harry.
And on and on into the night, he stopped at some intervals to further explain some things, mostly things in the muggle world and a few things about the magical one, but they soon understood what he was talking about. Towards the end of Harry telling them about his third year, he stopped.

"I think that's enough for right now." said Harry with a smile, as he looked at how late it had gotten.

"Wait! Did you go and live with Sirius?" asked Pippin.

"No, but I hope I will someday." said Harry.

"Did they find Peter?" asked Merry.

"No, not yet." said Harry.

"That's enough questions, it is time for us to retire." said Elrond quietly.

Grumbling, the hobbits went to their rooms, and Harry followed. Elrond stood back with Gandalf and Strider.

"To think, all that, and one get's the feeling he is still holding back." said Elrond.

"Indeed. He's being truthful, but he's hiding the pain he felt." said Gandalf.

"And most of that pain we probably cannot even begin to fathom." said Strider.

The next day, Harry sat quietly beside the river and looked at the compass. It was pointing eastward out of the valley.
"Well, that tells me which direction to head, but when do I leave?" said Harry out loud.

"Harry?" said a voice coming from behind him. Harry turned and it was Elrond.

"Yes sir?" he asked as he stood up quickly.

"Would you like to lend us your voice in the council meeting?" said Elrond with a smile. "Perhaps the ways of your world could help us in ours."

"Gee, I don't know, I don't have anything to contribute to it." said Harry. "Yours and mine are a bit different."

"Perhaps, and yet, perhaps not." said Elrond, "I have found that wisdom can come from the most unlikely inspirations."

"Oh...well...okay, I'll come." said Harry with uncertainty.

He followed Elrond, all the way into an open stone area with wooden chairs. Every one of the representatives were seated facing a square pedestal. Harry took a seat beside Frodo and waited until it started.

For several hours they debated the history of Mordor and the One Ring. Harry noticed however that neither Gandalf nor Elrond spoke of King Meandenbor. Harry took the initiative and also refrained from discussing the matter, but he, over the course of those hours, learned a bit more about what was going to happen or might happen.

"Bring forth the ring, Frodo." said Elrond looking at the hobbit to Harry's left.

Frodo looked around round nervously, Harry looked at him.

"Do you want me to put it over there?" asked Harry. Frodo held the ring out slowly for Harry to take it.
Harry reached to take the ring and place it on the pedestal, but an electric shock ran through his body and caused him to slam back into his own chair.

"Ow....I'm never going to learn that lesson am I?" said Harry weakly with a laugh.

"What do you mean?" said Gandalf who was taken aback by the flash of light.

"It happened once before, in the Prancing Pony. Sorry Frodo, you're on your own." said Harry with a nervous laugh as he rubbed his slightly burnt fingers.

Frodo looked at the ring in his hand, but slowly walked over and placed it heavily on the square block of stone. He walked back to his chair and heaved a sigh, with a peaceful look on his face.

Silence ensued. The people that were gathered stared intently at the ring, the elves held a calculating look, while the dwarves winced slightly when they gazed upon it. Harry noticed however, that one man, Boromir was looking at it with a sort of possessed longing. Harry reached into his pouch and felt around, until his hand came upon the amethyst. If this Boromir was going to try something, he'd have to go through Harry first.

Waiting for the man to make the first move.

"It is a gift!" Boromir stood up. "A gift to the foes of Mordor!"

"Funny, I see it as a curse." said Harry. Elrond looked at him, he had a small, proud smile.

"Look what disaster it had brought to the Shire, several farmers killed trying to protect their lands from those black riders. The gateman of Bree was crushed as they forced their way into the town, and Frodo was stabbed. A gift? I think not." said Harry. *When the hell did I start talking fancy? Must be rubbing off on me...*

"What would a child know?" said the man dismissively. "Why should we not use this ring? Long has my father, the Steward of Gondor, kept the forces of Mordor at bay! By the blood of our people, are your lands kept safe!" he gestured to the surrounding council members.
"Give Gondor the weapon of the enemy!" his face grew into a great smile, a hopeful smile. "Let us use it against him!"

"You cannot wield it!" said Strider. "None of us can. It answers to Sauron alone, it has no other master."

Harry smiled over at Strider. *Thank goodness he isn't like him.*

"And what, would a *Ranger* know of this matter?" said Boromir snidely.

"More than yourself knows." said Harry with a frown.

"He is no mere Ranger, he is Aragorn, son of Arathorn. You *owe* him your allegiance." said Legolas standing swiftly up.

The man looked slowly over to Strider, who looked like he would rather the information go unknown.

"Aragorn?" he said weakly. "This is Isilidurs' heir?"

Harry looked over to Strider quickly, *Wait a minute,* he thought *Isilidur, wasn't he the....oh my god.....*

"And heir to the throne of Gondor." added Legolas.

Strider, or Aragorn, motioned the elf to sit and spoke in the same language he and Arwen spoke often. Legolas did not take his eyes off the Steward's son, but sat down slowly.

"Gondor has no king, Gondor needs no king." said Boromir fiercely as he went back to sit.

Harry clenched his hand around the amethyst tighter, just in case that he tried to make a grab for
"The Ring cannot be destroyed, Gimli, son of Gloin by any craft we here possess." said Elrond looking around the room, but stopped for a moment at Harry. "The Ring was made in the fires of Mount Doom. Only there can it be unmade. It must be taken deep into Mordor and cast it back into the fiery chasm from whence it came."

A silence fell upon them all.

"One of you must do this." said Elrond.

Another, but thicker silence fell. You couldn't even hear the wind blow, or the leaves falling gently to the ground.
"One does not simply walk into Mordor." said Boromir quietly. "It's Black Gates are guarded by more than just orcs. There is an evil there, that does not sleep. And the Great Eye is always watching. Tis a barren wasteland, riddled with fire and ash and dust the very air you breathe is a poisonous fume. Not with ten thousand men could you do this, it is folly."

*Sounds like London in the old days.* thought Harry with a slight smirk.

"Have you heard nothing Lord Elrond has said?" said Legolas to the doubtful man. "The Ring must be destroyed!"

"And I suppose you're the one to do it?" said Gimli with a deep voiced sneer.

"He didn't say that Mr. Gimli!" said Harry quickly. "He was only saying what we needed to do!"

But Gimli didn't take notice.

"And if we fail what then?" Boromir stood up again. "What will happen if Sauron takes back what is his?"

Harry groaned, *this isn't going very well.*

Then Gandalf began to join in the fray and shout to the man who was causing all the ruckus. Harry looked over to Frodo who was looking at the ring with a horror filled look and then he stood up.

"I will take it!" Frodo shouted, but his words could reach no one.
Harry took his hand, noticing that there was no shock crashing through his body. "Are you sure?"

Frodo turned towards him. "I am."

"Well then, lets quiet down the circus, shall we?" Harry said with a sad smile. He took the amethyst jewel from his pouch and held it high.

*Ka-Crack!* A bolt of lightning came down and struck the jewel in Harry's hand. The council and Elrond looked over at Harry in shock.

What Harry didn't know, is for a brief instant, he gave off a soft golden light, and briefly wore a red cape a white silk shirt with a rising sun embroidered in sparkling thread on the breast. Harry lowered his arm and the glow, with the image faded.

"Frodo has something to say." said Harry with a smile. "Go on, Frodo."

Frodo took a breath. "I will take the ring to Mordor."

The council looked at the small halfling with wonder in their eyes.

"Though, I do not know the way." said Frodo weakly.

Gandalf gave a sad smile. "I will help you bear this burden, Frodo Baggins, as long as it is yours to bear." he walked over to where Frodo was standing.

Aragorn stood up. "By my life or death, I can protect you, I will." he went and knelt in front of Frodo. "You will have my sword."

"And you will have my bow." said the Legolas

"And my ax." said Gimli. Legolas rolled his eyes as the dwarf came over to join them.
Boromir walked slowly over to them.

"You carry the fate of us all little one. If this indeed the rule of the council, then Gondor will see it done."

"Hey!" came a shout from behind Harry's seat. They turned and saw Sam scurrying out from behind a bush and rushing to stand beside Frodo with his arms crossed.

Elrond looked shocked at first, but he smiled.

"Mr. Frodo isn't going anywhere without me." said Sam firmly.

"No, I think it is hardly possible to separate you two, when he is invited to a secret council meeting and you are not." said Elrond with a smirk. But he was in for another surprise as Harry could see two more curly headed rascals from behind two pillars.

"Oi! We're coming too!" said Merry.

Elrond looked at them and as they ran past him and looked around, expecting more to pop up from the ground.

"You'll have to send us home tied up in a sack to stop us." said Merry.

"Anyway," said Pippin. "You need people with intelligence on this sort of...mission...quest...thing..."

Gandalf looked up and shook his head.

Merry turned to him. "Well that rules you out Pippin."

"Nine companions, so be it, you shall be the Fellowship of the Ring." said Elrond with a smile.
"Right!" said Pippin, "Where are we going?"

Harry laughed out loud. "You aren't heading to Happy Valley, I can tell you right now." said Harry with a smile.

"Aren't you going?" asked Pippin quickly.

"Do you wish to go along as well?" asked Elrond. Both he and Aragorn hoped he would say no. "It may be easier to find what you seek, if you wait till the danger passes."

"If I can go along with them, I would rather go now. That way, I can help out, and find the stones at the same time." said Harry. "Is there room in the company?"

"More than enough." said Merry happily.

"Then I'll go, I'll be more useful there, than I will here." said Harry.

"But remember." said Elrond coming close to him. "Of what you yourself bear. You carry as great a treasure as the Ring is."

"I'll be careful." said Harry.

"Very well, you leave the morning after next. Prepare yourselves." said Elrond. "Come with me, Harry."

Harry followed Elrond over to a part of Rivendell that Harry hadn't explored yet. It was a forge where there were three elves working tirelessly forging swords.

"I asked them to craft you a sword. Here." he said lifted a sword carefully off a cloth covered stone table. The blade was a light silver and the handle was a dark twisted metal with emeralds on the handle.
"It's called King's Wrath, Verlairion." said Elrond placing the sword in a ornate leather scabbard. "Use them well. Aragorn will teach you how to further your skills."

"Thank you." said Harry quietly. He held the sword high and watched it as it glinted in the sunlight. "I'll take care of it."
Sirius and Remus stared at the bed Harry was sleeping on, he had still not woken up or even turned in his sleep. His wounds that he occurred in Hogwarts were still unhealed, but the others that seemed to crop up with no explanation were healing just as suddenly as they had come. And from time to time he seemed to just seize right the before them as if he were being electrocuted.

"I wish this was just a dream, and Harry's was just fine." said Sirius sadly.

"Me too." said Remus.

Dumbledore then came in he looked as if age had finally caught up with him, and sunk into a nearby chair, leaning back and sighing heavily. "It is fortunate that Harry is here."

"Why? What happened?" asked Sirius looking over to Dumbledore, he didn't think he could take any more bad news as of that moment.

"The Weasley's home had just been subjected to a raid, in the search for Harry." said Dumbledore sadly.

"What? Is the Burrow okay?" asked Remus.

"Umbridge burnt it to the ground." said Dumbledore looking down at Harry. "It seems she wants him that badly."

"I can't believe this." said Sirius angrily. "Of what bloody harm is it to keep Harry around? Why do they want to just out kill him?"

"I do not know what the Ministry fears when this happens. But they will not get him, I can assure you. Only certain members of the Order, the Weasley children and Hermione knows he is here. They would never sell him out. Thankfully the children are all here and they will remain here, I fear what could happen if they were in Hogwarts." said Dumbledore.

"That's no problem, but you're sure that no one can find Harry here?" said Sirius earnestly.

"No one. Not unless I tell them myself where to find him." said Dumbledore walking up to where Harry's head rested and placed a old hand on Harry's young brow. "And I will never do so."

Sirius and Remus looked at him somberly.

"Both of you go and get some rest, I'll sit with him. It's the very least I owe him." said Dumbledore. "If something happens, I will fetch you." he added to Sirius’ face full of worry.

"Come on Padfoot, you need to get something to eat anyway." said Remus as he gently pulled Sirius towards the door.

Dumbledore conjured a squashy purple armchair and placed it close to the headboard of Harry's bed. He reached down and took Harry's unmoving hand in his own.

"Come back Harry, I'm begging you. There's so much, I haven't told you, and so much I need to apologize for." he said as tears fell down his crooked nose and disappeared into his snow white beard.

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Harry woke up early the next morning and began filling his pack with a separate set of elvish clothes, choosing to wear the outfit that Strider gave him. Harry wrapped his new swordbelt around his waist and secured the sword in the scabbard.

He hurried down into the kitchens and gathered up all the hardiest fruits, breads, nuts and spices he could gather to take with him on the journey.

"Are you hoping that you'll get some game along the way?" said Willadow with a smile.

"Am I crazy to do so?" asked Harry quickly.

"Crazy?" asked Willadow.

"Uh...foolish?" said Harry with an apologetic smile.

"Oh, well, not necessarily, once you get past Gondor though, game is hard to come by." said Willadow, but by that time, you'll be past the Golden Wood, they'll give you some Lembas bread."

"What's that?" said Harry.

"It's an elvish bread that doesn't spoil for a long time and a single mouthful will sustain you for the entire day." said Willadow. "I would make it, but unfortunately, Merry and Pippin both ate over half our crop of blackberries and honey."

"Doesn't surprise me." said Harry with a smile.

"Here take some of this eleven water with you, it will always stay fresh and even a small sip will refresh you completely." said Willadow handing Harry several large crystal bottles.

"Thanks, this should last the entire trip." said Harry with a smile.

"When you get to Lothlorien, they'll fill the bottles before you leave." said Willadow.

"Thanks again." said Harry with a smile. Willadow then brought him into a large hug.

"Be safe dear." said Willadow quietly. "And listen to Aragorn and Gandalf."

"I will." said Harry gently. He carefully pulled away and walked out of the kitchen, sneaking a look back at the venerable elf as she dabbed her eyes with a silk handkerchief.

He hurried out into the courtyard and saw the rest of them gathered around the same pony that they led here from Bree.

"Here, Harry, you can put that pack on Bill here," said Sam patting the horse's flank.

"Sure thing." said Harry.

Once they were all packed and ready, they made their way slowly out of the valley. Harry took one last glance at the mausoleum. Harry smiled softly down at it and continued up the path.

"I'll try."

They made it out of the valley and continued into the East, not really speaking, the company was tense and hobbits were silent. Frodo pretty much just looked forward and had a blank look on his
face. Sam was focused on Frodo and not taking his eyes off him and both Aragorn and Harry had a hard time trying to keep Merry and Pippin from running off and hunting mushrooms and other berries.

"You two need to keep up." said Strider almost dragging Pippin back to the rest of them, as Harry led Merry back.

"We're hungry." said Pippin.

"Come here." said Harry as he walked over to Bill. He opened his own pack and took out a small loaf of strawberry bread. "Share that. Next time, ask for food, don't leave us."

"Okay Harry." said Pippin as he took a large bit out of the loaf and then had to fend off Merry and Sam to keep it for himself.

"They listen so well." said Harry with a laugh as he watched the wrestle on the ground for the bread.

"You did a good job tracking." said Strider with a smile. "It only took you seven minutes to find them this time."

"I'm getting better, slowly." said Harry. He put his hand in his pouch and pulled out the small compass and held it out. The little needle was pointing straight ahead.

"Do our paths still go together?" asked Aragorn quietly, dreading the day that they may have to split up and go their own paths.

"For a while it looks." said Harry with a smile. "Hope you don't mind if I all of a sudden wander off."

"Only if you don't mind me dragging you back." said Strider patting the boy's back.

Before they had decided to stop for the night, Harry heard a faint tune wafting towards him.

"Hear that?" asked Harry in a whisper.

"No, what is it?" asked Strider.

Harry took off swiftly and followed the sound, Strider called to the others to stop and followed Harry into the heavily wooded area beside them. Harry followed the music until finally he was led to a small house in the middle of the wood.

"Harry?" said Strider coming up behind him. "Where is it?"

"It's in that house, I think." said Harry, "That's where the music is coming from."

"Alright lets go see..." said Strider.

They opened the door.

Inside, the house appeared to be uninhabited. There were cobwebs amost everywhere and the food lying on the counter and in the pantry were past rotten.

"Where is this jewel?" siad Strider.
"Hang on." said Harry walking slowly into the room. He walked towards where the melody was coming from, the entire room seemed to have it vibrate off every surface. He went closer to a small cabinet on the other side of the room, thinking perhaps it was in there. He made to open the small door, when suddenly a crash came from the ceiling.

Harry dove out of the way and found he was nose to snout with a ferocious black wolf.

"Harry! Get back!" said Strider loudly.

"How the hell did it get on the roof?" shouted Harry recoiling quickly and pulling out his sword.

"We'll worry about that later!" said Strider, pulling Harry back hard. "Right now, we need to go!"

As Harry pulled back as the wolf snapped his fangs in the dead space in where Harry's face once was. The wolf growled deeply and then lunged towards the skinnier figure. Harry raised the sword in both hands, found the swod to be exceedingly light, dropped the one hand and swung the sword cleanly through the air. It seemed that the sword knew where it wanted to go.

The wolf fell to the ground with a sickening thud, the severed torso first, then the lower abdomen. Harry stared at the body of the wolf in shock.

"Your first real kill with a sword, not easy, to do, or to forget. Thankfully, it wasn't a person." said Strider.

"Don't be too sure." said Harry as his eyes grew larger.

Strider looked down at the body of the wolf and saw with horror, that the creature slowly turned into a black bearded man, his face was scarred, his teeth blackened, and his nails chipped and bloodied.

"What on earth?" said Strider his face pale. "What could have caused that? Was he a Skin Changer?"

"Not really, look what just fell out of his stomach." said Harry reached over into the thick pool of blood and pulled out a small rock.

"What is it?" asked Strider.

"Well." said Harry as his hands fumbled with a dusty rag lying on the floor. "If I can wipe the blood off...there," in his hands laid a slightly bloodstained diamond.

"It's a good thing you sliced him clean through isn't it?" said Strider with a dry chuckle.

"More like luck, I don't think I controlled the sword at that point." said Harry.

"Well, it is an elvish blade." said Strider with a smile. "They can put the strangest powers in them, some give you a warning before danger strikes. Others have an icy poison in them, and others give you the strength and also seem to give you the skills to use the sword."

"Well that's convienient." said Harry with a smile.

"So do you think that jewel gives the ability to change into a wolf?" asked Strider as he helped Harry to stand.

"Won't know, till I clean it up and test it out. I'll ask Gandalf about it before I try." said Harry. His voice was shaky, he tried to convince himself that the man attacked them first and did all he could
to try and kill them...but killing a person...it made him sick to his stomach.

“Lad...you couldn't do anything else...if you had faltered, you would be this man's next meal.” said Strider. “Best save the mercy for a much later time.”

They made their way quickly back to the fellowship, but they stopped beside a small creek, cleaned their swords and wiped the diamond free of blood.

"So...what made you so shaken up?” said Harry. “You've killed wolves before, especially from Bree to Rivendell.”

"You or the hobbits weren't that close to the beast's teeth.” said Strider washing his face quickly.

"Didn't know you cared." said Harry with a smile.

"I care more than you think." said Strider giving Harry a smack to the back of his head.

They made their way back to where the fellowship was and was greeted with a curious pair of hobbit.

"Where did you go?” asked Merry quickly.

"How come you yell at us when we take off?” said Pippin sourly.

Harry smiled. "I heard something, and I needed to check it out."

Gandalf looked up quickly. Harry saw Strider give him a small nod.

"And what did you find? That it was a just a little animal in the leaves?” sneered Boromir.

Harry smirked. "Close."

Borormir frowned. "One gets the feeling that the boy is holding back something." he whispered to Gimli.

"Hmph." said Gimli, but he looked at Harry skeptically.

Legolas also heard what Boromir had said, but he took no heed. But he couldn’t stop himself from becoming suspicious himself.

Harry could see the distrust in both the elf and dwarf’s eyes. "Boromir isn't going to make this trip any easier for me." he thought somberly.
Distrust and Arson

Harry helped Sam prepare the Fellowship's dinner that night. Before night had completely fallen, Legolas had shot a deer standing serenely in the nearby woods and brought it back to the company. Despite the impeding darkness, he only needed one arrow to fell the poor beast, causing Harry and the hobbits to stare in awe. Gimli however only frowned at the show-offness of the elf. Aragorn had skinned and dressed the deer for the hobbit and young man, and they roasted it over a large crackling fire.

As the fire slowly roasted the meat, Harry sprinkled different herbs and squeezed a few berries over it.

"What are you doing, lad?" asked Gimli looking at what Harry was doing and Gimli didn't look all that impressed, it would be hard to win him over with food with Harry adding things to the tasty meat.

"I'm adding flavor..." said Harry slowly as he rotated the meat on the spit.

"Why? Meat is meat." said Gimli. "The flavor doesn't need to be changed."

"I know, but wait until you try it." said Harry with a smile. "You might like it."

After Sam and Harry had finished cooking the meat that Strider had expertly carved from the deer, each member took a bit of it. Pippin and Merry tore into it greedily, knowing full well that it was going to be delicious.

"This is great!" said Merry with his mouth full.

“I haven't had this tasty a dish on the road before!” said Pippin.

“You've never been on the road for more than three days, before.” said Merry shooting his cousin and best friend a smirk.

Gimli looked at it with some skepticism. Then he slowly took a bite out of the large chunk of meat.
"They're right, it is good." said Gimli hesitantly.

Legolas took a bite out of his own smaller piece and closed his eyes, he could taste the juice of the berries that was drizzled over it and roasted deep into the flesh.

"You should come to Mirkwood, my father would love to have you as his personal cook." said Legolas to Harry.

"Forget Mirkwood, come to Lonely Mountain. Lord Dain would be proud for you to come to him." said Gimli.

Harry looked at the both of them with a smile. "Those are both tempting offers, but I would really like to try and head for home."

"It is for the best." said Boromir throwing away the bone from his piece of venison.

Strider looked at Boromir in disbelief. He didn't think, not after the council meeting and what he had said when they returned from the small cottage, that Boromir could be understanding towards his young protege. He didn't believe that Boromir would offer Harry a place in Gondor...

He wasn't disappointed.

"This meat isn't worthy of gracing the trough of a swine." said Boromir standing up and walking away.

Gimli and Legolas flashed their eyes angrily over to Boromir.

"It doesn't bother me, I'd be taken aback if he said he liked it to be honest." said Harry with a smile, trying to pacify the two.

Gimli and Legolas both smiled softly at the young man, while Boromir scoffed.
Later on, Gandalf sat away from the rest of them. Looking hard into the east, towards their final destination, but looking fleetingly into the south east, to where Saruman had his tower.

"Gandalf?" said a voice quietly.

Gandalf bolted out of his solitary thoughts and looked around. There he saw the bright green eyes of the young man, chosen by King Meandenbor from beyond the grave.

"Ah, Harry. That was a delicious meal you and Samwise made. Quite the treat for a quest." said Gandalf with a smile.

"Thanks. Boromir seemed to be the only one who didn't like it, but that's to be expected." said Harry with a grin. "I wanted to talk to you about something."

"About that little jaunt that you and Aragorn took this afternoon?" asked Gandalf with a smile.

"Exactly. Here it is." said Harry holding out the diamond that he had acquired earlier that day. "It was in the belly of a wolf. that had then turned into a man." said Harry. "Well, something that looked like a man."

Gandalf held the diamond up to the light gently glowing from his staff and examined it closely. "It's stained with blood." said Gandalf.

"Yeah, apparently the guy...ate it." said Harry. "I really don't know how he managed to eat it, but he did."

"You forget, people other than King's and Wizards cannot see it. So it wouldn't be surprising that someone were to accidentally devour these jewels." said Gandalf.

"I still can't believe that someone can eat a rock this size and not even know it." said Harry shaking his head.

"There are many strange and mysterious things in this world. You are one of them." said Gandalf with a smile.
"On my end, I'm seeing a lot more strange things here, then I ever did back home." said Harry.

Gandalf handed Harry's newly acquired diamond. "What power do you think that gem possess?"

"Well, when we removed the diamond, then he turned back into a man. So...I'm assuming that you can turn into at least a wolf." said Harry. "I don't know if you can turn into another animal besides that. But maybe I can test it. But I'd rather not eat it."

"I do not find fault with that. In order to be rid of the transformation you'd have to either wait a long time, or have it forcibly removed." said Gandalf with a smile.

"Perhaps, it would work if I had it around my neck." said Harry thoughtfully. "I just need a chain and a way to stick the jewel to it."

"How would you cause it to activate? Obviously touching it does nothing." said Gandalf.

"I'm not too sure. But I have a feeling I'll be finding it out really soon." said Harry. Harry looked at the jewel closely and smiled.

That evening, Harry laid on his back and looked up at all the stars. He thought about Sirius, Ron, Hermione and everyone else back at Hogwarts and Grimmauld Place.

"Do they even realize that I'm gone?" said Harry looking up at the sky. "If this is a whole 'nother world, has time even gone by?"

The night passed on by, Harry was surprised to not be woken for guard duty. He had strange dreams about feathers, fur and teeth. Each one of them flew off their respected animal hosts and was absorbed by the diamond, and then his hand, moving against his will, touched the diamond. Suddenly he would sprout feathers, wings and a beak or fur and fangs.

Harry woke with a start, looked at his arms and legs and settled back onto pack he used as a pillow and fell back to sleep.
Once again he dreamed the exact same dream, but this time he saw himself grasp the jewel, which was now around his neck he shouted:

"Hawk."

Then Harry saw that his image soon changed into that of an actual hawk and he watched as he himself flew away.

Harry woke early the next morning and took out the small diamond. "Someone is really making this quest easy." he said to himself.

He stood up and walked over to where the deerskin laid, waiting to be used. Harry took a small bit of the fur (or hair, Harry wasn't sure) and held it up to the diamond. Harry had to turn his head away from the bright flash of light that came from it. When he looked back at the jewel and the hair was gone.

"I want to know where all these dreams come from." said Harry. "Cause they're a big help."

Then a thought struck him, he reached up and tugged a small amount of his hair out of his own scalp. He then held it out to the diamond, it flashed (though not as brighter this time) and it disappeared.

He leaned against the tree that he sat in front of and turned the diamond slowly over in his hand.

"Well, if I ever get a chain, I can turn into a deer and back again." thought Harry to himself.

He heard a clatter of wood in front of where he was sitting and he looked up quickly. It was Boromir dropping more firewood beside the campfire they had going all night.

"What caused you to get up so early? Strider said to leave you out of guard duty last night." said Boromir shortly.

"Why did he not want me to keep watch?" asked Harry.

"I do not know, the 'Great Aragorn, Son of Arathorn' does not wish to inform me of his reasons." said Boromir sarcastically. "Now what made you get up so early?"
"I was just thinking." said Harry calmly. "No harm in that is there?"

"All depends on what you are thinking." said Boromir darkly. "I know there is some secret motive that made you came along on this quest."

"We didn't exactly speak in hushed voices when the meeting was done." said Harry as he placed the jewel back in his pouch.

"I'll be watching you closely boy." said Boromir.

"Do as you please." said Harry as he stood up. "I'll go and get breakfast gathered up."

Harry stood up and turned towards the forest, he had seen the patch of berries and the nut trees before the sun had completely set and when Sam and he had gone to look for the herbs he needed to make dinner.

He took one of Sam's pots with him and filled it full of different berries and nuts. He looked up and saw that a rich, full apple tree was only a few yards away.

"This will fill them up even faster." said Harry with a smile. He climbed the tree and filled the crook of his arm full of apples. Suddenly, he heard a group of footsteps coming towards himself and their camp.

"I saw a fire somewhere around here last night. Must be travelers, should be easy pickings." said a weedy voice.

"As long as they ain't goblins again." said a deeper voice.

"That was all Neildor." said the weedy voiced man.

"Well, he paid for it, with his life. So, lets go and see what we can get." said the deeper voiced man. Harry looked down through the branches and saw two men walking underneath him. One
man was hunched over fingering a jagged dagger and another was a thick burly looking man with a broad sword.

He wasn't too sure how many of the Fellowship was up, but if they were to get close to Frodo and see what he was carrying, they would all be in danger of a massive assault. He took two of the apples he had plucked from the tree, and threw them hard at the two men's heads.

"OW!" shouted the hunched man in a weedy voice.

Before the burly man could look up into the tree, Harry fell to the earth and raised his sword.

"What do you want?" he asked both the men.

"Your coins, and other valuable objects." said the weedy voiced man, putting a hand to a large lump forming on his temple.

"I'll have to decline." said Harry with a smile.

"You'll regret that." said the deep voiced man. The man raised his own sword and brought it crashing down.

Harry reached into his pouch and grabbed the opal. Suddenly the world about him began to move sluggishly. He easily disarmed the man and sent him sprawling to the ground. The hunched man stared in amazement at the youth.

Harry released the hold he had on the opal and smirked at the hunched man. The man backed swiftly away and took off. Harry pointed his sword down on the fallen man's throat. The man came to his senses slowly and looked fearfully at the youth with the sword.

"Your friend took off. I suggest you follow, if you value any part of your life." said Harry coldly. "And find another line of work."

The man staggered to his feet and followed hastily after his friend.
Harry smirked once more and turned back towards the tree he was perched in earlier and grabbed the pan and picked several more apples from the lower branches.

"You fight well." said a voice coming from behind him.

Harry turned swiftly. He saw Legolas standing beside a tree and smiling.

"How long have you been there?" asked Harry.

"A few moments at best." said Legolas with a smile. "Aragorn has trained you well."

"I'm still learning." said Harry with a smile. "Well, I got breakfast here, want to head back?"

"In a moment, I wish to breathe in the forest air, it is uncertain when we will be graced by the coolness of a forest next." said Legolas. "I will join you all later."

Harry made his way slowly back to the camp and placed the pan and apples near the fire. Gandalf, Gimli, and Aragorn were now up as well, the only ones who seemed to be sleeping in, were the hobbits.

"Good morning lad, what's for breakfast?" asked Gimli gruffly.

"I've got berries, nuts, apples and some nutbread in my pack." said Harry reaching and bringing out a small loaf.

"Sounds delightful." said Gandalf taking a few berries and an apple.

When Aragorn came closer to grab a handful of berries, Harry grabbed his arm.

"Why didn't you wake me up for guard duty last night?" asked Harry quietly.
"I figured you had enough excitement for one day, and letting you sleep seemed to be the best idea." said Aragorn.

"Oh...uh...thanks." said Harry sheepishly.

"You're welcome." said Aragorn with a laugh.

"Let's get the hobbits up, so we may continue on." said Gandalf.

"This will do it." said Harry. He cleared his throat loudly. "If they don't get up, breakfast will be all gone."

Instantly, all four hobbits woke up quickly and looked around. "Did we miss breakfast?" asked Pippin thickly.

"Just about, come on." said Harry as the rest of the company laughed at the priorities of hobbits.

Back in London, Umbridge was standing in front of the Minister of Magic's desk, with that toad like smile on her lips.

"Any word about Potter?" asked Fudge rifling through some papers.

"Nothing yet, but we'll find him, and put the poor boy out of his pain." said Umbridge, trying to sound sympathetic.

"I want him examined first." said Fudge sternly. "To make sure what you say is true. We haven't had that sort of affliction for a long time. And it would look bad for us if we just killed him on sight."
"Of course sir." said Umbridge with a simpering smile.

"I do have one question." said Fudge, his voice suddenly cold.

"And that is?" said Umbridge with a smirk.

"Was setting fire to the Weasley house all that necessary?" asked Fudge with a curious look. "I'm getting heat from almost every department and the Wizengamot, seems a lot of people has a soft spot for Arthur and his family. There's already a collection going up to rebuild their home."

"It was necessary sir. The Weasley's are very close to Potter and if he was hidden in the house it was imperative that he's found." said Umbridge.

"Did you even search the house before you ignited it?" said Fudge.

"We couldn't, Arthur's wife wouldn't let us get near the house. We had no choice." said Umbridge with a smile.

"You could have contacted Madam Bones. She would have had the authority to go in and search for the boy." said Fudge. "I can't afford to have you setting homes on fire. It won't look good for me."

"Yes sir." said Umbridge, her smile failing slightly.

He dismissed her and went about his work again.

Umbridge left the Minister's office, ignored Percy, he did his best to hide his glare and made her way out of the Minister of Magic's office.

Percy was loyal to the Ministry, but that didn't give them the right to torch his family home. Slowly, the Ministry was losing their control over him, and he wasn't even going to try to rationalize their decision to burn his parent's home.
Kingsley was walking down one of the corridors a load of papers in his arms. He was delivering them to Madam Bones when he heard something from a closed room, that made his blood freeze and the rest of his body with it.

"How much longer is it going to take you to find the brat?" spat a voice that he recognized as Umbridge's. "Is he at that Mudblood Granger's house?"

"No, we checked there." said another voice. A voice that Kingsley couldn't really identify.

"Did you burn it, and incarcerate them to be on the safe side?" said Umbridge. "The Minister won't take notice of a pair of no-account muggles."

"No ma'am, but we can do it after dark. Make it look like an accident." said the voice.

Without hesitation, Kingsley hurried down to the floo exits and disappeared in a whirl of green fire.

Out of the shadows, Umbridge appeared with a cloaked wizard. "I knew it."

Mrs. Granger was just setting the table for dinner as her husband ladled the stew into a serving dish, when they both heard a pounding on the door.

Mr. Granger looked at his wife and slowly went to the door. When he got there, Kingsley was looking around swiftly in the deserted street behind him.

"Can I help you sir?" asked Mr. Granger.

"I'm Kingsley Shacklebolt, from the Ministry of Magic, may I come in." said Kingsley as he made his way quickly into the house.

"Y-yes of course." said Mr. Granger.
"Is something wrong with Hermione?" asked Mrs. Granger worriedly.

"No, she is fine. Have you spoken to anyone from the Ministry earlier today, or at all this week?" asked Kingsley quickly.

"No. Should we have?" asked Mr. Granger looking confused.

Kingsley turned a slight pale color and ran to the window, peeking out of the side. There he saw three people standing silently in the street, with Madam Umbridge leading them.

"We need to get out of here, NOW!" said Kingsley sharply.

Suddenly an explosion that shook the whole street happened. People ran out of their houses in panic and screaming to their children to know where they were. The muggles never even noticed the four people standing, watching the fire. Umbridge brought out what looked like opera glasses and looked at the base of the burning rubble. Through the broken and charred door, she could see a blackened hand...of a dark adult male.

"There, later, we will find out if the boy was in there or not. If he was, it's what Kingsley deserved for going against the Ministry. And as for the Muggles, well, it's not like they made a difference in the world is it?"

She smiled and walked away, leaving the men behind her to look at each other uncomfortably.
The Fellowship made their way slowly past the roots of a great snowy mountain chain. Harry stared in awe at the amazing size and majestic beauty of it, never having seen a mountain in all it's splendour before.

"It's called Caradhras." said Gimli gesturing towards one of the taller mountain peaks. "Under that great crown of rock and stone, lies the great Mines of Moria. My cousin, Balin rules there now."

"Balin?" said Harry perplexed. "Wasn't he one of the..."

"Yes, he was one of the dwarves that traveled with Bilbo to Lonely Mountain sixty years ago." said Gandalf from the front of the troop.

"Ah! To visit him. You know Gandalf, if we went under the mountain, instead of around it, we could save at least a week." said Gimli.

"I would rather save that path for a last resort." said Gandalf grimly.

Harry looked at Gandalf, with a look of concern on his face. If Gandalf didn't want to go somewhere where there were a mine full of valuable allies....something wasn't adding up.

Gimli however didn't see it that way and fell into a dark mood for the rest of the day.

Merry and Pippin found that the area allowed no opportunity to forage for a quick snack. They tried sneaking a small morsel of food from Sam's pack, but both were thumped soundly with Sam's walking stick.

"Get off." said Sam angrily.

"Come on Sam! We're hungry!" whined Pippin.

"I've already given you two your food for today! We need to ration it!" said Sam shortly.

"Here you two." said Harry taking a bit of bread and broke it in half.

"Just bread?" said Merry, slightly put out.

"I baked cheese in there with it." said Harry with a smirk. That piece of information brightened Pippen and Merry's mood when they heard it, and they snatched the bread away greedily.

"Keep it up and they'll be no food left." said Boromir darkly.

"I planned on their constant snacking before we even left Rivendell. So I made extra food for them, and rationing it." said Harry with a smirk.

Boromir scowled and didn't bother to make slamming into the boy with his elbow subtle. Harry had to hold out an arm to stop Strider.

"I'm fine, he just wants to find something wrong with me." said Harry with a smile.
"If he keeps it up, I'll make something wrong with him." said Strider darkly.

They stopped for the night on a large pile of rocks. Harry couldn't see how this place would be very comfortable, especially for someone as old as Gandalf. But Aragorn showed him that, while they sacrificed comfort, they could see if any of Saruman's winged spies were coming and they could hide amongst the rocks.

It was Boromir's turn to go out and get dinner that night, so he borrowed Aragorn's bow and quiver, then left the campsite.

"I hope he gets a deer." said Gimli.

"I'll be happy with whatever he gets." said Pippin.

"That's no surprise." said Gandalf with a good-natured smile.

Harry smiled as he helped Legolas pile the firewood in the circle of stones they had formed. Gimli started the fire with his father's old tinder box. Once Harry had positioned the wood where he wanted, he walked over to his pack.

"What are you doing, Harry?" asked Frodo curiously from where he was resting.

"Well, in that last village we passed through, I bought something, and I want to see if I can make what I want out of it." said Harry. "And if I can, I will be really happy."

He took one of Sam's pans and poured a white powder into it, sprinkled in a different powder, and then poured some water from his canteen into the pan. After dousing his own hands with the water, he used his hand to stir the contents of the iron pan. Soon, it became sticky and immensely thick.

"Hey!" said Pippin excitedly. "You made dough!"

"Exactly," said Harry with a smile. "Now let's see if I can bake it."

He took out his own frying pan and borrowed Sam's, he took medium sized clumps of dough and placed it in one of the frying pans. Once he had used up all the dough, and filled the frying pan, he flipped the other pan over top of it, and buried it under the burning wood.

"Now we wait, and see if my idea will work." said Harry. "Hope it turns out alright."

The sun began to set further into the west, finally Boromir came back with a tight group of conies tied to bit of rope.

"No deer to be had, but there's plenty of rabbits about." said Boromir.

"What do you want to do with them, Sam?" asked Harry.

"How about a stew?" said Sam.
"Sounds good to me." said Harry.

Sam took charge of cooking that night, as Harry had never made anything out of rabbits in his stay here in this strange world. Harry watched earnestly on what Sam placed into the large pot and helped him cut up the rabbits Boromir had brought.

"Too bad we don't have some potatoes." said Sam.

"Ooh, those sound good right about now." said Harry with a smirk.

That night, they enjoyed Sam's rabbit stew, with slightly the same fervor that they had for Harry's cooking.

The bread Harry had made with the frying pans turned out very well, a little burnt on some places, but they were delicious nonetheless. That night, they were entertained with stories of old dwarven mines and treasures by Gimli. Legolas listened on dispassionately, but when describing the jewels, a faint smile came to his lips.

He described the jewels and the great halls of his fathers, he told of newer tales of the Lonely Mountain and the small town of Dale. Though, even he did admit it himself, they weren't as thrilling as the Dragon Smaug's destruction.

"It's nice to know that relative peace has come to Lonely Mountain." said Gandalf with a smile.

"Aye, but the occasional bandit does show up from time to time." said Gimli, trying not to look at Legolas.

*There's a story there, good thing Gimli isn't going to bring it up. thought Harry to himself. I wonder if a jewel is down there, I hope not, especially if we aren't going to go that way.*

That night, Strider had the first watch, Harry decided to sit up with him, and learn a bit more about sounds in the night. They stayed awake all night, not allowing anyone else to relieve them.

"What's that noise?" asked Strider.

"A Screech Owl." said Harry.

"Very good, you're getting a grasp of this at last." said Strider with a proud smile.

Suddenly, Harry heard a faint voice nearby.

"I smell...food...so hungry."

Harry looked at Strider who didn't appear to have heard anything.

"Strider, did you hear that?" said Harry looking around.

"No, was it music again?" asked Aragron curiously.

"No, but if you can't hear it, then it's most likely a snake." said Harry standing up.

“What do you mean?” said Strider looking confused. Harry didn't answer.
They both took a flaming brand and patrolled around the camp.

"It's over this way, Strider." whispered Harry as he stalked over towards where Gandalf was resting. He held the brand higher over himself and looked down at Gandalf, he almost dropped the torch.

"What is it?" said Strider coming quickly over.

"Does he always sleep with his eyes open?" said Harry weakly.

Strider looked down and yes, Gandalf's eyes were open, but he was still sleeping soundly.

"I've never noticed, I've never watched him sleep when we've gone on quests before." said Strider with a quiet laugh.

"My eyes would dry out." said Harry shaking his head, he moved the brand a little farther up Gandalf's body and saw...

"There it is." said Harry.

Aragorn looked down, and saw a snake, slithering slowly up Gandalf's body.

"Waking Gandalf would be a bad idea." said Strider before Harry could even begin to think about it.

"Let me try something. Get off." he hissed at the snake.

Aragorn backed away from the hissing youth. "Are you alright?"

The snake looked up at Harry, but obeyed after a short time.

"I forgot you said you could do that." said Aragorn.

"I just about forgot it too." said Harry with a relieved sigh. "Here's a bit of rabbit, now get out of here." he hissed to the snake and tossed a piece of the rabbit that Boromir had caught. Then a thought struck him.

"Hang on, come back here for one moment, I have a favor to ask." hissed Harry to the amazement of the veteran warrior.

The snake turned and slowly slinked back back to where the young man speaking to it was.

Aragorn watched curiously as Harry held out the diamond to the snake. He gave another strangled hiss and they watched as the snake slowly coiled around the youth's hand. The same hand that held the diamond. A bright flash of light came from under the snake's coils and then the snake slithered towards the direction in which Harry had thrown the rabbit bit.

"What's is it." said Gandalf sitting up and rubbing his eyes with two fingers.

"You had a snake on you." said Harry standing up and beating the dirt off his pants.

Gandalf looked quickly down and around himself.

"It's gone now, incidentally, how can you sleep with your eyes open?" said Harry with a bright smile.
"Years of practice, I thank you for getting rid of it. I'm not overly fond of snakes." said Gandalf.

"I've never known that." said Aragorn, trying not to laugh.

"I've never told anyone that." said Gandalf with a smirk. "I think I'll stay awake with you fellows, I'm not too sure that I will fall back into an easy slumber."

That night, Gandalf, Strider and Harry both spoke well into the dawning hours, talking about what the future held, for both quests.

"What if I have to..." said Harry.

"If our paths seperate? Hopefully, we will have taught you enough to make it on your own." said Gandalf with a calm smile.

"I hope so too." said Harry. "I also hope that I won't have to leave. I'd miss you fellows." he added with a smile.

*Us as well* thought Gandalf, knowing Strider's mind.

"So, putting aside the uncertain future, what's the plan for getting around the mountains?" said Harry.

"We stay on we are one for about forty days, until we reached the Gap of Rohan, travel through Rohan, Gondor, and then finally into Mordor." said Gandalf.

"And then, we do our damndest to get through to Mount Doom?" said Harry quietly.

"Exactly." said Gandalf, his face slightly fell. "What does damndest mean?"

"Well...I guess I should rephrase it to 'do our best'." said Harry.

"Ah, that makes much more sense." said Gandalf looking amused.

Soon the sun began to rise, and the others began to stir slightly. First Legolas awoke, he climbed to the top of the rock pile and relished the feeling of the sun on his fair skin.

"What's he doing?" asked Harry in an undertone.

"Mirkwood elves have a ritual in the morning. The younger ones climb to the top of the canopy of their woodland realm and greet the sun." said Aragorn quietly.

"He doesn't do that when the sun goes down though." said Harry.

"That's a ritual for the elder ones." said Gandalf.

"Oh..." said Harry. "That's strange." he muttered.
Once everyone had woken up, Sam proceeded to making as hearty breakfast as they could manage, and after Merry and Pippin ate their fill, they conned Boromir into teaching them how to use a sword. Strider chose to sit above them and watch their learnings. Legolas moved from one end of the rock pile to another, keeping a close eye on the distance.

Harry and Gandalf conversed softly between the two of them, discussing the ways of magic and why Harry would never be able to use a staff in this world.

"Staffs are given to us when we finally leave apprenticeship. And it takes a hundred years for someone to go through it." said Gandalf with a smile.

"I don't have that kind of time." said Harry. "Guess I'm stuck with these." said Harry patting the pouch of jewels on his side.

"Take care in practicing your magic, the enemies have spies everywhere." said Gandalf.

"Yes sir." said Harry.

"If anyone were to ask for my opinion. Which I know they have not." said Gimli grumbling slightly. "I would say that we are taking the long way around."

Harry rolled his eyes slightly, this argument again.

"Gandalf, we could go through the Mines of Moria, my cousin Balin would give us a royal welcome."

Gandalf sighed, "No Gimli, I would not go through Moria, unless I had no other choice." it was a repeated speech that he had said the other day.

"Move your feet." said Strider from where he was sitting.

Harry stood up and walked over to the overlook to where the hobbits and the man were sparring.

Harry smiled warmly at the man, he noticed that when dealing with Merry and Pippin, his eyes were filled with a tenderness that Harry didn't know he had.

Suddenly, Boromir made a mistake and brought the flat edge of his sword down on Pippin's fingers.

"Ow!" said Pippin, dropping his sword and shaking his hand in pain.

"Oh! Sorry!" said Boromir, lowering his own sword and moved forward to inquire if he was alright.

Pippin was about to show him just how fine he was. He aimed a swift kick to Boromir's ankle and while he was hopping on one foot in pain, one of the hobbits slammed both hands into his side, knocking him off his feet and onto the ground.

"For the Shire!" said the hobbits trying to pin him to the ground. "Hold him! Hold him!"

Boromir, Strider and Harry laughed loudly.

"He's got my arm! He's got my arm!" said Merry.
Suddenly Harry looked over to where Legolas was. Legolas was watching a dark shadow turning in the clear sky.

"What is that?" asked one of the Fellowship.

"Nothing, just a wisp of cloud." said Gimli very sure of himself.

"It's moving fast," said Boromir standing up. "And against the wind."

"Crebain from Dunland!" said Legolas.

"Hide!" shouted Aragorn loudly. The Fellowship grabbed their belongings and doused the cooking fire. Harry shoved Merry and Pippin under a thick bush, the birds were almost upon them. Harry looked frantically around for shelter, there was none to be had.

Harry reached into the bag, and touched the diamond, Deer. He thought frantically.

A strange sensation flitted though his body, his arms and legs were being stretched quickly and his hands were growing stiff and curled up into fists. His face stretched and his ears grew longer, the hair on his head crawled down his body and suddenly his world turned black.

Strider looked at Harry in amazement, one moment he was there, and then as if in fast forward he turned into a deer, a black furred stag.

The stag got slowly to his feet, staggered slightly but eventually, Harry got used to his new four legs. As the crebain flapped closer, the stag bowed his head lower and began to eat the grass.

“Hide you foolish boy!” hissed Boromir.

“No wait, look what he’s doing, he’s making it appear that no one is near him! Clever lad.” said Gimli.

“Deer are easily skittish, one wouldn't be here if it sensed us.” said Legolas from his own hiding place.

The dark birds flew across them like a black cloud. Then one bird decided to land beside Harry and hop about, looking for the hidden men. Quickly, Harry brought one of his hooves down on the bird’s head, killing the preoccupied bird instantly. Harry leapt from rock to rock until he was on the top of the pile and used his great antlers to ward off the birds. Sometimes his antlers were lucky and he impaled two or three birds at a time.

But the birds began to swirl around the top of the rocks, pecking him at every chance they could get. Harry continued to pound the birds into the rocks when they got too close to his hooves, and his antlers were drenched in the blood and feathersof the birds.

Finally, after what the Fellowship could guess was an hour or more and with their birds’ numbers down by a third, the crebain decided to flee.

Once the birds were gone, everyone came out of their hiding place with triumphant smiles.

“You did it Har...” said Pippin turning to face the stag, but a horrible sight met his eyes.

The stag was teetering on it’s legs as he came down from the rocks, but he couldn’t make the last jump, he landed with a heavy thud on the ground. The Fellowship looked at Harry with frightened looks, there were gashes all around his body.
“Where’s his pouch, maybe we should change him back!” said Pippin running to the fallen leather pouch.

Gandalf stopped him from opening it. “Changing him back now wouldn’t be wise.”

“What sorcery is this?” asked Boromir.

Strider pulled a few herbs from a pouch of his own and held them to the wounds. The stag's head reared back and made a low grunting sound, "Easy lad." said Strider soothingly. "This herb should help with the pain."

After an hour, the stag slowly rose off the ground. It's knees were shaky and he didn't stay standing for very long. Merry and Pippin spent their time wiping the blood from the antlers and Sam poured water into a pan for Harry to drink from.

"Those birds were spies of Saruman, the path south is being watched. We must take the path of Caradhras." he said looking towards the mountain.

Harry made to stand, but Gandalf stopped him. "We'll rest for a while yet, then make for the road over the mountains." said Gandalf gently. "We need you strong again, if we hope for you to make it."

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Sirius was gently changing the bandages on Harry's chest, the old wounds were still not disappearing or healing, and new gashes and cuts kept cropping up, but the strangest thing....Harry was developing more and more muscles. If Sirius wasn't scared of losing Harry, he would have tried bouncing a galleon off his godson's abs. That thought brought a pale smile to his lips, but he was still worried about his little boy.

Just then, Bill came in with the radio from the kitchen. "I thought that...since you weren't coming back down to the kitchen...and, no offense to Harry, it's kind of boring up here. I thought you would like the radio to keep you entertained." said Bill holding up the radio.

"Thanks, Bill. I appreciate it." said Sirius with a grin. "Just set it down on the table over there."

"Will do." said Bill, "I'll even hook it up for you."

Sirius went back to doing his job for the evening when a voice on the Wizarding Wireless Channel broadcast caused him to freeze.

"Earlier this evening, an attack was made on the home of one Hermione Granger, a student at Hogwarts, School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and close companion to Harry Potter. Who is currently being searched for, due to a fatal illness he has and must be treated immediately.

"It has been reported, by a muggle eyewitness, that a person meeting the description of the Auror Kingsley Shacklebolt, rushed into the Granger household, obviously to warn them of the impending danger.

"Then two cloaked wizards plus a toad faced witch appeared on the street and blasted the entire house into a fiery inferno. The witch, who perfectly fits the description of one Delores Jane Umbridge, none other than the Minister of Magic's own Senior Undersecretary! And the current teacher of Defense Against the Dark Arts, no one knows why she did it, for not even the Department of Magical Law Enforcement can find her."
"The Minister has neglected to give a statement or denounce his involvement in the unfortunate event. Also, it's been further discovered that the remains of three people were discovered in the house. No doubt it was Mrs. and Mr. Granger and the Auror Kingsley Shacklebolt.

"What the...Kingsley?" said Sirius with a weak voice.

"It can't be." said Bill faintly.

"Bill go down and tell..."said Sirius quickly.

"I already know." said Dumbledore, looking slightly worn.

"Dumbledore, what hap..." said Bill.

"I think I'll let him explain, he just finished telling everyone else downstairs." said Dumbledore with a bright smile, the tiredness wearing slowly away.

In slowly came...Kingsley.

"What the hell?" said Bill.

"All I can say is thank Merlin for Transfiguration." said Kingsley.

"So, are Hermione's parent's are safe too?" said Sirius quickly.

"They're downstairs." said Kingsley, "A little shaken, having never apparated before."

"So what did you transfigure?" asked Bill quickly.

"Let's just say, they did have two love birds and one rat in their house." said Kingsley.

Umbridge, who was apparating from one place to another, was busy avoiding the Aurors after her. They seemed to get closer and closer on her heels, but she was able to shake them off in the end.

"I never should have trusted those blasted men." said Umbridge, "Never trust a half-blood." she muttered darkly to herself. “Don't they realize that Kingsley was a traitor?"

Soon she came to the gates of the Malfoy Manor. "Finally, someone who understands...he'll be more than happy to lend me some sanctuary." She opened the gates and went straight to the front door.

She gave a loud knock on the front door and awaited, looking nervously around, hoping no one had tracked her there.

The door opened and saw that it was Lucius Malfoy, a very tired and worn looking Lucius Malfoy.

"Ah, Lucius, might I take refuge here. The Ministry is being completely unreasonable." said Umbridge. She barely took notice of the sneer that appeared on his face.

"Of course, Delores, in fact, I have someone here, who would love to speak with you about this matter, and Potter." said Lucius.
"Oh, good! He needs to be found." said Umbridge eagerly as she swept inside the manor. "It's important."

"It is indeed." said Lucius closing the door behind her with a loud clunk. He then took it upon himself to lead her towards the large dining room.

"Is your wife not at home?" asked Umbridge.

"She is out doing some shopping." said Lucius.

"Don't you have a house-elf to do that for you?" asked Umbridge sweetly.

"I would rather not talk about that, it's a sore subject..." said Lucius coldly. He opened the door slowly and bowed low to the floor.

"My lord? I have Delores Umbridge here, she may perhaps have information on the Potter boy." said Lucius.

"Does she?" said a low hiss like voice.

Umbridge turned a faint shade of white as she saw who was sitting in the armchair across the room.

*Lord Voldemort.*
The Climb on Caradhras

Later that afternoon, thanks to some healing liquids Elrond had given Gandalf, healed the wounds on Harry's stag body. The liquid strangely had almost the same healing properties of phoenix tears and Harry was feeling as well as he ever did. Pippin held the pouch up to the stag's head, and the animal dipped his entire nose and mouth into the bag.

"Hope he doesn't try to eat anything." said Pippin to Merry. Suddenly a flash of white light and Harry was back to his original form.

"Note to self, desperate acts aren't good enough anymore." said Harry falling back against a rock. "Gotta think before I act."

"But you did beautifully." said Strider with a kind smile. "You hid yourself from Saruman's spies and even destroyed quite a few."

"You're just kidding the boy, he could have destroyed everything." snarled Boromir.

Harry sighed, "He's right, I could've ruined it all. On a side note: remind me not to use that, unless I'm really really desperate." said Harry, "That hurt. When do we leave for the mountain?"

"We leave now, and go as far as our we can and if you can make it. With those spies, one might have seen one of us. It is best to beat the birds to Saruman and get over the mountain." said Gandalf. "Though at the speed they fly, it might just be a pale dream."

"Let's go then." said Harry.

"Alright, but you tell us when you need to rest a bit." said Strider sternly, making Harry promise.

They traveled for the rest of the day, climbing the shimmering, snow covered slope. They stopped once because Frodo had lost his footing and fell right into Strider's knees. (who was traveling all the way in the back)

Harry watched as Strider helped picked Frodo up off of the snow covered ground. Frodo gripped
his throat and a slightly panicked look came into his eyes. Harry reached into his pouch and was about to grab a hold of the amethyst jewel, to help Frodo clear some of the snow away and find the ring.

But he stopped, when he saw Boromir lift the ring by the chain out of the snow.

"Strange, how such a small thing..." said Boromir gazing longingly at the ring.

"Boromir, give the ring back to Frodo." said Strider sternly.

Harry dropped the amethyst and reached for his sword, ready to defend Frodo. But Boromir slowly handed the ring back to Frodo, who snatched it immediately.

"I care not." said Boromir with a dry chuckle.

Bull thought Harry to himself. After Boromir ruffled Frodo's hair and swung his shield back on his back, Harry eased the tension on his sword and he noticed Strider did the same thing.

They continued their freezing cold journey until they finally found the remains of a path, perched precariously on the edge of the cliff.

"The path of Caradhras. Wasn't always this close to the edge, there used to be a good forty feet away from the side of the cliff." said Gandalf quietly to Harry.

"What happened to it?" asked Harry.

"Time has finally come to the path and has caused it to steadily erode away down the mountain." said Gandalf. "Now, only the wolves of Caradhras take this route."

"Chances are that we're going to meet up with one of them? Better than average?" said Harry.

"I'm afraid so." said Gandalf. He turned to face the setting sun. "We'd better find somewhere safe to rest for tonight."
Legolas looked swiftly around, then pointed. "I see someplace, up ahead."

They trudged their way, through the piling snow and made it to the spot Legolas had seen.

It was small indent in the rock, a cave that didn't go too far back, but shielded them from the falling snow and the wind. They all huddled inside, there were no trees or sticks to make a fire from, but Harry had the solution.

He took the amethyst out of his pouch and gave it a tight squeeze.

*Heat.*

Suddenly, the cave grew slowly warmer, until the snow completely melted.

"*What's going on here?*" said Boromir looking around suspiciously.

"Harry's heating the place up." said Merry.

"How does..." said Boromir.

Harry smiled warmly over to Boromir and said "That's a secret."

Boromir frowned slightly. "What sort of magic do you have?"

"Like some apprentice wizards, they can vary." said Gandalf, quickly coming to Harry's rescue.

Boromir looked at Harry skeptically, but decided to drop it.

The hobbits gathered around Harry tightly, discovering it was warmer by him.
"I'm hungry." said Pippin.

"Here you go." said Sam tossing each person a piece of bread and an apple. "I restocked the apples when Harry found them." said Sam with a smile.

"Very wise." said Legolas taking a bite of his own fruit.

Suddenly a howling sound came from out of the cave.

"Well, if someone was bored, we're about to get some excitement." said Harry standing up and unsheathing his blade.

As everyone stood up, and the hobbits were moved into the back, three wolves moved slowly into view. Their teeth were bared, and Harry could see the saliva dripping from its fangs and the steam coming from it's breath.

Strider moved forward and stood beside Harry, a savage smile on his lips. "Who wants to make the first move?"

And as if in answer, one of the wolves lunged, it's fangs ready to break and tear at the flesh at Harry's neck.

With a quick swing of his sword, Harry sliced the head off of the wolf making it's way towards him. Strider handled the two that foolishly decided he was the easier target. Legolas shot his arrows between the two swordsmen and felled beast after beast that came within his sights.

Gimli barged his way through the three of them and struck at any furry neck that reached him. Boromir and Gandalf kept the little ones back and struck down any of the wolves that were lucky to get past the front lines, but met with just as grisly an end. Soon, there were none left, either they had scampered off out of fear for their own skins, or they had simply destroyed the entire pack.

"Well, that wasn't too hard." said Pippin with a nervous smile.
"We didn't help." said Merry.

"There's more than one pack in these mountains." said Gimli.

"I was afraid he'd say that." said Merry.

So, Boromir took the first shift and kept a lookout for anymore wolves. He watched out of the corner of his eye at the young man who was surrounded by the hobbits, and sleeping gently against the wall of the cave.

It was a strange feeling, he didn't want to trust the boy, but he couldn't help but feel the slightest hint of fondness for him. Why, he couldn't really figure out. That boy tried to make a fool of him at the council meeting, and...and...that was it. He couldn't think of another reason to dislike him, except that secret power he's been hiding.

So far, he's seen the boy summon lightning, (and change his appearance slightly) change his form into that of an animal and heat the cave in which they were staying. What else can he do? Why won't he tell the rest of the company how he does it? Gandalf uses a staff, it's easy to see how he does it, but wait...if he is a wizard, where is his staff? He learned years ago that a wizard has no magical ability without his staff. Then how does this boy do it?

So many questions, and too few answers, that's why he dislikes the boy.

The next morning, they climbed out of the cave and made their way steadily further up the mountain path. Sometimes they had to huddle close the rock wall in order to dodge the cascading snow and not get swept off the mountain entirely.

Harry pushed his way forcefully through the waist deep snow, and saw with slight annoyance as Legolas tread light on top of the snow. He hadn't noticed it before, but there was no doubt that his feet had never sunk into the snow.

"How can you do that?" shouted Harry over the blizzard.

"I'm an elf!" said Legolas, not shouting as loud as the rest of them had to do just to communicate.
"Can't you melt the snow boy?" asked Boromir from the back.

"If I do, I have a bad feeling that we'll just get caught in an avalanche, or drown, which ever comes first." said Harry shouting back to Boromir.

Legolas walked a little further up the path, and stopped at the turn in the path. He looked hard into the snowstorm.

"There's a foul voice on the air." said Legolas.

They all listened hard, they heard a deep voice mingling with the storm, as if commanding it do it's will.

"It's Saruman!" shouted Gandalf, a waterfall of snow came down upon them and they had to hug the wall of the cliff in order to escape from being pushed off.

"He's trying to bring down the mountain!" shouted Aragorn. "Gandalf! We must head back!"

"No!" said Gandalf stubbornly.

Harry reached, with his frozen fingers and took out the amethyst. He gripped the stone tightly and raised his hand.

"STOP!" he bellowed.

The snowstorm raged once more, but soon began to trickle down to gentle flurry. Harry’s knees buckled slightly. What’s going on? Why am I so tired?

“You did it!” said Merry happily. But immediately the storm picked up again.

“I SAID STOP!” shouted Harry. The storm slowed down once more, finally Harry fell to his knees.
Gandalf rushed over to his side and dug him out of the snow. “I-I don’t understand.” said Harry his voice slightly weak.

“Saruman is a powerful wizard, with him fighting you, you lose strength.” said Gandalf as quietly as he could.

Then a greater shower of snow, bigger than the rest that had been trying to bury them, fell down on top of them. This time, it succeeded in burying each member of the Fellowship.

Slowly, arms and heads began to poke out of the snow and busy themselves trying to free themselves and each other.

“We must get off the mountain, make for the Gap of Rohan! And head to my city!” said Boromir shouting over the storm that came back in full force.

“The Gap of Rohan takes us too close to Isengard!” shouted Aragorn, as he tried to pull Harry to his feet, who was almost completely unconscious.

“If we cannot go over the mountain, let us go under it! Let us go through the Mines of Moria.” said Gimli sternly.

“Harry. Harry, come on. Wake up.” said Strider slapping his young friend’s face.

“So...weak....” said Harry weakly.

“Gandalf we must make a decision now! Before we lose Harry and the hobbits.” said Strider.

Gandalf looked as if a great decisive battle was going on behind his eyes. “So be it. We will go through the mines.” said Gandalf, his voice held less than no hope.

Going down the mountain was easier than going up, Strider tried to take the amethyst and will it with all he had to grow warm, but nothing happened.
“Only Harry can will it to work for another.” said Gandalf as he hurried behind him taking Harry’s other shoulder, assisting in taking Harry down the the slippery slopes.

They walked well into the night, until they reached a small woodland patch just off the mountain and made camp. Gimli built a large roaring fire to warm up the hobbits and try to revive Harry. He was still unconscious but the color was coming back into his face as he rested beside the fire.

“Will he be alright, Gandalf?” asked Pippin.

“He should be alright by morning. He had to fight the head of my order, with little or no experience. It drained his strength, that was no natural storm, it was crafted by strong magic. We will head towards the walls of Moria in the morning.” said Gandalf as he draped his traveling cloak over the sleeping figure.

Harry’s body back at Grimmauld Place shivered horribly. Sirius ran to the hall cupboard and grabbed several blankets. He met Hermione on the landing.

“I’m still not happy with you.” said Hermione stiffly as she stuck her nose in the air.

“And you think I’m happy with you? You kids can come back and join me in sitting with Harry if you learn to keep the depressing thoughts to yourself.” said Sirius pushing past Hermione. “And shouldn’t you be helping your parents cope with everything?”

“Mr. Weasley is doing that, I just want to help.” said Hermione, turning to face Sirius.

“This is way beyond you kids, you just worry about your studies.” said Sirius.

“Ron and I have...” said Hermione quickly.

“Don’t even start.” snarled Sirius. “Now let me get back to Harry.”

“We want to see Harry.” said Hermione.
“Prove to me you can keep your mouth shut.” said Sirius as he walked into Harry’s room.

He dumped the three blankets on his chair and draped the heavier, fluffier blankets over top the shivering teen. The door then opened and the kids piled into the room.

“What do you kids want?” asked Sirius tucking the blankets in around Harry.

“Hermione said we could see Harry.” said Ron.

“Did she also tell you that I said you could come in here if you learned to keep your mouths shut?” asked Sirius turning around and facing them. Hermione shrunk back slightly. “Obviously not.”

“We’re sorry for talking like we did.” said Fred.

“Can we please sit with Harry too? Mums not telling us anything on how he’s doing.” said George.

“Alright. But screw up and I’ll kick you out of here.” said Sirius. “I’ve got no patience for anyone else but Harry.”

“So how is he doing?” asked Ginny coming to the head of the bed and brushed Harry’s constantly growing hair out of his eyes. “He feels a little chilly.”

“I know, he just started shivering and I went to get some blankets for him.” said Sirius.

“Why not just put up a warming charm in the bed.” said Hermione.

“Strike one.” said Sirius pointing at her. “Dumbledore says that using magic around him is a bad idea, it could hurt him.”

“How could it...” said Hermione.
“Strike two.” said Sirius.

“Hermione! Drop it.” hissed Ron. “I don’t want to get kicked out again.”

“You wouldn’t, she would.” said Sirius.

“Here you all are.” said Remus coming inside the room. “How’s Harry today?” he asked as he made to the other side of the bed, joining Ginny as he brushed his hair back.

“He’s cold today.” said Sirius.

“What are you writing down?” asked Remus looking at the book beside the worn looking man.

“I’ve been keeping a record of everything that happens. So that if this happens to someone else, they’ll know what to do. Hopefully Harry will get better.” said Sirius.

“That’s a good idea.” said Remus. “Might avoid more Ministry trouble.”

“I hope they catch that bitch.” said George angrily.

“Amen.” said Remus, not bothering to scold the twin for his language.

They all sat in reasonable silence and watch as Harry’s shivering continued until it stopped suddenly and then they watched his chest rise and fall slowly.

The door opened again and in came Mrs. Weasley and Dumbledore.

“There you lot are.” said Mrs. Weasley sighing in relief.

“Any news Dumbledore?” asked Remus.
“Delores has vanished without a trace. Kingsley has volunteered to go and look for her, but I felt it is best if he stays here for a bit. He won’t say it, but he’s received an injury by taking two people by apparating.” said Dumbledore with a slight smile. “How is he today?” his eyes misting slightly.

“Cold.” said Ginny.

Dumbledore stepped out of the room and came back with a large blanket with a red and gold phoenix on it. “Here.”

Sirius took the blanket with a smile and tossed it lightly over the boy. “He’s going to get crushed with all these blankets.” said Sirius with a smirk.

“I still don’t see why no one can use magic in here.” said Hermione.


Hermione looked hurt, but left the room.

“You must give her some slack.” said Dumbledore. “She is trying. He was her first friend at school. I don’t mean it the way you seem to take it.” said Dumbledore looking at Sirius’s furious eyes.

“I gave her three chances.” said Sirius.

“She’s a logical thinker, she’s not one for emotions and human complexity.” said Dumbledore. “She can be quite cruel.”

“I remember that.” said Remus. “Lavender Brown came crying to me once about her rabbit and Hermione trying to rationalize the death of her pet.”

“Perhaps, instead of magical lessons, she needs to be taught some emotional knowledge.” said Dumbledore.
Umbridge was strapped to a chair with chains in the Malfoy Manor and facing the most vile and
dangerous man in the wizarding world.

“Are you ready to speak to me now?” said Voldemort with a slick smile.

Umbridge nodded earnestly.

“I thought so, the Ministry is known for it’s cowardice.” said Voldemort smoothly. “Speak.”

“W-well, I had Potter thrown through a portrait. Draco can tell you, he was there!” said Umbridge
earnestly.

“I am aware of that. What I want to know is, where is Potter...now...his body...” said Voldemort. “I
know of that painting, it cannot be removed from the castle, and it cannot be destroyed. But if I
destroy Potter’s body, silence his beating heart, then he will be trapped in that painting forever. As
good as dead, stuck in the oils for ever more.”

“I don’t know where the Potter boy is, I’ve been looking for him for weeks.” said Umbridge
quickly.

“Then I suppose I have no use for you. Take her to your cellar dungeon, I shall have someone deal
with her later.” said Voldemort.

“I can tell you everything about the Ministry!” said Umbridge rushing to save her own skin.

“I have Lucius for that.” said Voldemort with a sickening smile. "Of what use would I have for
you. I've already got the Minister of Magic in my pocket."

Umbridge looked fearfully around, trying to think of something to save her. But Voldemort had
stood up and walked out of the room, leaving her to the mercy of a masked Death Eater.
They traveled as fast as they could down to the secret door of Moria. Gimli, though he didn’t show it, he was getting quite eager to see his dwarf cousins. He was fingering his axe and telling Merry and Pippin about the great city beneath the mountains.

Legolas wasn’t all that keen on the idea, he kept stopping suddenly in the path and spent some time gazing longingly at the leaves clinging tightly to a tree. He muttered several times to himself that elves did not go underground. After Harry, (who was thinking fondly of Sirius and the rest of them), crashed into Legolas as he stood at the base of a giant pine tree, he came up with an idea. Though he wished it could have been found in a little less painful way.

The next time they passed an maple tree, Harry scampered up the tree, like he was so fond of doing to his, Hermione and Ron's favorite tree on the school grounds. If they were annoying him too much, he'd go outside climb the tree and not come down until dinnertime. He climbed to some of the greener leaves and broke off a small twig that held several green leaves on it. He climbed back down a ways and jumped the rest of the way out of the tree. He handed the twig to Legolas. Who stared at it in confusion.

"Gives you something green to look at besides your clothes while we're underground." said Harry with a smile.

Legolas looked at him, straignt into his green eyes, looked down at the branch and slowly followed Borormir down the incline.

Too bad you aren't an elf, you'd make a fine husband for my sister, and a wonderful brother.

Harry lagged behind and looked out onto the vast landscape, his thoughts dwelling back to Hogwarts, and all those people he left behind. Then, a blonde barmaid crept into his mind.

I knew it, you aren't going to make leaving this world any easier. thought Harry sadly.

"Harry! Keep up!" came Strider's voice.

"Alright, alright." said Harry rushing after them. "I'm coming."

It was a almost two weeks till they finally located the secret door to Moria. Well, at least Gandalf said it was a door.

"It's a wall." said Harry plainly staring at the large rock wall.

"It's got to be like the door from the Lonely Mountain." said Merry excitedly.

"So how many days are we going to have to sit here and wait for the lock to appear?" asked Pippin.

"Do we have a key?" asked Merry.

"A key is not needed," said Gandalf gruffly. "All we require to reveal the door should be here." he said looking up into the sky, the sun was beginning to set. "We will have to wait for nightfall. and hope for a clear night."
"Joyful." said Harry under his breath.

"What's wrong?" asked Sam.

"Something about this place, I don't like it." said Harry quietly. "I can't pinpoint it, but something just feels wrong."

"Don't keep those feelings to yourself, could be the deciding factor, between life and death." said Strider.

The wind rushed past them, causing Harry to pull his hood up, the coldness of the mountain seemed to have followed them, and Harry was still slightly weakened from the storm battle atop the peaks. He needed to be stronger, magically speaking. How he was going to become stronger was beyond his guess.

They waited patiently, except for Merry and Pippin who were extremely fidgity, beside the pool of water. Harry would have tried to catch some fish, but he didn't trust anything in there near vacinity. Strider took Sam aside and told him that they would have to send Bill the pony off.

"But Bill won't mind it, he can go in." said Sam earnestly. He loved his Bill, while they were in Rivendell, he made sure that Bill got well taken care of. Adding at least twenty pounds to the horse's weight and groomed to perfection. Sam beleived he could coax Bill to follow him anywhere.

"A mine's no place for a pony, even one so brave as Bill." said Strider softly.

"I don't want to lose Bill." said Sam worriedly.

"He knows the way home." said Strider. "He'll head right back to Rivendell."

"You sure he won't head back to Bree?" asked Pippin.

Sam blanched. "That's where we bought him. I don't want Bill Ferny to get ahold of him."

"He knows where he got the most food and comfort, he'll head to Rivendell." said Strider with a smile. He removed the packs off of Bill's back and removed the bridle. He patted Bill's hindquarters and Bill set off slowly in the direction that they had come.

"Don't worry Sam." said Harry walking up behind the small hobbit, and smacking the back of Pippin's head lightly. "He'll be alright. He got off that mountain alright didn't he? He can handle a few kilometers."

"Kilometer?" asked Strider.

"It's a way of judging distance back home." said Harry trying to explain.

He kneeled down amongst the packs and opened each one. "Let's divide these up, I'm not really seeing anything in here we can afford to leave behind. Do you Strider?"

Strider kneeled beside him and looked inside the packs. "You learn fast. No, nothing. Everything comes with us." He looked at the two hobbits eyeing the bread in one of the packs. "I think the three of us should carry the food."

"Good plan." said Harry with a smirk over to the crestfallen hobbits.
"I'll carry my pots and pans. There aren't very many of them." said Sam.

Each person, except for Frodo and Gandalf, took on more things in their packs. Frodo had the ring to bear and that was enough, though he did insist on taking some of the smaller things, Strider and Harry both figured that since Gandalf was leading them, (and also the estimated age of the man) they wouldn't ask him to carry anything that he didn't already have in his own small pack.

Soon, all the equipment and food from Bill's packs were loaded into the Fellowship's bags. Gimli insisted he could take more, while Legolas complained quietly that the weight would throw off his agility. Harry asked if they could compromise, Gimli could take more, Legolas wanted less, so Legolas could give Gimli some of his pack.

"Stubborn..." muttered Harry. Gimli stomped off, and Legolas kept a firm hold on his pack.

"I've got enough." growled Gimli.

"I'm strong, it won't affect me." said Legolas darkly.

"I'm going to lose my mind." said Harry.

"Nothing will get them to work together. Besides a battle." said Gandalf with a chuckle.

"If I could stand even a fraction of a chance against them, I'd take them on." said Harry.

The sun had finally completed it's daily job and decided to rest for the night. Gandalf and the rest of them watched in amazement as moonlight seemed to have been absorbed right into the rock and reflected it's light in the outline of a door, with funny looking writing across it.

Harry turned to look at the water, it stirred slightly. He couldn't tell if it were a fish or just his imagination.

"...speak friend and enter." said Gandalf's voice penetrating Harry's ears and bringing him out of his thoughts.

"What do you suppose that means?" asked Merry.

"It's very simple, if you're a friend, you speak the password and the door will open." said Gandalf.

He turned to face the door, gestured dramatically with his arms and shouted strange words that Harry, if he had a guess, would be elvish.

Nothing happened.

Again Gandalf shouted more elvish words, and again the door didn't alter it's appearance.

"We sure this is the right door?" asked Pippin.

"How many other doors like this do you think are around here?" asked Harry with a smirk.

For two hours this went on, Gandalf must have said a hundred different phrases in elvish. Harry didn't dare ask Strider what each of them were, for fear of being punched for being annoying.
Legolas leaned against an old dead tree, waiting patiently, silently hoping they would not be able to gain access. Gimli was fidgeting once more, he couldn't wait to get inside.

"Why doesn't Gimli tell Gandalf the password?" asked Sam.

"Gimli doesn't know it." said Strider. "His cousins never sent word on what the passwords were, and it may be possible that they didn't take this path, they may have entered Moria through another passage."

Suddenly Harry heard a loud splash. Then another one followed, Harry turned and saw Merry and Pippin tossing large rocks into the lake.

Strider rushed over and grabbed Pippin's arm. "Do not disturb the water." he said quietly.

"Oh, it's no use." said Gandalf taking his hat off his head and tapping his staff down on the rock hard.

Frodo looked up at the door inquisitively.

Harry looked over at the water, and saw that something underneath it was stirring, and his instincts were kicking into high gear.

*Get out of there.*

"We need to move." said Harry to Strider.

"What is it?" asked Strider.

"The water." said Harry looking over at the lake.

"What's the elvish word for 'friend'?" asked Frodo loudly.

"*Mellon.*" said Gandalf looking slightly confused at Frodo.

They all jumped when the door slowly opened to reveal a dark tunnel behind it. They gathered up their supplies and began to cautiously enter the dark mine.

"Soon Master Elf, you will enjoy the fabled hospitality of the dwarves! Roaring fires, malt beer, red meat off the bone." said Gimli with a smile hiding behind his thick beard.

Harry could only shake his head, from what he remembered from Rivendell, Elves didn't eat their meat "Right off the bone" they carved it up in the kitchens and served it with delicate sauces and spices and surrounded by vegetables. He had the distinct feeling that in this place, Legolas might be going without meat for a while.

"And they call it a *mine*. A *mine!*" said Gimli with a laugh, Harry reverted back to the present and took in their surroundings completely, he felt his stomach plummet. There were skeletons, in full armor all over the place. They were covered in cobwebs and feathered with crude looking arrows. The only light was coming from Gandalf's staff and a torch that Boromir had lit.

"This is no mine." said Boromir shakily.

"This is a tomb." said Harry staring horrified at the surrounding scene.

Gimli's face fell from pride, to shock and finally a mixture of grief and horror. Legolas dropped beside a skeletal corpse and pulled out one of the arrows. "*Goblins!*" he hissed and drew his bow
and reached for an arrow from his quiver.

"We should never have come here." said Boromir. "We make for the Gap of Rohan, now everyone get out!"

"Get out!" said Gandalf feircely.

They began to back out of the mine slowly, then Harry heard Frodo screaming and Sam yelling for Strider's help.

“STRIDER!” shouted Sam.

Harry turned to see something that looked like the giant squid from Hogwarts' tentacles holding Frodo high up into the air.

"Octi?" said Harry weakly. But in the next moment, he knew it wasn't the Giant Squid of the school lake. This thing...was a monster, a monster he had never seen the likes of before.

Strider pushed Harry back to protect the hobbits. "It's not safe for them, keep them back!" shouted Strider.

Harry shook his head and began to drag the hobbits deeper into the mine. Gandalf led them further along, until they heard a crashing sound coming from behind them. A cascade of rocks fell in pursuit of the Fellowship and Harry felt one fall right in front of him. A sharp pain struck him he faltered slightly closing his right eye, but he continued onward.

Harry looked behind him and saw Boromir carrying Frodo with Aragorn right behind him. The large appendages of the beast were still trying to bring down the cave until they finally out ran it, and was protected by the wall of fallen rocks. Unfortunately that meant going through the goblin conquered-dwarven mine.

Harry tried to look around in the thick darkness with his good eye, but he could see nothing. In the confusion, Gandalf's staff had gone out, but once he tapped the ground with it, it relit itself.

"We have but one choice, to face the long dark of Moria." said Gandalf.

Boromir placed Frodo down on the ground and looked absently over to the boy. He recieved a bit of a shock. The scar that unfortunately adorned Harry's forehead was now considerably longer, it cut down his left eye and down his cheek. And it was bleeding heavily.

Strider noticed that Boromir was staring at Harry and turned to see what attracted his attention.

"Harry!" said Strider in a hushed voice.

"Huh?" said Harry looking over at Strider, his eye still closed.

"You've been injured!" said Strider coming over and wiping the blood off of Harry's face.

"This is starting to be a recurring theme." said Harry bitterly.

Strider cleaned the wound on Harry's face and it finally stopped it's bleeding.

"You'll have a scar." said Strider dabbing a handkercheif on Harry's eyelid and wrapping a long piece of cloth around it.

"I'll add it to my collection." said Harry with a smirk.
"Is his eye damaged?" asked Merry worriedly.

"I don't know, didn't exactly try it. We'll find out when it heals up a bit." said Harry with a smile. "I'm really starting to think that maybe waiting at Rivendell would have been the better bet."

They followed Gandalf deep into mine being carefully warned by him not to make any sound. They hoped that they would pass through the darkness, without letting any remaining goblins know they were there. Though Harry figured Gandalf's light would be a dead give away if a goblin were to be passing by or on patrol.

They continued on, without the ability to tell night in day and the threat of a goblin invasion at any moment they didn't stop until they could no longer summon the strength to go on.

Fires were forbidden and so was cooking food, the smell would no doubt attract somebody's attention and they would come to investigate. When they did finally stop, they ate as silently as they could, and drank as little as possible. There were no rivers, no streams that they could use, and they weren't about to try and operate one of the wells they had passed. Once a day, they were allowed a sip of the elvish water that Willadow had given Harry, but even that was beginning to run low.

"The squeaking of the pulley, the thud of the bucket or the splash of the water might attract attention. We will make do with what we have." said Legolas to a thirsty Merry.

Harry looked cautiously around, looking for moments in the darkness, but his Seeker eyes caught nothing. His left eye wasn't pounding anymore by the time the third rest period came. Strider removed his bandage and Harry tried out his eye. He could see all of them with his right eye just fine, but his left...nothing.

Gandalf looked into Harry's eye. "It doesn't appear damaged, perhaps if we let it rest a few more days."

"I hope so." said Harry quietly. "Being half-blind in this world wouldn't be the best thing."

"Some people make do with it, I know an old Rohirrim man that has survived many battles with that one eye." said Strider with a smile.

Harry returned his smile, but he couldn't help but feel a bit homesick. Since he got that new scar, whenever he laid down to sleep, he could see Sirius and everyone else, standing over him, saying something and looking worried, he never heard them, as if his ears weren't working. He could tell he was in Grimmauld Place, in Ron and his bedroom. He tried so hard but he couldn't lift his arms and touch any of them in his dream, but seeing them, it helped him a little.

Onward they went, keeping as quiet as possible, dreading the moment, if it came, that they would be discovered. Harry prayed with all his heart that they all would get out alright. He didn't want to lose the hobbits, Legolas, Gimli, Boromir and especially not Gandalf and Strider.

In the case of Strider, he felt the same feeling for him like he did for Sirius, a brother and a father all rolled into one. As for Gandalf, well, before Dumbledore decided to abandon him, he had the same connection with him too.

His heart ached whenever he thought of them, when he got back, the first thing he was going to do
was just hold Sirius close to him, and not let go for the longest time. Dumbledore, first he'd punch him square in the face, hugging would come later.

They came to a large elevated dias, where there were three different directions they could take, Harry had a sickening feeling, one would get them hopelessly lost, one was the continuing path out, and the other would lead straight into the horde of goblins. Thank goodness, that Gandalf knew which way to go.

Gandalf however didn't move from where he stopped.

"I have no memory of this place." said Gandalf in a low voice.

Or...they could be stuck there for awhile....
Sirius came back from the bathroom and sat back down in his chair, he reached to pick up the book he was reading he looked up at Harry's face and nearly screamed. Harry's face was covered in blood from a deep cut on his face.

"What the..? Harry! How the hell do you get hurt so often?" said Sirius worriedly.

He ripped open the drawer and yanked out a bunch of bandages, he worked feverishly to try and staunch the flow of blood. He tipped several potions down Harry's mouth and finally the bleeding subsided. He lifted Harry's eyelid to inspect his eye, to see if the eye wasn't damaged.

"Oh my GOD!" screamed Sirius.

There was a crash from downstairs and in an instant the door burst open, everyone that was in the house, Dumbledore, the Weasleys, the Grangers, and several members of the Order, was now crammed into the room.

"What is it?" asked Mr. Weasley quickly.

"Did Harry wake up?" asked Ron.

"Oh Merlin! He's hurt again!" said Bill.

"Sirius!" said Remus shoving over to Sirius.

"His eye! Look at his eye." said Sirius frantically.

Dumbledore rushed to the front of the bed, his stomach twisted into a knot when he saw the newly formed scar on his young charge's face and looked into the boy's eye.

The brilliant green color that normally danced in his eye, was no longer present, but replaced with milky white. There wasn't even a pupil anymore. Dumbledore's face whitened, he gently lifted Harry's right eyelid. But this eye was fine just as bright and beautiful as ever.

"Dumbledore what's going on? You say you know something about this crown thing on Harry's head, now his left eye is hurt! You better start talking before I start swinging," said Sirius grabbing the old man tightly by the collar.

Dumbledore sighed heavily and sank weakly down on the bed beside Harry. He took Harry's limp hand into his own shaking one.

"Where do I start?" said Dumbledore heavily. "At the beginning I shouldn't wonder, I was quite young when I first saw that crown; still within my teen years I believe. It was adorning the head of a man who came to Hogwarts, the entire school was up in an uproar, none of the students knew why, but the teachers were gathering papers, and rushing about quite agitated."

"What was going on?" asked Fred.

"I'm getting there." said Dumbledore with a slight smile. "It wasn't long till this man came, every student was to stand at attention at each of their house tables. He walked up and down each table, looking at everyone individually. Not saying a word, once he looked at the last person, he shook his head and left."
"That's it, he didn't say a single thing?" asked Hermione.

"Not one word to us, but the Headmaster at the time ran after him and tried to speak with him. It turns out, that that man was looking for an heir of sorts." said Dumbledore.

"An heir?" asked George.

"An heir to what?" asked Ron.

"We do not know. We were never officially told. Though, from the crown upon his head, we assumed the greatest of kingdoms." said Dumbledore.

"What kingdom?" asked Hermione.

"Think of it this way, the muggle world each has their own rulers appointed heads do they not?" asked Dumbledore.

"Yes." said Hermione slowly.

"Well, our world is somewhat similar, only we have one ruler. One absolute ruler, wherever there is magic of any sorts, he is there. That man was called King Meandenbor, a kind and powerful man," said Dumbledore fondly. "Though, with the corruption of the lesser branches of government, he has become...rather disgusted with us."

"But wouldn't that mean he's partly at fault for not taking action?" asked Hermione.

"You would think that, but the Kings created the governments here, in almost mirror image of the Muggle world so that he may spend most of his time maintaining the balance." said Dumbledore.

"What?" asked Ron.

Dumbledore thought carefully. "It's said that in Castle Valor, there is a room atop the highest tower, and inside is a giant orb, made of diamond and crystal. One side reflects the muggle-borns and the other reflects the pure-blood. If, for example, the diamond side overtakes the crystal's side, then whichever side the crystal represented, that side would experience a drop in magical strength, and their numbers would decrease."

"Which side is which?" asked Ginny.

"No one knows. It takes many decades of complete neglect for it to show." said Dumbledore. "No one has seen King Meandenbor for many, many years. We are unsure if he is even alive."

"What?" said Hermione. "So we've gone a long time without a king? If we can get on without him, then..."

"Miss Granger..." said Dumbledore his voice suddenly like steel. "Do not disrespect someone you do not even know. Besides, if we do not have anyone keeping the world's magic in balance, half of the our world will collapse, and soon after the others. We won't be the only casualties, every magical being in will suffer as well."

"So what does that have to do with Harry?" said Sirius.

"Perhaps, he will be King Meandenbor's new heir." said Dumbledore giving Harry's hand a squeeze. "Though I do hope that is not the case."

"Why do you say that?" asked Bill. "Being king might help the fight against You-Know-Who."
"He'd be a wicked king." said Ron with an excited smile.

"Harry is already burdened with hardships, especially right now, he doesn't need added trouble." said Dumbledore.

"True, we can't even wake him up." said Remus.

"That's not the only problem, we'd never see him ever again." said Dumbledore sadly.

"He'd make time for us." said Hermione with certainty.

"He would try of course, but it would never happen. He has the whole world to look after." said Dumbledore.

"Hang on! This king person could still be alive, I mean, you don't know for a fact if he's dead yet do you?" asked Mrs. Granger worriedly.

"That's right." said Dumbledore.

"Then there may be a chance that he's still alive and looking for an heir, why not go to this Castle Valor and find him." said Mr. Granger. "Ask him about how to wake Harry up and then ask him about the whole crown business."

"A good notion, but alas, there's a problem with that idea." said Dumbledore with a sigh.

"What's that?" asked Mrs. Weasley.

"Castle Valor isn't in any country." said Dumbledore he pointed a long finger up to the ceiling. "It's travels in the air. It's hardly ever in the same place twice."

"How can a...nevermind...I can barely understand Hermione when she comes home for the summer." said Mr. Granger with a smile towards his daughter.

Dumbledore reached over, and gently pulled down Harry's eyelid, hiding the milky orb and kissed the boy's forehead.

"I'll go and find the castle, if it's the last thing I do." said Dumbledore.

Suddenly, Kingsley Shacklebolt came into the room. "We just got word, Umbridge's been found."

"Finally, let's go ask the bitch what she did to Harry!" said Remus angrily. "Still say she's behind it."

"That might be hard to prove." said Kingsley.

"Why do you say that?" asked Mrs. Weasley. "Just give her Veritiserum."

"Can't give it to the dead. According to St. Mungos, she was burnt alive."

Harry leaned against a large stone slab and closed his good eye. He had been feeling a bit tired and with Aragorn's solemn promise that he would watch his packs against Merry and Pippin, he settled down for a rest.

Every time he closed his eyes, he could still see Sirius and a few of the others. Now
Dumbledore was in the picture, he didn't feel like punching Dumbledore anymore. Well, at least not at that point, maybe he'd settle for a slap.

Aragorn noticed a tear slowly falling down Harry's cheek.

"Seems the boy is weaker than we thought." said Boromir with sneer.

"How would you like it if you were unceremoniously dropped in a strange world with absolutely nothing to aid your or cover your naked body?" snapped Strider. "I think he's doing better than most grown men could."

Legolas and Gimli stared at the youth who was now quietly moaning. Aragorn placed a callused hand over the boy's mouth, but he heard the boy give a sort of choked cry.

"No, don't kill them, please, take me. Leave them." moaned Harry quietly. He jerked back awake and found Strider's hand covering his mouth.

"Cn uh hmm ooh." mumbled Harry.

"What was that?" asked Strider removing his hand.

"Can I help you?" repeated Harry with a smirk.

"You were moaning." said Strider. "I wanted to keep you quiet in case you got any louder."

"Oh, sorry. Well, it was nice not having those dreams for a while." said Harry quietly.

"I'm bored." whined Pippin.

"Yeah, me too. Harry? Could you finish the story that you were telling us at Rivendell?" asked Merry crawling over to where Harry was.

"I don't remember where I left off." said Harry.

"It was when you finally found Peter and then he got away." said Pippin eagerly.

Harry cleared his throat as the hobbits drew closer to listen to his story. Frodo looked away quickly, then hurried up to Gandalf.

"Am I that boring?" asked Harry with a smile. He didn't mention that he noticed Frodo looking very worried.

"No, he's always sort of been close to Gandalf." said Merry.

"Come on! Get on with the story!" said Pippin.

Legolas, Gimli, Strider and Boromir sat a short distance away from the rest of the group, catching different snippets of the story being told.

"And here you thought he was weak." said Gimli with a smirk as Harry reached the part about confronting the dragon.

"I cannot believe he would want to go back. It seems more trouble than it is worth." said Legolas.

"I guess, home is home." said Strider.
Suddenly, Gandalf made a sound. "Oh! It's that way." said Gandalf with a smile.

"He's remembered!" said Merry excitedly.

"No, it's just the air doesn't smell so foul down there. When in doubt, Meriadoc, always follow your nose."

"Sounds like the breakfast cereal slogan." said Harry with a smile.

They traveled slowly down the dark stairs, and Harry's fingers were almost permanently crossed by now. They reached the end of the stairs and taking a huge risk, Gandalf brightened the end of his staff.

Harry looked around with wide eyes. This place would hold at least three Great Halls, and still have room for the Entrance Hall.

"Behold the dwarf city of Dwarrowdelf." said Gandalf.

"There's an eye opener and no mistake." said Sam.

They continued onward into the dark city, Harry had to squint with his good eye to see the dark buildings on the sides of vast open area.

*If this place were properly lit, this would be something even more wonderful.* thought Harry with a bright smile. He could almost picture the dwarves hustling and bustling about the columns and tinging of hammers on metal.

The walked deeper down the city, until Gimli gave a shout and rushed towards a room that seemed to overflow with light.

"Gimli!" said Gandalf quickly.

They all ran after Gimli into the light filled room.

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Dumbledore hurried back to Hogwarts, arranged for Moody to come back and teach temporarily, and asked Hagrid for a thestral.

"How's Harry?" asked Hagrid quietly. "Has he woken up yet?"

"Not yet, and I'm very worried. But if I can have a thestral, perhaps I can remedy that." said Dumbledore, though his voice didn't have the certainty it always did.

"Here, take this one, he's the strongest of the bunch." said Hagrid leading one forward. "Is there anything I can do ter help? I can guard him or somethin'."

"Sirius is doing that, but I'm sure an extra prayer wouldn't be amiss." said Dumbledore quietly as he climbed upon the thestral's back.

Hagrid's face fell slightly.

Dumbledore gave him a reassuring smile. "I'll see if Grubbly-Plank can come and take over your classes, then you can go and join Sirius on guard duty."

"I'd appreciate it." said Hagrid with a smile.
Dumbledore smiled, and then spurred the thestral into the air. *I'll send word when I land to rest. I MUST find him.* thought Dumbledore determinately.
Fleeing Moria

Harry didn't know how everything went to hell, it all pretty much happened so fast.

They had followed Gimli into the brightly lit room was met with a tragic scene for Gimli to behold. The room was bathed in light that had to have been coming from reflectors that led to this room, and it rested on a large tomb in the middle. Harry could tell, the only reason the reflectors were even put in, was for the purpose of honoring someone.

The moment Gimli saw it; he fell to his knees and wept.

Harry wanted to walk over and put a comforting hand on Gimli's shoulder, but a sound stopped him. It was music. His pulse raced, the sound was bouncing off the almost empty room, and it would take him hours to find it. He took out the compass in his pocket and held it out. The compass turned slowly around and faced the area to the left of him.

He walked over in that direction and didn’t stop until the compass started spinning around in a circle. He looked down and saw a loose piece of stone in the wall. He gently took the stone out of the wall, causing several spiders to skittle down and away from the monster that had removed the stone that had guarded their home for generations. He peered inside the hole and saw a small box inside.

He pulled the box carefully out of the wall, and gently blew the dust off the lid. It a beautiful silver box gilded with gold and set with beautiful rubies. He felt a stirring in his stomach, he didn't want to give it to Gimli, and he didn't even want to show him the box. Harry had to shake his head, to get rid of the thoughts in his head.

He stood up and walked slowly over to the rest of the Fellowship. They were looking over the room slowly. Harry walked over to Gandalf and held the box out for him to see.

"I found this." said Harry quietly.

Gandalf looked down at the box and took ahold of it, but Harry wouldn't let go.

"Something wrong?" he asked.

"I think you might have to pry my fingers loose." said Harry slowly.

"Ah, a common dwarf protection." said Gandalf with a smile. "You must have found a great treasure; I am quite amazed that you brought it to my attention."

"I didn't want to..." said Harry. "Still barely want to."

Gandalf pried the young man's fingers off the box, and opened it slowly. Inside he saw several diamonds, different sizes and different cuts, each a flawless bit of starlight.

"Don't you already have a diamond?" asked Gandalf.

"Yeah, but the music and compass led me right to it." said Harry.

"King Meandenbor had one of each stone that can be found in the world." said Gandalf stirring the contents of the box with his finger.

Harry's eye flicked open wider when he saw a flash of amber. "There." said Harry pointing into the
box. He didn’t want to touch the box again, Gandalf tried to be gentle when prying his hand loose, but it didn’t quite work, he could feel his hands almost bruised and shiny with light burns.

Gandalf stirred the contents a little more, until he found the stone. "A topaz." said Gandalf, holding the jewel up. "Here you are." he handed the jewel to Harry. Harry looked at the jewel intently.

"Let's give this to Gimli." said Gandalf with smile. Harry flashed him an angry look, but shook his head quickly, then nodded. "I'll take that as a yes." said Gandalf with a fond smile.

Gandalf patted Harry's shoulder and placed the box gently on the tomb's lid. Gimli looked up and stared at the box. "The treasure...of Khazad-Dum." said Gimli with a shaky voice. He opened the box slowly, tears falling from his eyes. "I will protect it, with my life."

Harry smiled faintly. The grip that held his stomach hostage was gone, and he could finally relax. He’d have to ask Gimli what was so special about those stones later.

Gandalf gave Pippin his hat and staff as he made his way over to a large book being held in the final death grip of a skeletal dwarf. He took the book, showing the departed as much dignity as he could, and opened it slowly.

He turned to the back of the book and read aloud. "They have taken the bridge. And the second hall, we cannot get out. Drums, drums in the deep. We cannot get out."

Harry looked around the room; he didn't want to hear in detail how Gimli’s people were wiped out. It was bad enough in his third year that he had to listen to his own parents lives extracted from their bodies. He didn't want to hear anything like that again.

Suddenly he heard a great crash and turned to face Pippin, he was staring ashen faced at the well that was in the back of the room. Several echoing crashes came soon after as, whatever he knocked down the well, continued to fall down the abyss.

Harry's breath froze in his lungs until finally the banging of the unknown object crashed for the last time, once he was sure no sound came afterward, he released the air from his lungs. Pippin had winced every time that the object crashed against something deep below them.

"Fool of a Took! Throw yourself in next time and rid us of your stupidity!" hissed Gandalf, taking his staff and hat forcefully from the hobbit.

Pippin looked down in shame, but suddenly a pounding came from deep down the well. They turned their eyes fearfully towards the gaping hole. They could hear the pounding getting louder and louder and then a new sound came to their ears, shrieking.

"Frodo!" said Sam. Frodo pulled out his small sword, Harry couldn't believe it, it was glowing.

“Why is...” said Harry pointing at the sword.

"Goblins!" hissed Legolas.

Harry grasped the hilt of his sword and pulled it swiftly from his sheath. His own blade glowing, but strangely, it wasn't blue, but red with a gold streak down the middle.

"Brace the door! Little ones stay close to Gandalf!" said Strider as he, Boromir, and Legolas made to brace the door. Harry took a step to help them, but Strider held out his sword. "That means you too."
Harry scowled and took another step, to say that he could help and that he wasn’t a little one, but Gandalf pulled him back. "We cannot lose you, or Frodo. You both have great tasks you must complete, do not fall to lucky arrows." said Gandalf quietly.

Harry grudgingly stayed back, but readied his sword, Velairion.

*A true battle at last.* said a voice.

Harry looked quickly around, but he saw no one, and this voice didn't belong to anyone that was there.

*Great now I'm hearing voices. This day is just getting better and better.* thought Harry darkly.

*I couldn't agree more. I was afraid I was going to be forgotten. I was expecting you to fly into battle soon after I was given to you.* said the voice with a sneer.

*What the hell?* thought Harry looking at the sword.

*You're quick-witted, I like that.* said the voice, he could hear the smirk behind the voice. *Want me to take over? Like I did at the cottage?*

*I can fight my own battles.* thought Harry frustrated.

*Goblins and wolves are two different beings, wolves don't have bows, arrows, swords and spears.* said the voice.

Harry shook his head, but he decided to play nice, he'll contemplate why his sword was talking to him later, now really wasn't the time. *Can we work together?*

*I'll settle for that.* said the voice smoothly.

Harry steeled himself just in time for Boromir to groan. "They have a cave troll."

"Oh not again." said Harry rolling his eyes. He looked up and saw a stalactite hanging from the ceiling. *I can handle that.*

*Just remember you have goblins to fight too, don't focus all your attentions on the troll.* said the voice.

Harry nodded, he tightened his grip on his sword. *Let the fun begin,* both Harry and the voice seemed to say at the same time.

He watched with vicious glee as Legolas shot several arrows into the holes of the door that the foul creatures beyond had made with their swords and axes. Soon, the doors crashed open and the room was flooded with goblins, each one had a twisted and wicked looking face.

*Let's go, boy.* said the voice.

Harry lunged forward and swung his sword, the sharpness of the blade cut the goblin cleanly in half. He moved about the room, slicing through every goblin that came his way, and keeping well in front of the stalactite on the ceiling.

Soon, he had to go chasing after the goblins that were themselves, chasing the hobbits around. The goblins soon discovered that if they went towards either the bigger people, or the short one with the beard, they were cut down instantly. The little ones, were inexperienced and better targets. Harry, however, dashed that advantage and kept guard over the hobbits.
Then...the troll came in...

The goblins began to scatter rush out of the room, hoping to avoid injury from the overgrown, brainless, behemoth. Harry looked up at the ceiling; the troll was still too far away for the stalactite to do much damage. *He* had to lure it to where he wanted it to go.

Harry leapt over to the tomb, the word 'Balin' sticking in his memory, and stood atop it.

*Show respect!* scolded the voice.

"*Will in a minute. Over here Big Boy!*" shouted Harry tossing a rock at the troll's eye. The troll roared and came stomping over to Harry, squashing orcs and goblins under it's feet as it went.

"That's it, little closer." A second later, the troll was right where Harry needed him to be. Harry reached deep into his pouch, grabbed the amethyst and brought it out.

*Lightning!* thought Harry, a bright flash of electricity shot from the stone and crashed into the ceiling, right above the stalactite. The rock cracked and it fell, impaling itself in the troll's skull. The remaining goblins ran for their lives.

"That was gross." said Harry staring at what little brain matter the troll had; start oozing out of the skull.

"Nicely handled though." said Gandalf. "It prevented anyone else from being hurt."

"*Very good, very good.*" said the voice approvingly.

"Frodo!" shouted Sam, they all turned and saw Frodo slumped against the wall, his eyes were closed and there was a spear sticking perpendicular out of the side of his abdomen. Strider, Sam and Gandalf hurried over to him, Strider took the spear away from Frodo's body. Harry could see that Frodo was pale, he looked dead.

He picked the small body up off the ground, and prepared to run out of the room, taking the small frame with him.

"I can walk." said a voice coming from Frodo's body.

"I thought you were *dead!*" said Strider in a whisper.

"No time, we must go!" said Gandalf hurriedly. He ushered them onward, out of the tomb of Balin and into the large hall. Harry looked up and saw what looked like the upside down version of ants crawling out of an anthill. *They were going to die.*

Harry reached into his pouch and brought out the topaz stone. Desperation hopefully worked in his favor this time. "Hope this doesn't do them any good." He held the stone up into the air as he ran. Suddenly a large piece of rock came out of the ground a few feet away from them and slammed itself into hole, stopping more of them from coming out.

"Love it." said Harry with a smile as he continued to run.

They continued running as fast as they could down the hall, until they found their path blocked by a battalion of goblins. They slowly moved their way towards the Fellowship. Gandalf extended his sword, in a silent gesture that Harry took to mean *'Back the hell up!'*

The goblins circled around the fellowship and prepared to close the circle in quick. Harry took the topaz out of his pouch and prepared to bring down a large part of the ceiling if he had to. He hoped
it would work again, and that it wasn't a fluke or that he misinterpreted the power.

Suddenly another pounding came from the tunnel off the room, only the sound wasn't the only thing that was came. A red glow came from the tunnel, along with pounding sounds came a great roar.

The goblins began to scatter and climb up the pillars, and stuffed themselves into any crack in the ceiling they could find.

Gandalf bowed his head slightly as he listened to the roar.

"What the devil is that?" asked Boromir.

"A Balrog, a creature of the ancient world. This power is beyond any of you....RUN!" shouted Gandalf as he turned and led them down another corridor. Strider had to clasp onto Harry's arm and pull him along with them.

"Now is not the time to freeze." he hissed.

They ran as fast as they could down several flights of stairs, until Boromir nearly toppled to his death in his haste to follow Gandalf's orders.

"Lead them on, Aragorn." said Gandalf bringing up the rear; he allowed the others to go ahead of him on the stairs. "The bridge is near." They all peered into the distance; Harry could see a thin stone bridge, that was near?

Strider made a move to go back and fight whatever terror it was that haunted their steps, but Gandalf stopped him. "Do as I say!" shouted Gandalf pushing Strider back. "Swords are no more use here."

They picked up their pace again and raced onward. The hobbits were getting tired and their own pace was slowing. They were about to come to the consensus of picking up the hobbits and carrying them, when they came to the strangest looking staircase Harry had ever seen.

Before they could even think about getting down the second set of stairs, a large rock came down and smashed a part of stairs. Legolas looked at the distance and jumped nimbly down to the opposite side.

"Come on Gandalf!" said Legolas urgently. Gandalf took a step back and leapt with all his strength and landed in the outstretched arms of Legolas. Boromir picked up Merry and Pippin and leapt over the space with a shout, however as he landed, a few of the steps fell away into the deep chasm beneath them, never to return.

Harry looked at the distance himself and thought that it was either now or never. Harry took several steps back and leapt. He landed into Gandalf and Boromir's outreaching arms and caught him gently.

Harry turned and after he help catch Sam, he saw that only Gimli, Strider, and Frodo were left behind. Gimli stopped Strider before he could even think about tossing him like he did Sam.

“No one tosses a dwarf!” said Gimli. He took a giant leap, but fell slightly short. The only thing that kept him from falling to his death was Legolas grabbing his beard and pulling him forward.

“Not the beard!” said Gimli from his teetering position.
They pulled Gimli to safety but another rock fell the gap became even wider. Harry couldn’t see how they were going to get over to their side, especially with the snipers on the walls. Legolas pulled out his bow and quickly pelted the air with arrows. Each arrow met a target and said target met the ground almost a mile beneath them.

Harry was about to bring out the topaz, but soon the staircase began to move back and forth slowly, teetering by the great weight held by the increasingly shrinking support pillar. Harry stared in amazement as Strider maneuvered the stairs so that they didn’t have far to jump at all.

Once they got reunited with each other, they continued down the stairs and didn’t stop. They didn’t halt even when they were met with a wall of intense flames right beside them. Harry was right ahead of Gandalf and had crossed the bridge halfway before he had turned and saw Gandalf was facing a giant....Harry could only describe it as a demon.

It’s entire body was covered in hellish flames, two smouldering horns came curling out of his head, his eyes, nostrils, and mouth gave off a light as if a furnace were inside the beast’s body.

"Get across the bridge!" shouted Gandalf as he turned and ran towards him. Harry's good eye was opened wide in shock.

Now Boy! shouted the voice. He felt his sword almost him drag backwards to the end of the bridge. He came back to his senses and pulled out the topaz, he slammed his fist up into the air and a wall of rock came shooting up, stopping the monster in it's track. He turned and ran; Gandalf followed him onto the bridge.

Harry thought they were home free, but the rock that he summoned up was smashed by the Balrog in a furious rage. Harry was on the other side of the bridge, but Gandalf was still in the middle of the bridge. Gandalf turned to face the monster, suddenly every sound that was pounding through his ears, was now silenced, and the entire world was slowed.

He could see the Balrog slowly bring it's whip, like a thin lash of fire, down trying to strike Gandalf, Gandalf deflected it and parried the sword of fire at the same time. Gandalf brought his staff up slowly.

Suddenly the world of silence was broken for one terrible moment.

"You shall not pass!" he bellowed and brought his staff slamming into the ground, the rock underneath the Balrog's feet crumbled away and despite its blazing wings, it fell into the abyss.

Harry slowly breathed, it was over. Gandalf turned to go over to the rest of the Fellowship, but the monster’s whip came shooting out of the darkness and pulled him back to the ledge that Gandalf had made, and knocked his sword and staff off into the pit. Harry made to run to the wizard's aid, still dwelling in silence and almost frozen in time. Strider caught him and held him back.

Harry could see Gandalf's eyes wide with what he deemed fear, he saw his mouth move to say something, but Harry couldn't hear or understand his words, then...the man, the one man he thought could get him home, the man who he had become so fond of, let go of the ledge.

He fell, and with him, Harry's hopes of ever seeing Hogwarts again.

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Sirius cleaned each wound that settled on his godson's body, he was developing bruises, even more cuts and his breathing, instead of normal breaths, became pants and sweat poured off his temple and entire body.
Harry's cuts were becoming more and more frequent, and his eye was still milky white. Sirius could barely contain his frantic worry from overtaking his body, until he saw something.

All this time that Harry had been stricken with whatever had happened, he had never done this. Harry was crying. No sound was coming from Harry's lips, but tears fell freely down his face.

Sirius gently lifted Harry into his arms and rocked the boy gently, trying hard to stop the tears coming from his godson's eyes, and his own.
Lothlorien

Harry sat on the boulders outside of the mountain, tears fell silently down his face and showered the rocks in which he rested upon. Back in the mine, Harry could barely keep up with Boromir, Aragorn and Legolas as they ushered and pushed him and the hobbits out of the dark cavern and into the bright sunshine that was only hundreds of feet upwards.

What happened for it all to go wrong? It had to be Pippin accidentally dropping that bucket and skeleton down the well. No, he couldn't blame Pippin, he wanted to, but he couldn't. Pippin didn't know that this was going to happen, he didn't have the faintest idea that that small action would have such tremendous and tragic consequences. And if Pippin was anything like him, he was already beating himself up over it.

"Legolas, get them up." said Aragorn.

Harry looked up with reddened eyes. What?

"Give them a moment for pity's sake!" said Boromir as he tried to hold Gimli back from storming the mine by himself and going to kill the Balrog with anything and everything he had.

"By nightfall these hills will be swarming with orcs!" said Aragorn, "Best to make sure we put a large distance between us and here by then. We make for Lothlorien." he bent over Sam. "Let's see your wounds before we take off."

"I don't care." said Sam sourly.

Aragorn looked at bruises carefully. "You'll be fine. Your turn Frodo."

"I don't care, there's no hope without Gandalf." said Frodo angrily.

"Then we will do without hope, there is always vengeance." said Aragorn shortly. He took ahold of Frodo's tunic and opened it gently. A glittering sight met his widened eyes.

"Mithril!"gasped Gimli when the glittering light caught his eye.

Frodo closed his tunic protectively.

"Don't worry, only you, and maybe Merry could wear it." said Aragorn with a shaky smile. He stood up and walked over to Harry, who was barely listening to what was transpiring.

"Come on, Harry. We need to go." said Aragorn softly.

"I had so many questions about the king, and I never asked them." said Harry sadly. "And...he..."

"I know, he was a great friend to me as well. But we must continue on, we have two sets of powerful items that could prove disastrous for Middle Earth if they fall into the wrong hands." said Aragorn.

He pulled Harry to his feet and placed a comforting hand on his shoulder. "I can't believe I will say this, but we will need your magic now."

Harry gave a small smile, but the smile didn't reach his eyes. As the others began to follow Aragorn down the hill, Harry turned and looked up to the large mountain chain. Tears still burned his cheeks.
He knelt on the rock he was standing on, took out his amethyst and the topaz, clenched both in his hands and closed his eyes. When he opened them, he saw what he had hoped to see.

The rock beneath him turned into a giant, round, smooth crystal. It wasn't as transparent as some crystals were, this one had a storm raging inside it. He was hoping for trapped clouds, but he supposed a storm reflected his feelings at that point. On the crystal's face, it read in yellow letters. *Gandalf Stormcrow*.

"Stormcrow?" asked Harry out loud.

"*Did you just let the magic due it's will?*" asked the voice in surprise.

"*Yeah sort of, this looks really awesome, but where did the Stormcrow part come from?*" thought Harry.

*"It is told that people call him that when he heralds times of woe, but the origin of the name comes from the time of King Meandenbor. He called Gandalf the name Stormcrow as a way of...how you would say...teasing."* said the voice.

"*How do you know?*" asked Harry.

"*The time for that knowledge has yet to be conceived.*" said the voice.

"It's one rerun after another." said Harry with a groan.

Harry stood up, wiped his eyes on his sleeve and had to run at full speed to catch up the the others.

They made their way swiftly away from the mountains, not stopping even for one moment to rest. If one of the hobbits became tired, Boromir or Strider would carry one of them on their backs.

They finally slowed their pace when they reached the safety of trees of Lothlorien. Harry panted heavily behind a large elm tree.

"Come along, we need to keep moving towards the center of the forest." said Legolas trying to pull Harry along.

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Dumbledore was still flying through the skies on the thestral, he barely stopped for even a moment to rest his old and venerable frame. In order to have even the slightest bit of hope, he used a sensing spell to try and find Castle Valor, but twice now the spell would have him turn around and start in another direction.

He had been at it for almost six days straight and he had nothing to show for it, except for blisters on his hands from constantly hanging onto the thestrals reins and the coming of a cold. Once he thought briefly of giving up, but the visual of Harry's unconscious and bleeding form lying motionless in the bed at Gimmauld Place stayed in his mind and forced him to continue on. He had to find the castle and get some answers.

A fierce storm swarmed and raged around him, sending a chilling rain right through to his bones. He had to either find the castle soon, or fly to the ground and seek out shelter. Suddenly, through the flash of lightning, something came into view briefly, it was a tower, *a tower in the sky!* He spurred the thestral on faster and hurried to the spot before it disappeared.

"Come on, come on." said Dumbledore hurriedly.
A castle came into view. It was almost a carbon copy of Hogwarts floated upon a silver cloud. There was a large metal gate around the edge of the cloud and despite the ground being hundreds of feet below, there were trees, flowers, hedges, and even fountains stationed in front of the castle.

He landed the thestral right in front of the door just as the castle began to fade out. The fading image immediately stopped and the color and the physical structure became solid again. But the rain still came crashing down on him.

He jumped off the thestral and pounded on the door. *Please, please someone answer!*

The door opened slowly and Dumbledore hurried in, he turned to coax the thestral inside the castle, out of the damage of the storm, but the skeletal horse was gone. He turned to actually take in the appearance of the surroundings, when suddenly the door closed with a bang. He hurried over to the door, and instinctively pulled at the handle.

The door wouldn't budge, he fired spell after spell at the ancient door, but met with the same results.

He was trapped.

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Harry followed the rest of the remaining Fellowship deeper into the forest, they slowed their pace to almost a stalking crouch. Harry could almost feel the trees breathing overhead, and sometimes he would see something fluttering between the trunks of the trees.

"Do you want me to turn back into a stag and check the area ahead?" asked Harry. "I can makes sure that the path is safe for the little ones."

"Not in this area, we are in elvish country, and when elves see a stag like the one you can turn into, they shoot it." said Aragorn.

"I need to get my hands on a bird." said Harry looking around. "That would come in real handy right now."

"Next time I see a turkey, I'll let you know." said Boromir with a sneer.

"Ha ha." said Harry rolling his eyes.

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A little further ahead, Gimli was telling the hobbits about the treachery of the Golden Wood, and the "Elf-witch" Galadriel. Much to the disgust of Legolas. Harry bowed his head and shook it.

"Do not speak of things you know nothing about!" hissed Legolas.

"This is one she will not ensare with her magic..." said Gimli, then his continuous rant was silenced. Everything was silenced.

Harry looked up and saw an arrow pointing at his good eye.

"He talks so loud we could have shot him in the dark." said one of the elves silkily. He walked up to Aragorn and began to speak to him.

They were utterly surrounded, by at least twenty elves. Each Fellowship was guarded by two elves, each with a arrow targeted at their skulls.
Harry noticed that Aragorn looked at the elf in front of him as if he knew him, but this elf in front of Harry, made him uneasy, this elf, didn't sit right with him.

"What's this pouch?" said the elf in Harry's blind spot, he could feel someone reaching and taking light hold of the pouch that held all the stones he had acquired.

Harry's hand shot down like lightning and held onto the pouch on his hip.

No! said the voice suddenly.

Suddenly, a blow came to the back of his head, and he knew no more.

Strider was trying to explain to his old friend Haldir what they were doing and that they obviously meant them no harm, when out of the corner of his eye he saw Harry fall to the ground. He saw the elf lowering his dagger back into it's small leather sheath.

"No!" shouted Strider. He hurried over to where Harry fell and glared up at the elf, who held Harry's pouch in his hand. The elf was gripping the pouch tightly, then made to open it and examine it's contents.

"There is nothing in here, yet I can feel something." said the elf in wonder.

"Give that back." spat Strider angrily. The other elves looked at the two standing above the fallen youth torn with conflict. They felt the need to stand beside one of the thier own, but the person they struck, was a boy, if he were one of their own, he'd be tiny elfling. No more than a babe.

"Until we know your motives, this pouch stays with us." said the elf with a sneer.

"Give it back, Naryion." said Haldir. He had seen Estel act this way only once, this meant that the person lying on the ground is beyond and above suspicion.

The elf looked at Halidir, scowled and threw the pouch on the ground. Aragorn took the pouch, and placed it deep into his own pockets. He picked up Harry's unconcious form and held it close to his body protectively.

"What's so important about that pouch?" asked Haldir quietly.

"I'll tell you when we get into the safety of Lothlorien." said Aragorn. "But please, grant us asylum."

Haldir looked pensieve. "Very well. The Lady will want to have a word with you and boy about that pouch. And why you seem so denfensive about it."

"Going to blindfold us?" asked Strider looking at the corner of his eye to Gimli.

"I would, if we hadn't attacked your young charge for no reason." said Haldir with a frown to the two elves, who themselves were looking angry.

Harry seemed to never stop falling into the cold darkness that surrounded him. He couldn't even lift his arms or open his eyes. I should really be used to this feeling. Thought Harry grimly. I've been here so much that it should be my mailing address.
He just floated around in the darkness until he felt the coldness slowly slip away and was replaced with a gentle warming sensation, like a warm, soothing bath.

In fact...his skin did feel wet, it was a bath and someone was pouring water over him. He tried to open his eyes with his remaining strength but nothing happened.

"Relax child, it will be alright." said a deep soothing voice.

Harry groaned and shifted his body slightly. His eyes fluttered open and he saw, standing over him a shirtless, silver haired elf pouring a silver ladle of water on top of his head. He became aware that he was floating gently in a large pool of water, and the elf was standing in the water with him, supporting him.

"Wha-What's going on?" asked Harry weakly.

"I'm tending to your wounds." said the man soothingly.

It was a little while till Harry noticed that he could see out of both eyes.

"Rest child, you're almost done healing." said the elf. He continued to ladle water over the top of Harry's body.

Harry closed his eyes and sighed as he could feel the water wash over him and strengthen his body straight down into his soul, he had never felt so good before in his life.

"Estel holds you in high esteem young one, much like a father worships a son." said the elf calmly.

"Who's Estel?" asked Harry quietly.

"You know him as Aragorn." said the elf.

Harry could feel the sides of his mouth turn into a small smile.

Once the elf was done pouring water all over him, the elf helped him to stand. Harry realized three things, first thing: the water came all the way up to his middle, the second thing: the water was unnaturedly green, third thing: he was naked again.

"No need to turn that shade, child, I've been healing you in this pool for three hours. Seems you have more injuries than just the blow to the back of your head that the Basin needed to see to." said the elf with a kind smile. Harry looked at him, he was shirtless, but he was wearing leggings, and peering at him with concern "I'm Lord Celeborn."

Harry gulped, "Thank you, s-sir." he said nervously as he looked around. "But..."

"Before you ask, those stones in the pouch you carry brought me to take over your care." said Celeborn. He waved his hand over the green water. "This is the Lothlorein Basin; it has the strongest healing powers this world has to offer, but not many people can fully utilize it's powers."

"Then how could I...?" asked Harry.

"You and I are two of the few that can bathe and heal in this pool, Aragorn is another person, but he's never had to use it." said Celeborn. He gently let go of Harry and Harry's feet touched the bottom.

Harry sighed, this was a lot of information for someone who just woke up, he turned, looking for a robe or something to cover himself. He hoped to everything holy that he didn't have to go and piss
off a wild boar again just to get a shroud.

"This way son." said Celeborn, standing outside of the water and holding a white robe.

Harry climbed out and wrapped the robe around himself tightly. It wasn't like a normal bathrobe, but like a loose fitting cloak.

"We are making you new clothes that will fit you better." said Celeborn. "My lady Galadriel would like to speak to you, and as would I, about King Meandenbor."

Harry stared, but slowly followed the elf.

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Sirius sat beside Harry's bed and brushed his godson's hair back. No word from Dumbledore, no word from anybody. Hagrid snored loudly on the other side of the bed, he had come to help keep vigil over Harry, and Sirius was happy for the added company.

Out of curiosity, Sirius lifted Harry's eyelid, the milky whiteness was gone, and the sparkling green had returned.

Sirius smiled warmly, closed the eyelid and kissed it.

"Now all that's left is you waking up." said Sirius. "And healing from...the..." he lifted the sheets, but most of the wounds had mysteriously disappeared. There were still some of the wounds from the original incident, but they were now beginning to stop their assault on Harry's body and beginning to heal.

"Please just come back." said Sirius, not knowing just how hard Harry was trying to get back home.
A King and a Tantrum

Dumbledore made his way slowly through Castle Valor, keeping his wand at the ready just in case of...anything. He had heard so many different stories about Castle Valor, some he considered rumors, but the rest...they just had to be stories. If the king was indeed gone, then perhaps he could go through the mythical library that was said to be in this castle. He could find a cure perhaps in one of those books.

He could also try and find The Celestial Fountain, the waters in that blessed pool is supposed to have the healing powers of a thousand phoenixes, an absolute cure-all. Then his mind strayed to the Balance Orb. If the balance was out of...how did the youngsters put it, out of whack? He could try and set it right.

"No! I must not touch that, I must not get near that!" thought Dumbledore fiercely to himself. "Harry, I must find a cure for Harry, at all costs. Harry, remember Harry..."

He climbed the stairs and looked slowly around, the palace. He could hardly believe it. Though it had to have been uninhabited for almost over three quarters of a century, no dust was on gathering on any of the surfaces. He walked slowly onto the first landing, turned and continued upwards to the next one where the second floor was. He took one step on that staircase...

Creak!

Dumbledore froze, as if a sharp and painful shock went through his body. If someone was here, and nearby, they were sure to have heard that. He was not disappointed.

Suddenly he heard music, a faint but beautiful music. He couldn't pinpoint the instrument used, it was as if...the music would change if he tried to discover it's instrumental origin. His body moved against his will and followed the music. He knew following something that could possibly be a trap was the height of foolishness. But his body gave him little choice in the matter.

He allowed his body to lead him up several flights of stairs that were not there before, down corridors that appeared out of nowhere but were decorated with the loveliest of paintings and statuettes. Dumbledore marveled at their beauty, and wondered if these were the originals, and if all the museums in all the world possessed mere copies.

His body stopped suddenly in the presence of a large golden door. The door had jewels decorating the edge of the door, thirteen different stones, each going in the same pattern around the door. Dumbledore wanted to look and examine the stones on the door, but they were pulled out of his sight.

The door opened towards him and inside was a great and glorious throne room. Despite the gloom of storm outside, it didn't rob the room any of it's beauty. The walls were covered with rich tapestries, and the room was lined with statues of several Famous Witches and Wizards: Merlin, Morgan Le Fay and countless others. Towards the back of the room, he saw his own.

The music still continued as he walked slowly up to the throne since he had entered the throne room, he seemed to regained control of his body so he walked up to his own statue. It was most flattering, he saw himself in a pose that he could no longer do at his age. His wand was raised and his knees bent, dueling an invisible foe. Or so he thought was invisible, Dumbledore turned his head slightly and saw a sort of illusion, of Gillert Grindelwald.
Dumbledore looked around, he had the unyielding urge to examine each statue and see what illusion each would show him. Then he saw one statue that captured his eyes, and drew it to him. He walked towards an ever changing marble statue.

A small baby boy with a scar on his forehead, a young boy flying a broomstick after a solid gold snitch, the same boy grabbing the face of a bald man with two faces. The same boy lying against a wall, with a fang sticking out of his arm and a dead basilisk at his feet. The boy, a little older, casting a stag patronus, surrounded by hundreds of Dementors. Then, yet older still, a boy facing a dragon, and then the same boy, dueling a cloaked figure.

It was Harry, this statue was an ever altering statue, not able to choose which form suited him perfectly. Dumbledore reached out to touch the statue's cheek, of Harry dueling when the statue changed once more. This one Dumbledore could not place the origin. The pose was of him wielding a great sword, and a bag of jewels in his hand.

He heard a noise and looked towards the direction in which it came from, the throne... The throne was a tall silver chair with fur over the sides to provide comfort to the seated monarch. Though, no one was seated on it at that moment.

But the vacancy was not long lasting. Very slowly, a ghostly shape solidified and lounged majestically on the throne. Dumbledore recognized the man from so many decades ago, though the man was now merely a specter, he didn't look as if he had aged a day.

Instinctively, he kneeled before the king and bowed his head.

"Who are you, and why have you invaded my castle?" asked the ghostly King Meandenbor, the voice echoing off the walls of the room.

Dumbledore looked up and stared at the ghost in shock. So close, he was so close to learning what was ailing his Harry. He must find out what it is!

"I asked you a question, boy. I suggest you answer." said King Meandenbor.

Boy? He hadn't been referred to as that for over a hundred years! But now was not the time to be debating his age and certification of adulthood. Dumbledore could tell the King was furious, furious at being disturbed, and he could not blame him.

"Forgive me, Your Majesty, I came to ask you for...for answers." said Dumbledore humbly.

"Ask for answers? Well then, ask your questions, then be on your way out of my castle." said the King waving his hand dismissively.

"Many thanks, your Majesty. You see, sire, I have a student under my care; he's been struck down with a strange and peculiar ailment. I was hoping that you could help me find a cure." said Dumbledore, his eyes pleading with the departed ruler for some sort of miracle cure.

"Mysterious ailment? Tell me, Dumbledore, what are his symptoms?" said the King leaning back in his chair.

Dumbledore didn’t bother asking him how he knew his name, now was not the time, he glanced at the statue of himself and smirked at his own mindlessness. He was, however, overjoyed that the King had decided to help him. "We found him on the floor in Hogwarts, his body riddled with cuts and gashes. He has not woken up since we've then." said Dumbledore still kneeling on the floor.

The ghost leaned forward on his throne. "Has he developed any more injuries?"
"Yes!" said Dumbledore excitedly, the King must know what to do! "Yes he has, but those go away after a short while. They seem to heal themselves without any help from us, but the original wounds are still present."

The king looked thoughtful. "Describe the boy."

"He's kind, as kind as a spring rain. Gentle and innocent as a baby kitten and yet brave as a tiger and fierce as a dragon guarding it's lair." said Dumbledore proudly. Completely forgetting that he could easily show the boy to the King as his statue was close by the throne. He hoped by telling the King what Harry was like would prompt the King to help him in any way he could.

"Fascinating, Now could you tell me what he looks like?" said the King with an amused smile.

"Oh, of course. He's about, well, five feet eight inches know. Black hair..." said Dumbledore.

"And eyes as green as a shimmering emerald." said the King softly, looking over to the statue with a fond smile.

"Yes, that is him." said Dumbledore, he said looking over to the statue himself. Then he looked up quickly. "Is there anything we can do? To wake him up?"

"There is nothing, nothing you or anyone else in this world that can do anything." said the King.

"This world?" asked Dumbledore. "What other world are you talking about?"

"You needn't worry about that now. What you must be sure to do is protect the body the boy left behind." said the King. He stood up and Dumbledore could almost feel the power radiating off the ghostly ruler. "I will take care of the other thing that needs to be protected."

"What is that?" asked Dumbledore.

"The means that sent the boy to where he resides." said the King.

Dumbledore stood up and looked at the man with a uncertain look. "You mean to tell me that he's in two places at once?"

"I will send you back to the fallen boy's side, you place your strongest guards around the boy." said King Meandenbor. "I will see to his conscious form."

"If I may sir, is he your heir?" asked Dumbledore, he hoped to convince the man to leave his young charge be. Allow him to, if it all came out the way he hoped, live a life of peace and simple comfort. The comfort and peace he had be denied the boy's entire life.

"He was forced into a test, if he can pass my test then yes. He will be considered, if not then he might have learned something at least." said King Meandenbor.

Dumbledore stared, his hand itching towards his wand. Ghost or not, how could this man just do that? Dumbledore admitted that he caused Harry more trouble than Harry could ever deserve, even if he were to be the devil incarnate. He wholeheartedly promised that Harry would no longer suffer by his hand, and that he would protect Harry with everything he had.

"You can put your wand away, I'm taking care not to have him killed. Though he's holding his own on quite admirably." said the ghost with a smirk.

"Can I help him? In any way?" said Dumbledore. "That other world you spoke of, may I join him?"
"At this point, you might be more of a hindrance than a help." said the King. "And from what I gather from the boy's thoughts, he would strike you on sight." he added with a smile. "He would not kill you of course, but he is not pleased with you at this moment."

Harry followed the tall elf up the winding staircase, a staircase that wound around the tall tree. The forest was lit with an ethereal light that seemed to just enhance the beauty of woods. He heard music, not like the music that led him to each stone, but a sorrowful song. If Harry had to hazard a guess, it was a funeral dirge.

"What is that, they're singing?" asked Harry as he followed Celeborn up the stairs.

"A song for Gandalf." said Celeborn somberly. "Would you like me to speak it in the common tongue?"

"No, thanks. I don't think I could take it." said Harry, looking heartbroken.

"You were fond of him." said Celeborn. It wasn't a question, but an observation.

"Yes sir. I didn't know him nearly as long as the hobbits, or Strider, but I did really like him. Like a Grandfather."

Celeborn stopped in his tracks. "Do you not have one of your own?" he asked without facing the young man following him.

"Not that I'm aware of." said Harry shrugging. "They must've died before I met them."

Celeborn fell silent. "Not to know the wisest of your family, most unfortunate. But surely your children will benefit from your mother and father's wisdom." he continued upward the stairs.

"No they won't. My parents are gone too." said Harry continuing after the elf once more. "Never knew what they were like personally."

Celeborn stopped again, but this time he turned round and faced Harry with sorrowful eyes. It was a moment till he spoke again. "I see."

They continued on in silence until they reached the end of the steps where there was a landing. Harry looked around and saw that it had several soft benches, a small fountain at one end, and a table of fruit beside it. There, sitting on one of the benches was a beautiful blonde woman, tall and fair. Harry was strongly reminded of Arwen.

"This child, is my lady Galadriel." said Celeborn walking over and sitting beside Galadriel.

Harry bowed low, remembering what Strider told him to do if he should meet this woman.

"Estel has taught you well." said Galadriel with a smile. "Come, sit with us, I want to hear all about you, and your adventures."

Harry looked at her eyes, but then looked down.

"Would you feel better, child, if we summoned Aragorn to sit with you?" asked Celeborn with a smile.

"Thank you sir, but, I'll be alright." said Harry sitting down on a nearby bench.
It took the rest of the day for Harry to tell his story to the two elvish monarchs. They only stopped him for clarification on some points, but not nearly as often as the hobbits and others at Rivendell had done. Harry had just finished speaking of the elf that tried to take his pouch when Lord Celeborn spoke again.

"Yes, we've heard of that." said Lord Celeborn. "He has been reprimanded for trying to take that pouch, when it was forewarn to us what you were carrying."

"You knew about the pouch?" said Harry.

"Indeed. Word was sent to us from Rivendell, and Lady Galadriel told each of the wardens of the borders not to investigate in any pack that came their way by the Fellowship." said Lord Celeborn. "But it seems that the temptation of curiosity was too great for some."

"Where is the pouch now?" asked Harry quickly.

"Aragorn has it." said Lady Galadriel. "He swore he'd protect the pouch."

Harry smiled softly. "He would too."

"Now child, what do you know about you predecessor?" asked Lady Galadriel.

"My predecessor?" asked Harry confusedly.

"King Meandenbor." said Lord Celeborn.

"He's not my predecessor, is he?" asked Harry.

"You are his chosen one, if you can hear the music that leads you to the stones." said Lord Celeborn.

"But he doesn't know who I am! He's been gone for...over a thousand years hasn't he?" said Harry.

"You would be surprised what the spirits of the past can do child." said Lord Celeborn.

Harry pondered the words carefully, predecessor, he didn't like the sound of that. "But, I don't think I'm really 'King' material. I can barely keep myself out of trouble; I don't want to even think about me running a country."

"It's not just a country, this entire world, and from what I can tell," said Lord Celeborn with a kind smile. "Your world as well."

"You have got to be kidding me." thought Harry shaking his head. "I don't want to be king of anything! I just want to get home!" he said out loud.

Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel looked at each other in shock.

"I've got enough on my plate with Voldemort, and trying to find these stones. I don't want to worry about a two worlds on top of that!" said Harry forgetting his manners. All he wanted was a nice, calm, normal life. Running the two worlds was on the list of things he didn't want!

"Dear child," said Lady Galadriel. "We do not want you to do something you do not wish to do. But do not cast aside this path that lies ahead. It may be that someday you will wish to take the enchanted throne."

Harry snarled down at the ground. "Don't bet on that." said Harry. "I've already been thrusted into a
job I half-heartedly didn't want back home, I really don't want this one."

"Besides," said Harry angrily. "Where was my world when I was kicked around by my family? Their so-called Boy-Who-Lived, who was declared a hero for something his mother did! Where was everyone when I needed them! They expect me to save them, well I want some equality here!" shouted Harry loudly.*

Lady Galadriel's eyes were holding the faintest traces of tears.

"You've had a long three days, child, would you like to rest a bit, we can take up this conversation another time." said Lord Celeborn. "Rest easy child, you will not be forced into a role that you do not wish. An unhappy ruler could soon become a tyrant. I am not saying that you will." he added swiftly.

Lord Celeborn stood up as well Lady Galadriel. Harry stood up right away and bowed low to the both of them, not wishing to disrespect them any further than he already did. "I will show you to your chambers." said Lord Celeborn.

"Is it near where Strider and the rest of them are?" asked Harry.

"They rest at the forest floor, near the fountains, you reside in the treetops." said Lord Celeborn.

"Why am I up there and they're down there?" asked Harry.

"You were in the process of healing, dear boy. And besides, my Lady and I have taken a fondness to you." said Lord Celeborn. "Your eyes," he said lifting the long bangs out of Harry's eyes. "are quite beautiful, it reminds us of our forest in springtime."

Harry blushed slightly.

"Our fondness is why we have given you your own quarters. Do not worry, if you wish to see the rest of the Fellowship, I will take you there, tomorrow. Alas tonight, it may be best if you rest."

Harry yawned, he was exausted, and just from his outburst.

"You're entire being agrees with my decision." said Lord Celeborn with a smile. "Come, it’s time that you rested once more.”
Contemplations

Harry got up the next day from his soft canopy bed and stretched his thin frame. He placed his hands behind his head and looked up at the morning sky that playfully shone through the openings in the ceiling.

Why did he have to get thrown into stuff like this? If he wasn’t supposed to be the great hero of the wizarding world and defeat Voldemort, he was now supposed to be king over that place and this one? What he wouldn’t give for a nice normal life. Go to school, get good marks, play Quidditch, go home to his loving family and then do the process all over again. Not needing to worry about being killed by a psychopathic killer, or tortured by a sadistic teacher and now the workings for two whole freaking worlds!

Now he was supposed to play the role of king? He could think of several people that would do a better job than him.

He thought of the Weasleys first.

Mr. and Mrs. Weasley would make great rulers. Mr. Weasley would promote cooperation between the Muggle world and the Wizarding world. He could almost see it, flying cars everywhere and everyone would be as fat as Uncle Vernon from all the food. He couldn’t help but smile fondly.

Hell, even their kids would become great rulers.

Bill would be a really cool king, he certainly didn’t know any other king that would have long hair, earring in one ear and wore a leather jacket. Charlie would outlaw the use of Dragon skin for gloves, boots and jackets. Then he thought of the twins, the world would be fun, but maybe the world needed someone a bit more…calm.

Ron…now that would be a world he would like. Just like Mrs. Weasley’s world, everyone would get plenty to eat, but in his, The Chudley Cannon team would mostly likely be made the only team. Chess matches would decide arguments, and everyone would have some money.

Ginny’s world…Harry’s eyes fell slightly, he didn’t know what she would do. He really should, but he just couldn’t fathom it. Apart from liking Quidditch and being as playful as her older brothers, he knew nothing else about her, which made him feel very guilty. When he got home, he’d make a point to know more about her.

Then his thoughts dwell on the third oldest Weasley, Percy. He had to admit, the world would run like clockwork, but it would be boring. He also felt that perhaps he wouldn’t be the best choice for a position of power. Percy seemed a bit…power-hungry for the most part. His heart was in the right place, just not his brain.

Then his mind strayed to Hermione. She’d make a great Queen, the whole world would be full of intellectuals and schools would be run to its highest efficiency. Like Mr. Weasley, there would be more cooperation between magical and non-magical folk. Not only that, but she’d finally succeed in freeing the house-elves, though Harry wasn’t sure that the house-elves wouldn’t be all that pleased about that little development.

His mind traveled away from the Weasley’s and Hermione and settled on a few others that would be great Kings and Queens beside him.

Sirius…the whole world would be engulfed in flames, and not intentionally. Harry couldn't help but
laugh. Nah, Sirius would be a good ruler, but that would never stop him from teasing him.

Remus! Now there would be the best choice! He was kind, smart, powerful and knew about being an outcast. He would be the absolutely perfect King. Perhaps, if he could wrangle it, he could have Remus be the king instead of him!

He knew of one thing, one person that didn’t deserve it or should never get it. Voldemort, he’d take the throne himself if the only available option was him.

Harry sat up on his bed and began to change into the clothes that were lain down on the end of his bed. They were kind of like the outfit that Lord Celeborn wore last night, rich garments of the finest make. He finished latching the pearl buttons, when he saw someone coming into his room out of the corner of his eye.

He turned and saw the same pair of elves that had knocked him out on the way to Lothlorien. Harry reached beside him and withdrew his sword quickly.

“Relax child, they’re only here to say something to you.” said Lord Celeborn’s voice. “Speak, you two.” he added sternly.

“We apologize for striking you.” said the one elves solemnly. “We had no cause to do so.”

Harry did not lower his sword.

“That’s all you can expect and deserve, leave us.” said Lord Celeborn.

The two elves left the room, but one didn’t leave without send Harry a glare, but he left with no physical altercation.

“You surprised me child, I did not expect you take up a sword so readily.” said Lord Celeborn, he had the faintest of smiles on his lips.

“I don’t like being smacked around.” muttered Harry.

“I did not hear you, dearest child.” said Lord Celeborn kindly.

“I don’t take kindly to being struck.” said Harry clearly.

Lord Celeborn smiled. “I recollect that you stated something last night about wishing to see the rest of your company.”

Harry sheathed his sword quickly and hurried after Lord Celeborn. Harry followed him down the circular steps of the giant tree Harry had slept in last night. The early morning sunshine shone softly down to the forest floor and made the dew drops that still clung desperately to the leaves sparkle and shine. Lord Celeborn led him down to the lowest part of Lothlorien, where the air was cool and comfortable. There was a small trickling waterfall coming down a small rock wall and poured its contents into a small pool and cups so people could drink the water. Harry looked around the area and saw little holes in the base of the trees. There were cushions and blankets inside and they looked as if they had been slept in. Harry followed Lord Celeborn a little further and saw the rest of the Fellowship sitting around, taking in the beauty of the woods. Boromir was not however, he was obviously agitated by something.

“Harry!” said Pippin eagerly, he ran over to the youth, with Merry following close behind. “Blimey, you’ve been gone a long time!”
Harry stared at Pippin. “I’ve been hanging around you too long; you’re using words that I use back home.”

Pippin smiled broadly.

“Are you alright?” asked Merry.

“Just fine now.” said Harry.

“Hey! Your eye is all better!” said Pippin. “How did they heal it so quick?”

“Thank you Lord Celeborn.” said Legolas bowing low, he knew he had the Lord of Lothlorien to thank for that.

“Quite welcome, young Legolas.” said Celeborn with a smile. “We are quite fortunate his body could allow the best healing skills we have.”

Strider came walking up to Harry and placed in his hands the pouch. “They’re all there.” said Strider.

“Thanks.” said Harry with a grateful smile. He opened the pouch and looked at them, he still didn’t want to be ruler of anything, but he had to get home. Hopefully he didn’t have to take the throne in order to get home.

And if he did…well…he hoped it wouldn’t come to that.

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Dumbledore followed the spirit down to the deepest part of the castle. They passed tapestries and busts of ancient craft. His thoughts barely strayed from the image of his fallen student. They continued down the corridors until they came to a large oak door. The King waved his ghostly hand in front of the door.

The door opened slowly and revealed a shimmering pillar of light. The rest of the room was dark, almost nonexistent. The pillar just continued down the shaft, into the nothingness.

“What on earth is this?” said Dumbledore in shock.

“This is the Magical Core. A sliver of this goes into each wizard, witch and magical creature. With every new birth of a magical being, a miniscule amount goes to the infant and enables them to utilize their magic. Once they pass away beyond the land of the living, the sliver of light comes back to the Core.” said the King with a smile.

“It’s beautiful!” said Dumbledore with a rapturous look. “I can feel something deep within me, wishing to just leap into the light.”

“I wouldn’t recommend it, not unless you are willing to wait several years to use magic again. It would take your Harry several years to just find your light in that pillar.” said the King.

“Harry?” asked Dumbledore.

“If he becomes the next ruler, then he would be the only able to take the pieces of core out at will.” said the King.

“But what if Harry doesn’t want to be king? If I know Harry, he won’t just leap at that job.” said Dumbledore.
"If he doesn’t, then I need to take a closer look at other people. But that boy seems to be a wonderful candidate," said King with a smile. But then the smile faltered. "It took me this long to find the boy, and that was by a happy and horrible accident."

The king waved his arm again and an image appeared swirling amongst the light, it was Grimmauld Place.

"I assume this is where the boy is hiding." said the King.

"Yes sire." said Dumbledore.

"Well, step through the light, it will take you right to the boy." said the King with a smile.

"But, won’t my magic be…" said Dumbledore.

"Only if I do not give my blessing." said King Meandenbor, "Now go, I will reflect on the events and see what I can do."

Dumbledore took a deep breath, closed his eyes and stepped through the shaft of light. It felt warm and yet cold all at the same time. When he opened them, he found himself in the room which Harry occupied, with two very shocked guards stationed beside the boy.

"Dumbledore! Where…how…?" asked Sirius stuttering loudly.

"I met him…I saw him…" said Dumbledore sinking into a chair. For the entire time that he had been in Castle Valor, he hadn’t rested for a moment. He had been graciously given the grand tour of the castle, and the rumors, they were true, and severely watered down.

"Did he give you a cure for Harry?" asked Sirius eagerly.

"There isn’t one." said Dumbledore.

Sirius turned pale and felt his stomach plummet right into his shoes. No cure? But, there had to be! He couldn’t let his godson, his precious, wonderful boy go through life like this, constantly wounded from unknown weapons and just lying there!

"There is no cure, but…" said Dumbledore.

"But what?" said Sirius quickly.

"But he said that Harry will wake up on his own." said Dumbledore. "He said something about Harry being in another world."

"Another world? What the hell is that supposed to mean?" asked Sirius.

Hagrid was stunned beyond words.

"There is another world, that King Meandenbor rules alongside this one." said Dumbledore.

"Hope it’s full of fluffy bunnies and pink clouds." said Sirius running his hand down his clammy face.

"Not if Harry looks like that it ain’t." said Hagrid looking at Harry with a sorrowful look.

"There’s a plus side, he’s looking a lot healthier than he has in a while." said Dumbledore taking in Harry’s face. "How’s his eye?"
“It cleared up, all on it’s own. I swear, I’m about a Gnome throw away from losing my mind.” said Sirius.

“Come with me Sirius.” said Dumbledore extending his hand.

“I don’t want to leave.” said Sirius grasping Harry’s hand.

“Hagrid will guard him.” said Dumbledore with a smile. “If there is one thing I am certain of, it’s that Hagrid will not allow anyone to even get close enough to Harry to give him a cold.”

“That I will.” said Hagrid proudly.

Sirius slowly stood up and followed Dumbledore out of the room. They traveled down the stairs and met up with the Weasley children and Hermione.

“When did you get back sir?” asked Ron in shock.

“Did you find Castle Valor?” asked Ginny.

“Did you find a way to wake up Harry?” asked Hermione.

“What did the King say?” said Fred.

“What was he like?” asked George.

“I will tell you all, at another time, but now, Sirius and I need to talk.” said Dumbledore placing a hand on Sirius’ shoulder. Dumbledore took his wand out of his pocket and tapped Sirius smartly on the head with it.

“What the…?” asked Sirius, he backed up into a mirror turned and saw his entire being changed. His long black hair was now a bright blonde; his gray eyes were transformed to a shimmering blue, and his face was shortened in places and elongated in others.

“I look horrible.” said Sirius examining himself closely. “Not too fond of the nose.”

“You only have to live with it for a short while, I thought you and I would take a stroll and talk.” said Dumbledore.

Sirius sent a quick look up in the direction of his godson’s room.

“He’ll be fine, but I felt that you, of all people, should know the complete facts first.” said Dumbledore. He took Sirius by the arm and led him outside, but Sirius froze at the door.

“Come accompany an old man on a walk.” said Dumbledore gently. Sirius took a tentative step out the door, and out into the street.

They walked for over an hour, Dumbledore relayed everything that the King had shared with him.

“So what’s this other world like?” asked Sirius.

“From what the King told me, it’s not the fluffy, happy place you hope for.” said Dumbledore.

“That was just a desperate dream.” said Sirius.

Dumbledore smiled softly. “The King told me that, this world, is almost a copy of our medieval times. Though some of the creatures there are nothing like our own.”
“What do you mean?” asked Sirius.

“Well, elves for instance. They look nothing like ours. The way he described them, reminded me of Veelas to be honest.” said Dumbledore walking towards a man pushing a food cart. “Care for something?”

Sirius shrugged.

“Two bags of peanuts please!” said Dumbledore with a bright smile as he took out some muggle money.

“He heats these things in his cart?” asked Sirius as they walked away.

“You would be amazed what these folks can do.” said Dumbledore with a smile. “But back to the other world. There is another group of creatures that both places have that are nothing alike.”

“I’m betting werewolves.” said Sirius as he cracked a few peanuts out of their shells.

“Not really, I don’t believe there are any werewolves actually. It’s the goblins that are not the same.” said Dumbledore thoughtfully.

“They beautiful too?” asked Sirius with a sneer. His mood was lifting immensely since he was taken outside. His mind stayed on Harry, but being outside helped soothe his mind back to where it was before all this insanity.

“Far from it. They’re cruel vicious, horrifying, and deadly. I fear that perhaps Harry is attracting some of those scars from goblins.” said Dumbledore.

“How the hell is that possible, he’s sleeping in a bed at home!” said Sirius.

“That’s what throws me as well. According to what I’ve learned at Castle Valor, seems that Harry is operating in two different worlds.” said Dumbledore cracking the shell of his peanut very carefully.

“How the hell is that possible?” asked Sirius.

“I don’t know, but from what I can guess, it seems that Harry’s consciousness and perhaps a bit of his core went with him over to that world.” said Dumbledore.

“But how did he get there in the first place! He was in Hogwarts!” said Sirius frantically.

“I don’t know, but the King has reassured me that he himself would keep an eye on whatever sent Harry to that world.” said Dumbledore softly.

“But he wouldn’t tell you what it was.” said Sirius.

“I think that the…I must keep up with the youngster’s slang…shoe is on the other foot.” said Dumbledore.

“That’s not recent slang.” said Sirius.

“Recent to me.” said Dumbledore. “But now I know why Harry always had that look of disappointment whenever he and I would have a chat. He knew I was withholding information. Seems I’m going through the same thing now.” he added with a faint smile.

“Are we sure he’s acting on Harry’s best interest.” asked Sirius.
“I believe so, he wants Harry to take his place on the throne.” said Dumbledore.

“He won’t take it.” said Sirius with a chuckle. “If I know my own cub.”

“I told him that, if Harry refuses the crown, then he must look again for another heir. From what I gather, the King holds him in top contention. He will only look elsewhere if Harry is definite about his choice.” said Dumbledore with a smile.

“Is he hoping to sway Harry to his side?” asked Sirius.

“I believe so, I don’t know how, but I think he will try. All I know, is that I want Harry back in this world. So I can…” said Dumbledore sadly.

“Apologize?” helped Sirius.

“Beg him to forgive me.” said Dumbledore. “Though I know I do not deserve it.”

Sirius patted the old man’s back, “You’re earning the right to ask.”

Dumbledore looked at his old student, with misty eyes.
Hazy History

Deep in the Hogwarts dungeons, there were two dark figures stationed beside a gory looking painting huddled in the darkest corner. It was the exact same painting that Umbridge had banished Harry through a few months ago. Luckily for the students they never had cause to travel down that way, for the two figures were far from benevolent.

They had been stationed in that corridor since the day before the death of Delores Umbridge. They wore invisibility cloaks to hide from the teachers that could actually deal some massive damage unto them and remained absolutely silent when sensory wards told them someone was coming. The Dark Lord told them that they had to guard that particular painting with their lives, and when the Dark Lord says that, get ready for no sleep, no regular meals, and possibly to lose your life.

One of the masked men looked at the painting, while he looked at it, the face behind the mask paled. He was one of the newest members, he joined for the chance at grandeur and the even bigger chance of getting rich.

"What's with you?" asked the other Death Eater. He was a seasoned Death Eater, he wasn’t one of the founding members or even a leader, but he knew his place, and especially knew when to shut up and do what his Master told him to.

"This picture gives me the creeps." said the masked Death Eater. "It's all covered in blood."

The other Death Eater rolled his eyes. Why did he have to get the newer ones that didn’t have the brains to fit in a pixie?

"Why do we need to guard this picture anyway?" asked the nervous Death Eater. "What's so special about it?"

"The Dark Lord wants it guarded, that's all we need to know." said the Death Eater sternly. Best get that lesson through the young man’s head before it got cut clean off by Bellatrix.

The Death Eater looked at the painting again, focusing mainly on one face in particular, "You know what I think?"

"I don't care what you think." said the Death Eater with a groan.

"I think Potter is stuck in that painting." said the Death Eater in awe.

That got his attention, he turned his head quickly. What? The other Death Eater looked at the painting as well, he saw the face that his comrade was gazing at. "It must just be a coincidence."

"It's got his scar and everything." said the Death Eater. "How can that be a coincidence? This painting looks a lot older than even the school!"

The stern Death Eater turned to face the painting even closer. He placed his face very close to the oils to inspect it further when a bright flash of light blasted down from the ceiling. The Death Eaters were completely engulfed in the light; their vision was blinded by the brilliant, tiny sharp, slivers of light that came raining down out of the ceiling.

Both of the masked men screamed in agony and they disappeared completely.

The light faded away slowly and in its place was the form of King Meandenbor. He walked slowly
up to the painting and looked at one of the oil painted visages.

"Well, lad, I hope that you survive the battles that are to come. I can only help you so much." said the King. “The rest is up to you.”

He blew on his hands with his ghostly breath; the air seemed to shimmer around his ghostly palms and fingers. The King's hands began to turn pink and developed a texture, as if the King's breath was the breath of life itself. He reached up and took the painting down gently. The light, that had destroyed the two Death Eaters and left him behind, came back again and collected both the King and the painting.

Harry sat with the Fellowship underneath the protection of the Lothlorien forest. A short while after Harry came to sit with them; he fell into silence once again.

"Are you feeling alright, Harry?" asked Sam.

"I'm okay now." said Harry with a smile.

They could still hear the faint traces of the song that the elves were singing for Gandalf on the breeze.

"Do you know a song for Gandalf?" asked Pippin sadly. “Like the one you sang in Bree.”

Harry looked down quickly. "I..." said Harry softly.

"He loved your singing voice, back in Rivendell." said Strider. “He would like you to sing again.”

Harry closed his eyes, picked a song that he heard Mrs. Figg sing one time when one of her favorite cats died. Gandalf wasn’t a cat, but in his opinion the words did fit the situation, he sang.

Elves began to walk slowly towards the glade they sat in, and stand beside Celeborn. Even Galadriel walked softly over to stand beside her husband.

"His talents know no bounds it seems." said the Lord of Lothlorien.

When Harry was done singing, Lord Celeborn walked up behind the youth. "What was the title of that song?"

"Goodbye, My Friend." said Harry quietly. "Though I didn't know him all that long..." he added even softly.

"It was a beautiful song." said Lady Galadriel softly. She looked at her husband and nodded.

"We wish to speak with you again son. Today, we promise to take things a little slower." said Lord Celeborn with a soft smile.

Harry didn’t really want to leave his friends, but he stood up anyway and followed the two leaders of Lothlorien to the same room they had been in the night prior. He needed to apologize for the way he acted.

Sirius and Dumbledore climbed the stairs back to where Harry laid, but not before they took the glamour charm off Sirius. It would not do for Hagrid to see a stranger and so close to Harry. Unless
Sirius wanted to be thrown from the second floor and through the first floor until he struck the basement below.

"So how long will this test of the King's take?" asked Sirius.

"I don't know, I can only hope that the test is almost done, or at least half done." said Dumbledore.

They entered the room, finding Hagrid tucking Harry in.

"Everything alright, Hagrid?" asked Sirius throwing his coat over the back of his armchair.

"Nothing's happened." said Hagrid. "The kids came in and spoke to 'im a bit."

"He probably heard them." said Sirius softly.

Dumbledore caught Sirius' eyes, and sent him a small smile.

"Ron's owl came in and tried to get under the covers. Hedwig chased him out, so I'm fixin' the blankets." said Hagrid with a smile. “Don’ quite know why he tried that…but Hedwig wasn’ havin’ none o’ that.”

“You know, I never really noticed but she hasn’t really left this room either.” said Sirius looking up at the wardrobe, where Hedwig had been and still was keeping her constant vigil.

"I know why you said that." said Dumbledore taking his cloak off after Hagrid left to get something to eat. "Best not to worry them as well."

"It's easier if I'm the only one going crazy." said Sirius sinking into his own chair.

"Don't forget me." said Dumbledore pulling up his armchair.

Sirius took a phial of blood replenishing and poured it gently down Harry's throat. "These are clearing up nicely, so I don't think we'll be needing any more of these...unless he get's hurt again. I'll keep an eye on Harry, as long as he needs me to." said Sirius. "But I won't stop praying that he'll wake up sooner."

"No one else will stop doing so either." said Dumbledore patting Sirius' back.

Harry sat in the seat that he had sat in the night before and leaned back into the cushioned backrest of the chair.

"Let's take this conversation in a different direction than we did last night, I do not wish to distress you again."

“Yeah…about that…I’m sorry…” said Harry sincerely.

Lord Celeborn smiled. “Don’t worry child. We can understand your anxiety. Hopefully future discussions will not cause you further distress.”

"We will focus today on King Meandenbor himself." said Galadriel kindly. “If we begin to make you uncomfortable again, please let us know.”

"Tell us, child, what has Lord Elrond and Mithrandir told you?" asked Lord Celeborn.
Harry rubbed the back of his head. "Just that he was a really kind man and that he was killed on his birthday."

"I'm sure someone elaborated a bit on that." said Lord Celeborn with a kind smile.

"I don't remember it all, word for word." said Harry with a blush.

"Well, let’s discuss the King a bit further than." said Lady Galadriel.

Harry sat in silence and took in Lord Celeborn's words. Though…something was wrong with what Lord Celeborn was saying.

"We shall begin at the beginning. It is not certain from which world King Meandenbor called his true home. He only came to be widely in Middle Earth when this world was in utter turmoil. There were no real leaders, kings, or lords to govern the Men who were starting to mass populate the world. The Men fought over who was right and who was wrong, who owned what land or what beast of burden.

"We, the elves and also the dwarves had lords and Kings, but the race of men would not pay heed to our leaders. They would prefer listen to the wizards, we did not mind, as long as the fighting was brought to a standstill. For it would often happen that the fighting would stray into elvish and dwarvish territory.

"Gandalf himself was still an inexperienced wizard in those days, trying his hardest to learn all he could from his first Master, Saruman. Saruman tried teaching the young Gandalf how to harness the elemental powers of their staffs, when another Wizard came to Middle Earth. A Wizard that took over the tutorage of Gandalf.

"He was a wizard of the likes no one had ever heard of before. He carried no staff, no wand but he did wear a crown upon his head. Each pinnacle of the crown carried a brilliant jewel on it. I believe the jewels in that pouch you carry are one and the same."

"Where did he get the crown?" asked Harry. He thought the people of Middle Earth made him that…and Middle Earth was where he got the jewels…this wasn’t adding up with what Elrond told him.

"We do not know, dear child, it could have been from your world, or it could have been from the Valar." said Galadriel kindly. "Though magic of that sort, does not happen just out of luck."

"So did they crown him King?" asked Harry.

"The race of men called him King first, most likely because of the crown on his head. He told the people that he wasn't truly a King of this world, merely a visitor. So perhaps he did come from your world, but then again, he could have been just deceiving the Men, to protect his homeland.

“He only came to help this world get back on the path of destiny, though it is unknown who summoned him. But he became beloved by all, and they happily proclaimed him King of the entirety of Middle Earth.

"With him as their ruler, the fighting ceased over the course a few months, the little land that people actually needed was assigned to them. The goblins and trolls were kept to their mountains and away from harming the neighboring farmers or travelers. The Dragons were kept to the uninhabited mountain tops.

“He gave aid to the Ents and Entwives as they cared for the vast woodlands that cradled this world.
They, of all creatures seemed to earn his favor, as he enchanted many of their forests in order to protect them against fire and witchcraft.

"Middle Earth experienced many, many decades of peace and prosperity under his rule. But that lengthy reign was cut short by the Dark Lord Sauron and his Master." said Lord Celeborn somberly.

"What did he ever do to them?" said Harry. "If he was so beloved, what did he do to cross them?"

"It was the fact that they wanted his jewels for their own purposes, for no one could best King Meandenbor in the ways of magical skill. With those jewels, the forces of evil would cover the land of Middle Earth and beyond in darkness." said Lord Celeborn. "They tried to get their tainted hands on them."

"But they never got them." said Harry gripping the pouch tightly.

"No, they never did, but the Dark Lord Sauron did get another weapon." said Lady Galadriel; she touched the beautiful ring on her finger.

"If the Dark Lords were that powerful to beat King Meandenbor, how did Elrond get his body?" asked Harry quietly.

"They cast his body out of his home, now known as Mordor, and left it for the beasts to do what they wanted with it. Elrond took the body to Rivendell, for King Meandenbor loved Elrond's home above any other Elf Kingdom. He rests there to this day, till he may rest back in Mordor."

Harry looked confused.

"Something wrong, dear child?" asked Lady Galadriel.

"This sort of doesn't sound like what Gandalf and Elrond told Strider and I."

"It seems that the story of King Meandenbor has taken the rank of legend. For it has been over two thousand years since stories had been fact." said Lord Celeborn with a slight smile. "And perhaps the facts have been distorted slightly."

"Guess I'll have to find a way to ask him what happened, chances of that is slim to none." said Harry.

"That remains to be seen." said Lady Galadriel.

Harry looked up to the both of them. They've been really nice, and I shouted at them yesterday, I need to come up with some way to make it up to them, thought Harry to himself.

"So...uh...in order to take the throne, what do you have to do?" asked Harry.

"Are you sure you want to ask that, remember last night." said Lord Celeborn gently.

"I'm just curious." said Harry.

"Curiosity, the finder of adventure." said Lord Celeborn with a kind smile. "I don't know how you would become King, for he was our first. I suppose finding all the jewels and then helping Aragorn
defeat the Dark Lord Sauron would do it...."

"But maybe because there are kings of men already, that having a king like King Meandenbor again, might not be beneficial anymore." said Harry.

Lord Celeborn laughed. "A wise child, at such a young age. It is true that the need is gone, but...another protector is always welcomed. The mountain passes and roads from kingdom to kingdom needs repair, and wards to protect them from unruly villains."

"So pretty much just gardener and guard duty? Well that doesn't sound all that hard." said Harry, "But I don't know a fraction of the magic he did."

Lord Celeborn stroked his chin slightly. "Perhaps there will be a teacher in this world for you to learn from. In the meantime, that is all we have to tell you that will not confuse you further, is there something you would like to do?"

"You don't have a kitchen, do you?" asked Harry.

"Of course. Alas, you haven't eaten in a while, it is no great wonder you are famished." said Lord Celeborn standing up, "Haldir, please take this young one to the kitchens and let him eat his fill."

"Yes, my lord." said Haldir bowing low and leading Harry out of the room.

Lord Celeborn sat down beside his wife.

"Such a dear thing." said Lady Galadriel. "It is not often that the race of men can produce a child like that."

"I was quite embarrassed, to think that our knowledge of King Meandenbor might be incorrect." said Lord Celeborn. "If only the curse would be lifted off his name, so we may write his life story down."

"The Dark Lord's curse of forgetfulness is coming at last to the elves it seems." said Lady Galadriel sadly. "Even we are forgetting the happier times of our long history."

Voldemort was not happy. His Death Eaters, wherever they ran away to, lost the painting. The Potter boy was nowhere to be seen, and now the painting was gone. If he ever got ahold of the two Death Eaters that were supposed to be guarding the painting, they would wish they shared the same fate as that Umbridge woman.

The rest of his Death Eaters knew to stay far away from the Dark Lord at this point. Not even Bellatrix, who had just been broken out of Azkaban was safe from her Master's rage. Lucius and his wife barricaded themselves in their son’s bedroom, hoping their Dark Master would not find them there.

He decided that if he couldn’t have the painting, he’d find the boy, and Merlin help the people sheltering him.
The days passed slowly while they rested in Lothlorien. Harry was allowed to hang out with the rest of the Fellowship, but Lady Galadriel and Lord Celeborn kept taking up most of Harry’s time. Especially after he made the lord and lady of Lothlorien quite a few tasty tidbits as a way of apologizing. They had never had apples covered in…well…whatever that brown sticky stuff was, but it was very delicious.

Lord Elrond had sent Lady Galadriel and himself a warning, that Harry would be someone very hard to let go of. Especially due to a few things, the boy was lost in a world he knew nothing about, he was forced into a quest that could have devastating consequences if he failed and his nature, it wasn’t that of a hardened warrior, it was that of kind and gentle child. Though the child had been long since dead thanks to his relatives back in his own world.

Since the boy had said that both his parents, and grandparents were gone, Lord Celeborn took it upon himself to take the place of Grandfather. He remembered a long time ago when Arwen was such a young girl, and he dearly missed having such a young child around. He could remember all the times she created with her presence; he thought fondly that she wasn’t always personification of angelic grace. There were times where she could have destroyed the entire Golden Wood with her adventures and antics.

If the boy didn’t have the wisest person in his family to teach him all there is to know, he would take it upon himself to guide the boy as best as he could.

They didn’t discuss King Meandenbor any further, but Lord Celeborn did take him out into the Golden Wood and teach him about Middle Earth and a bit about the way of the elves. He taught Harry how to use a bow and arrow, though it was a long process for Harry to even hit a basic elven target.

“Just aim a little higher lad.” said Lord Celeborn standing behind Harry as he shot a small wooden target.

Harry pulled the bow string back as far as he could and let loose the arrow.

THUD! The arrow embedded itself in the target, it wasn’t the center but it wasn’t burying itself in the ground for the five hundredth time in a row.

“Hey! I got it!” said Harry excitedly.

“So you did.” said Lord Celeborn with a warm smile. “Excellent. Now let us see if you can keep hitting the target.”

Unfortunately, hitting the target was like his Patronus lessons when they first started, awful.

“Archery is not learned in a day, dear boy. But don’t worry, I’m sure you’ll gain the experience soon enough.” said Lord Celeborn. He didn’t want to say that he’d learn from Aragorn or Legolas along the way, hoping the boy would stay in Lothlorien until these troubling times were over.

Harry picked up all the arrows that were not lost forever to the Lothlorien wood and placed them back in the elvish quiver that was slung over his back. The bow and quiver were a gift from Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel. They figured that, with learning swordsmanship from Aragorn, (and Boromir, though the man would never admit to teaching the boy to anyone) and with the jewels that Gimli was teaching Harry about where they come from, how they form and where they get
their color from (though he couldn’t help Harry learn how to use them), it would help if Harry were to learn an elvish skill. Elvish accuracy.

Sirius sat beside Harry’s bedside, reading from a book from the stack of books that Dumbledore brought him and listening to the radio. The kids, who were still coming in and out of the room, now had theory classes of magic in different rooms of the house. He actually found the house as quiet as it was before the Order made it’s Headquarters.

Remus was teaching them History of Magic, which they found a lot more interesting when the teachers didn’t all of a sudden fall asleep on you, or speak in a monotononed voice. He had actually devised projects they could do with large pieces of parchment, and gave oral reports. Hermione said it was like muggle school all over again, and she wasn’t complaining.

Haggrid was teaching his Care of Magical Creatures class in the room Harry slept, though he thought it wasn’t as well done as he would have liked with the creatures actually there. Sirius however was highly impressed with all the extra knowledge he had, it beat Professor Kettleburns class easily. Even he found himself raising his hand and asking the large man a few questions, and he found himself forgiving Hermione.

Charms class was run by Mrs. Weasley, she had sent word to Professor Flitwick for tips on how to help the students learn how to teach charms from just the book. He was more than happy to oblige by sending her several books on Charms theory and offered her words of encouragement.

Mr. Weasley decided to help them with their homework by watching over a study hall. None of his kids were taking a Muggle Studies class, so he decided to just help the kids with their homework.

Transfiguration, Defense Against the Dark Arts and Potions were the classes that didn’t happen all the time. Dumbledore would teach the Transfiguration class when he would stop by twice a week to check on Harry. Snape would teach both D.A.D.A and Potions class, though his demeanor didn’t change from the one that made his classes infamous at Hogwarts however.

Sirius ran his fingers through the hair of his godson as the news came on.

“This just in, a house in the town of Little Whinging was attacked by several unknown dark wizards. This home was the house of Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Dursley, the reported Uncle and Aunt of Harry Potter, the Boy Who Lived.

Mr. and Mrs. Dursley occupy their house with their nephew Harry and son Dudley. It is reported that no one was home at the time, but investigators have discovered something terrible in the house where the Boy Who Lived resided.

Terrible? What was so terrible?

It has been discovered, by several members of the Investigative Squad of the Auror Department, that the boy might not have had the happy home that all would have suspected and expected. Nowhere in the house could any photo of the boy be found, no childhood photos of a younger Harry Potter, only that of the Dursley’s only child but that was not the worst part.

Sirius ears perked up and he looked over to the radio fearfully.

When inspecting every inch of the house, the Investigators found a small cupboard under the stairs of this house, and unearthed a dried bit of blood on a part of the cupboard. A composition charm was used on the speck of blood. Worst fears were realized when the blood was found to be human
blood. Upon further investigation, through Harry Potter’s birth records, the speck of blood was his.

Sirius’ scowl grew into the coming of rage.

_The Department of Magical Law Enforcement swore that when they would finish gathering evidence, and if the terrible speculations are true, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Dursley will be arrested and be made to pay for his crimes of child abuse and neglect._

_But the questions that this station has only grown, is this just the tip of the iceberg? Was this a singular incident? Has there been even worse occurrences? What has Potter been through thus far, and is he alright right now?_

“He is now.” said Sirius darkly as he turned the radio off. “Well, as alright as he can get.”

Remus came in the room, “Padfoot…” he held up a newspaper.

“I just heard, if I ever get my hands on Dursley, I’ll rip him limb from limb.” snarled Sirius.

“I personally want a moonlit word with Rita Skeeter.” said Remus.

“What?” asked Sirius. “What are you talking about?”

“She glamourized Kingsley’s and the Granger’s death, the burning of the Burrow, and Harry’s disappearance.” said Remus throwing the paper down on the floor and spitting on it. “She’s saying how the deaths and arsons are all for the greater good and that anyone with information on Harry’s whereabouts should contact the Ministry for a thousand galleon reward.”

“Mundungus doesn’t know he’s here, does he?” asked Sirius quickly.

“After what happened this past summer, he should consider himself lucky he knows what day it is.” said Remus. “He’s off keeping an eye on the Department of Mysteries.”

“Good, keep him away from here if there’s a bounty on Harry’s head.” said Sirius with a snarl.

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Back at Hogwarts, in the Headmaster’s office, Dumbledore sat flipping through a stack of papers. Dumbledore had also read the evening paper, though Rita Skeeter’s information was now merely day old news and no one was really paying much attention to it due to the terrible facts discovered at Privet Drive, it still worried the old Headmaster.

What was the Minister thinking? Putting a bounty on the poor boy’s head? How far will the man go to not speak to him? And what horrors has he himself put Harry through? What had he done?

Suddenly, a bright column of light shot down from his ceiling and landed right in front of his desk. When the column of light disappeared, King Meandenbor himself stood before him.

“Y-Y-Your Majesty! What brings you here?” asked Dumbledore in shock. He tried to get used to the man, but that was impossible, as if every magical part of his body was excited to see him and forced his mind to be completely awed by the man.

“I came to see if people have changed since I’ve last been here, some things have, and yet, some things not.” said the King with a smirk. “I came to let you know that I have the device that sent the boy to my other world.”
“What was it?” asked Dumbledore.

“Something that should never have been placed in a school.” said the King sending a stern glance over to Phineas Nigellus. “That’s all I came to tell you and that’s all I can do for now. I’ll be in touch when I am needed.”

“Wait!” said Dumbledore quickly.

The column of light, that was in fact the world’s core of magic, came back and the King was gone.

“I wish he would tell me what is going on!” muttered Dumbledore. “Or at least speak casually.”

The day that Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel were dreading came upon them, the day Harry would leave with the company. They had grown attached to the young man and did their best to help him in his endeavors. Even Haldir took a shine to the youth.

Haldir took the young man out into the woods to go hunting. Though Haldir was the only one that got anything, Harry’s aim was still not quite good enough to hunt competitively with Haldir.

“I think I’m better with a spear and lucky shots.” said Harry as he helped carry Haldir’s large stag back to Lothlorien.

“You’ll get the skill soon enough, young one. It just takes a bit of practice.” said Haldir with a smile.

“But we leave tomorrow, the chances of me being able to practice is slim.” grumbled Harry.

Tomorrow, that’s right, you’re leaving. thought Haldir somberly. I still wish you would consider staying behind.

Then, a melody drifted on the air.

Harry stopped so suddenly that he was almost dragged by Haldir.

“What’s wrong?” asked Haldir.

“One minute, I need to go find something.” said Harry quickly. Harry dropped his end of the stag and hurried away to follow the music.

“Hold on, lad.” said Haldir, stringing up the stag into the tree. “You might get lost.”

Both Haldir and Harry ran deep into the forest.

“What are we looking for?” asked Haldir. All the while that he knew the boy, he had never seen him this determined and this focused.

“I’m listening for something.” said Harry he strained his ears, trying to pinpoint the origin of the music. He followed it to one of the tallest trees in Lothlorien. “The music’s coming from up there.”

“What music?” asked Haldir.

He looked up; the tree was almost completely smooth on each side, like a palm tree.

“There isn’t any way I can climb this.” said Harry.
“This is actually a test of ours. If you can get to the tallest limb, you can take your place as a warden of the borders,” said Haldir. He smiled over to Harry. “Are you sure you want to dismiss this challenge?” He hoped that if Harry could try something that was challenging and fail, he’d stick around a little while longer.

Harry looked up the tree once again. “I guess I can give it a shot.”

Harry placed both his hands around the trunk of the tree, *This is nuts, this tree is too damn...hang on...* Harry found small grooves in the bark. He pulled himself up onto the side of the tree and slowly made his way to the tallest limb.

It felt like hours as he slowly gripped his way around the bark. Sometimes, the grooves traveled all the way to the back of the tree, so he would have to go around in an arc around the tree. Twice he lost his grip on one of his hands and nearly fell to the forest floor.

*Blast it, child. Take care!* muttered Haldir, he didn’t want to think of what Lord Celeborn would do if the boy happened to hurt himself climbing the Guard’s Tree. Now he was regretting coaxing the boy into taking the challenge. “Lad! Come down, I’ll get whatever you are looking for!”

“I’m almost there!” shouted Harry, and he was telling the truth, the music was getting louder and louder with every foot he climbed. However, his fingers were starting to bleed from the strain. Every muscle in his body was begging him to stop, but the music continued to ring though his ears.

Onwards he climbed, until now his vision was either blinded by bark or leaves. He looked deeper into the greenery and saw a single emerald, perched precariously on a many leafed twig.

*Why couldn’t it be closer to the freaking ground?*

Harry reached as high as he could to reach the jewel. His fingers lightly caressed the branch it was attached to, and the jewel fell from the branch and towards the ground.

*NO!* shouted Harry as he watched the jewel fall. Out of desperation, and sheer stupidity, he leapt off the tree after it.

*BOY!* yelled Haldir. He watched in horror as the boy fell to what had to have been his imminent death.

Harry fell to the earth like a bolt of lightning clasping his hands to his side and aiming for the jewel. He had about twenty feet left to go when his hand grasped around the emerald. *Now that I’ve got it, how do I get out of this?*

“Help!” said Harry loudly.

*Why are you shouting for help now?* thought Haldir wildly.

Suddenly, a giant leaf sprung from the forest floor catching Harry softly before he landed on the ground. Harry bounced up and down several times, like a giant green trampoline, until he finally bounced softly back to terra firma.

Haldir came running over, “Have you lost your senses?” He looked at the giant leaf in shock.

Harry looked up at the tree, all the way to where the tree’s leaves began, he climbed that high? And he jumped? He’s an idiot.

“Um...is this a trick question?” asked Harry with a cheeky grin.
“Don’t test me, I’m not above punishing a young man.” said Haldir sternly.

Harry’s smile went quickly away.

“Are you harmed in any way?” asked Haldir helping Harry to his feet, Harry flinched when he took Haldir’s hand. Haldir looked at Harry’s hands and saw that the fingertips were bloodied. “Let’s get you to Lord Celeborn.”

“It’s nothing really.” said Harry quickly.

“We will let him decide.” said Haldir.

Harry’s face fell.

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They traveled back to Lothlorien and placed their game in the elves kitchen. At least the elvish cook was happy for that day’s events.

“Excellent! We shall have a grand feast for the Fellowship’s departure.” said the cook. The cook then shooed them away and got on with the preparations.

“Now, it’s time you have to face Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel about what happened.” said Haldir.

Harry’s eyes opened wide. “Do we have to? I’m fine, nothing really bad happened.”

“If Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel find out that you were injured and I didn’t bring you to them directly, I will find myself guarding the southern border, alone.” said Haldir sternly.

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Haldir was halfway right, they both were unhappy, whether they told them right away or not. They were even unhappier when Haldir told them that Harry had climbed the Guard Tree.

“We will talk to you in private later, Haldir.” said Celeborn looking sternly over to Haldir. Then he turned his attention to Harry.

“What were you thinking?” asked Lord Celeborn, not bothering to act as calmly as he normally did. “You could have fallen to your death!”

“I was going after one of the jewels! I heard the music and went after it.” said Harry quickly.

Lord Celeborn massaged his brow. “We’ll discuss this later, but for the time being, go to the Lothlorien Basin, I’ll heal your hands.”

Harry sighed and walked away. Once he was out of earshot, and Lady Galadriel left to tend to Frodo and show him what he had to be shown in her mirror, Lord Celeborn turned to Haldir.

“So how high did he climb?” asked Celeborn quietly.

“To the lowest part of the tree top. If he were an elf, he would able to train to be a guard, just barely.” said Haldir.

“Not bad for his first time and for not being an elf. But he still shouldn’t have climbed it and most definitely jumped from it.” said Lord Celeborn.
Harry sat beside the Lothlorien Basin, waiting for Lord Celeborn. He wasn’t waiting for much longer, Lord Celeborn came up the winding stairs, with Strider right behind him.

“Let me see your hands, Harry.” said Aragorn quickly.

“They’re fine.” said Harry swiftly.

Strider examined them closely as Lord Celeborn took a small knothole out of the tree that stood beside the smaller pool and ushered Harry over to the basin. Harry watched in wonder as he saw what looked like golden green water come pouring out of the tree. Once the basin was filled about halfway, Lord Celeborn replaced the knothole, took Harry’s hands and placed them in the warm healing water.

“Keep them in there for a few moments. Now we need to talk.” said Lord Celeborn.

“’Bout what?” asked Harry glumly as he wiggled his fingers in the water.

“Harry, Lord Celeborn and I spoke…this is your last chance.” said Aragorn softly.

“Last chance for what?” Harry asked in confusion.

“Last chance for you to stay where it is safe, and look for the jewels during a safer time.” said Lord Celeborn.

Harry almost pulled his hands out of the water in shock.

“When Sauron is destroyed, I’ll come back here and help you look for them.” said Strider quickly.

“But there’s no guarantee that this quest will succeed! What happens if He wins?” Harry said loudly.

“Then Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel already agreed to take you to the Grey Havens. There, the High Elves that reside there can send you home.” said Aragorn.

Harry stared.

“You’re hands are all healed. We’ll give you till tomorrow to decide. You’ve had a long day today, best get some rest.” said Lord Celeborn.

Harry was still dumbfounded. What was he going to do now?
Harry laid on his bed, looking up through the dense canopy and into the night sky. Harry thought deeply of his entire stay in Lothlorien. It had the same feel as Rivendell did, he felt at ease and safe there. It was a great place to hide, for it had been several nights, and according to Strider, goblins and trolls only come out at night, and there was no sign of them in Lothlorien.

Harry thought about Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel, he felt bad about his blowup at the pair of them. He couldn’t help but let loose all the frustration that he felt. They were doing their best to try and help him and there he was shouting at them. He actually really liked it here, just like he was sorry to leave Bree, and Rivendell. However, if he didn't leave, he'd never get home as soon as possible, but if he waited, he may be a bit safer.

Harry thought of what Strider said, that this was the last chance he had to stay safe and just go after the jewels after the battle was over. The other option was that he go with the rest of the Fellowship take things as they came.

He was in for a rough night of debate and he had a bad feeling that he wasn't going to get much sleep.

Strider told the rest of the Fellowship the decision Harry had to make, and to leave him be until he decided. The next morning, as Strider and Legolas gathered up the supplies they needed, Strider took special precaution to gather several canteens of the Elvish spring water that Harry had acquired in Rivendell. Legolas took great care in filling the packs with lembas bread. He knew that lembas bread was really the only food that they could keep fresh and wholesome in their packs and given them energy to spare.

He took ahold of Harry’s pack and was about to fill it with supplies when he stopped. He looked at the pack and breathed in the scent that came off it. Like an elf and the hobbits, the boy preferred to bathe every opportunity he had, which took Gimli and Boromir by surprise.

Legolas reached into his tunic and pulled out the leaf that Harry had given him before they entered the mines. He’d miss the boy, but if leaving him behind in Lothlorien kept him safe, then it was for the best. He packed Harry’s pack with some supplies, not the necessities, but just in case the boy came with him, which he was torn in between hoping he would and hoping he’d stay safe.

Sam stowed a special bit of rope, woven by the elves and Galadriel herself, into his pack. He had gone all the way from Rivendell to Lorthlorien without any rope in his pack, and he hardly went a day without wishing he still had it. This time, he wasn’t leaving without it.

Merry and Pippin stuffed their packs full of food, and were disappointed when Boromir told them they had to carry some supplies, for they no longer had two members of their group. Boromir felt sure that the boy was going to stay behind in the relative safety of the wood. As a matter of fact, he was secretly glad of it. The boy was slowly beginning to grow on him; he no longer held hostile words towards the youth, now it was…how did Pippin put it? Teasing, like he and his younger brother Faramir used to do when they were young.

Boromir wished that the smaller ones could also stay here, but they wouldn’t leave Frodo…Frodo…the ring-bearer…oh what he could do for Gondor with that ring! He’d defeat the terror that they faced everyday with the new dawn, he’d destroy the might of Sauron and Sauruman, he’d…
Suddenly, the eyes of Lady Galadriel peered through his thoughts and dreams of power. He shook his head, he didn’t want to think of the Lady’s eyes, they peered too deeply into him for his liking. Made him feel like a complete fool, which he thought he was not at all.

Gimli sat inside the elven forges, sharpening his axe blade. He couldn’t wait to leave this place, though it did begin to cause him to become fond of it, especially the beauty of the lady, but he wanted to get out and cleave a few orc and goblin heads in two. He dug into his pack for his special sharpening stone when his hand fell on the small box that Harry had found. He brought it out and opened it slowly. The fabled treasure of Khazad-Dum.

He stirred the countless diamonds around the box with his finger, each one a different and masterful cut. Even in the faintest light the entire box sparkled and danced in his eyes. These stones were worth all the treasures in the Iron Hills, though not as priceless as the Arkenstone of Thrain being cut and shaped by the greatest jewelers to come from the race of dwarves. He was impressed though; that the lad was willing to hand over the box to him, though his hands held the faint traces of bruises and burns that came with finding the treasure if you aren’t a dwarf.

The lad wasn’t bad, for a boy of the race of Men. And he could cook a fine piece of venison. If these were times of peace, Gimli would have taken the lad to the Lonely Mountain and introduced him to Lord Dain. Lord Dain would greatly appreciate a man of Harry’s talents. Maybe, perhaps, there was one of those jewels that Gandalf mentioned to him and the elf before they entered Moria in the Lonely Mountain. Well, if the boy was kept safe that was all that was important really.

The boy was the youngest member of the fellowship, not the shortest, but very much the youngest. The hobbits, though he wasn’t for certain, had to have been in their thirties. The boy was still in his teens. If he were a dwarf, he would still be at home, crawling about the rocks and playing and training their toy making skills. But he guessed, where he comes from, boys need to grow old before their time.

But he did have to hand it to the boy, when they could pick up a stray piece of wood, big enough to carve, he could do some fine work. Harry told him once of the music box that he gave to some girl in Bree. Harry said that some dwarves had been passing through Bree and gave him some quick lessons on how to do some woodwork in exchange for a little extra food. Judging solely on Harry's description of the box, he did a fine job. Too bad he didn't see it first hand, but perhaps once all this was over, he'd be able to see something else the boy were to make.

Merry and Pippin were still trying to squirrel more food into their packs and into their pockets. They weren’t as happy as they normally were, not only were they going to leave a place where they could eat anytime they wanted, Strider hinted that Harry might not be coming with them on the remainder of the journey.

They didn’t want to lose Harry, who was a lot more easy going about food than Sam was. He was also pretty much their playmate, if he wasn’t with Strider, then they were wrestling around or chucking a squashy bag of grain that Harry had made way back in Bree back and forth with their feet. Harry was pretty good about kicking it around in the air on the sides of his feet when they would be resting. He was teaching Merry and Pippin how to do it, but amazingly, Frodo was the best at it out of all the hobbits.

Also, they didn’t want to lose Harry’s amazing food while they would be out and about on their quest. It was more like a long and extended picnic when mealtimes came around. Sam was a great cook too, but they were used to Sam’s cooking, Harry did weird but delicious things with what they had to eat.

Sam and Frodo were sorry to hear that Harry might be staying behind too. Sam was sorry because
Harry and he were constantly trying new recipes together and were constantly exchanging recipes. While Harry taught Sam all about his world, Sam taught Harry how to garden and the names of different plants that is if Sam knew what they were. But Harry took in all the information he could, from everyone in the company.

Frodo was especially sorry to see Harry go. He felt that no one else in the company knew what it felt like to be in as much pain as he was almost every other day. The weighing down of his entire body and soul, but Harry it seemed to understand him perfectly.

Harry seemed to know what pain was like, even more than what Frodo did. Frodo liked to wake up early and talk with Harry about all of his adventures and ask questions about them. Frodo liked having someone to talk about what he was going through inside, and with Harry gone, his, healing buddy as Harry put it, would be gone.

Now Frodo felt he lost a protector against Boromir, he knew that Harry couldn’t take the ring, not without suffering immense damage to himself. Strider said he wouldn’t take the ring and that he’d protect Frodo, but he didn’t really want to risk losing Strider to the ring. With Harry, he had a definite protector, though Harry said that his swordsman ship was severely lacking, he still had those jewels he could use.

Magic…Gandalf. He missed the old wizard very much, and Harry was helping him cope with the loss.

Strider was finishing up the preparations and was about to set out to see how the boats were coming. Every time his gaze ran across something green he could only see Harry’s eyes. He didn’t want to leave the boy, but if the alternative was him being safe, then it’s best that he stayed here. Harry and the jewels in his care were too precious to lose to the enemy, but Harry especially was too precious to lose to anybody or anything.

Harry was like a son to the Ranger, so much so that he professed to Arwen that if Harry couldn’t find a way back home, that he’d come and live with them in Gondor. That is, if they can defeat the Dark Lord as they hoped. But he supposed that Harry would want to go back to Bree, if Anya was still on his mind, unless Legolas dragged Harry off to Mirkwood to meet his sister.

Voldemort paced the floor of Malfoy Manor angrily. The guards he had placed in front of the painting were gone and so was the painting. If he ever got his hands on them, Nagini would be feeding well on their corpses. He needed that painting! He was planning on finding out everything about that painting by inspecting it personally.

His informants told him that the painting was a sort of fixed portkey that took wizards and witches to another realm. A realm ruled by King Meandenbor himself. In his early years he tried to attract the King’s attention and become his heir, but the King never came. The King must be dead, he decided. If he had been alive, then Voldemort was sure that the King would have come to him and begged him to take the throne. But no word ever came thus giving him the notion of taking over the entire wizarding world. In his twisted mind, it belonged to him anyway.

So if this painting was a portkey of sorts, and the boy went through it, he himself would as well. He’d find the boy and then kill him on site, once one half of the boy was gone, the other would follow immediately. It was his only option now; none of his Death Eaters could find the boy anywhere. That fool Dumbledore must’ve used the Fidelius Charm again, using himself as the Secret Keeper. He had to find that painting!
Dumbledore sipped a cup of tea down in the kitchen of Grimmauld place. Mrs. Weasley was bustling around the kitchen baking cookies and making the children’s lunch.

“Are you going to stay for lunch today, Headmaster?” asked Mrs. Weasley.

“I would be delighted, Molly.” said Dumbledore with a smile. He took another sip of his tea. He couldn’t help but appreciate the serenity that she could give off with her homemaking skills. There were many pressing matters on his mind, all having to do with Harry.

The school was running as smoothly as can be, especially with Umbridge gone. Harry’s the only thing that seems to be the only trouble that plagued his thoughts. Harry in a strange world…was he really alright? Was he hurt, was he eating well, was he already on his way home? He could not help but worry.

At lunch time, all the children and some of the Order members came clambering in and sat down to enjoy lunch. They weren’t as jovial as they would be if they were back in school and Harry was back on his feet, but that was to be expected. They discussed their homework, and the progress of different Quidditch teams. Hermione was tutoring her parents on the basics of the new world they found themselves in though she was doing her absolute best, they were perplexed beyond belief.

Sirius however only came down to grab two giant plates and walked right back out the door. Without saying a word. Dumbledore finished his bowl of chowder and followed Sirius up the stairs.

“Any news on how Harry’s doing?” asked Sirius as he handed Hagrid his plate of sandwiches back in Harry’s room.

“I could ask you two the same thing.” said Dumbledore.

“He’s fine, now your answer?” asked Sirius.

“I’m thinking he’s alright, I’m sure the King would at least tell me if Harry were to fall in that world.” said Dumbledore softly.

They sat in deep silence, not saying a thing to anyone, all they did was look at Harry. What could any of them say? Hagrid just focused on protecting Harry from anyone wishing to hurt him, in this world anyway. Sirius figured as Harry’s godfather, it was his job to be there when Harry woke up, be the first thing he saw and give him all the care he could.

"However Harry got to that other world, the King now has possession of it." said Dumbledore quietly.

"And yet he didn't tell you what the hell it was?" said Sirius.

"No, he did not." said Dumbledore. "I just hope Voldemort did not find it and utilize it before he took it."

Back in Lothlorien, the Fellowship were placing all the supplies, and thanking their elvish benefactors. Galadriel was giving each member of the Fellowship final words of wisdom and her blessing for the remainder of their journey. Boromir chose to keep his distance from her. Lady Galadriel noticed this, but she accepted his reaction. Lord Celeborn looked around, but didn’t see
the person he was looking for.

He sighed with relief, he wouldn't have to say goodbye.

“It seems that Harry chose to stay here.” said Lord Celeborn with warm smile, “I must say I'm very relieved.”

"Please take care of him." said Aragorn quietly.

"You mean we aren't going to be able to say goodbye?" asked Pippin.

"It appears not, if he isn't here." said Boromir as he loaded the boat.

"Can we go and find him and say, goodbye?" said Merry starting to walk towards the forest.

Strider took a hold of the hobbit's shoulder.

"Let Legolas go and find him, he's faster." said Strider, "I want to say goodbye as well."

“Hang on! I’m coming!”

The elves, Lady Galadriel, Lord Celeborn, and the Fellowship turned to see Harry hurrying down the path, with a new pack, his pouch and his sword.

“What are you doing?” said Strider as he watched the youth run up to them.

“I’m coming with you.” said Harry putting the pack he had in the canoe, “I spent the entire night thinking about it, and decided I was going with you.”

“Are you sure, lad?” asked Lord Celeborn. "We hate to see you go." he didn't mention that he could feel his ancient heart breaking.

Harry looked up to the elf; he could almost feel the pain resonating off him.

“Yes sir. The offer you gave me was really great, but…I’d get into way too much trouble and I’d overstay my welcome really fast.” said Harry with a smile.

Lord Celeborn smiled in spite of himself.

“And this way, if we…uh…it’ll be faster if I find all the jewels I can on the road.” said Harry.

The Fellowship smiled brightly. Merry and Pippin grabbed Harry about his middle, Sam shook his hand tightly and Frodo heaved a sigh of relief. Strider smiled sadly at Harry and shared a poignant look with Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel. Boromir had to turn and face the water in order to hide his small smile.

They were still minus one wizard, but at least they didn't have to say goodbye to another member of their "family". They piled into the canoe after saying their final goodbyes; Lord Celeborn broke his own decorum and brought Harry into a tight embrace.

“If it becomes too much, come back to us.” said Lord Celeborn. “Or send word, and Haldir will come to fetch you.”

When they pulled apart, Lord Celeborn brought out a large golden feather. “This feather belonged to one of great golden eagles of Lothlorien, the ancient protectors of the Golden Woods.”
Harry took the feather cautiously. “I can’t take this.” he whispered.

“If you have this feather, you’ll able to come back to us easier and faster.” said Lord Celeborn.

As they finally paddled away from Lothlorien, Harry took a hold of the diamond in his pouch, and touched it to the feather. In a flash the feather was gone, well; at least Boromir wouldn’t have to hunt down a turkey for him.
They paddled down the river, looking into the forest with suspicion. Harry shared the canoe with Strider and Frodo, while Sam was riding with Merry and Boromir, and Pippin was with Gimli and Legolas. They had decided to split up the terrible twosome so one of the canoes at least doesn’t capsize.

Merry and Pippin had been bouncing about their canoes looking at each side of the river and peering deep into the water passing beneath them. They stopped for a while when Sam threatened to not toss Pippin his lunch or hand Merry his. They picked back up again once lunch was over.

Harry had never been in a canoe before so Strider had to tell him how to paddle properly, Harry accidentally got Frodo wet a few times from paddling too hard. Harry could tell that Strider was trying not to laugh. Frodo however didn’t hold back and laughed loudly.

They were paddling downstream, Merry and Pippin, in their separate boats, decided to look over the side to see if they could catch a fish with their bare hands.

“Merry, Pippin! Don’t tip the boat.” said Strider from behind them.

“We just wanted to see if we could catch something.” said Pippin.

Suddenly, a fish leaped out of the water and smacked Harry in the face. The force of the fish striking him knocked him backwards. Frodo and Strider stared in shock at Harry who was now sprawled in the boat facing upwards.

“I caught a fish.” said Harry with a groan. He held the fish up high into the air; it wriggled until the fish escaped back into the water.

Strider and Frodo began choking on their own laughter, as well as the occupants of the other boats.

“That’s right, laugh at my expense.” said Harry with a playful scowl. “Really glad I came along now.”

They continued on down the river, when in the distance, Harry spotted a pair of giant statues, as tall as the highest tower at Hogwarts. Harry didn’t hear much of what Strider said as they passed between the two giants. His own thoughts swam through his mind.

His mind was focused on his school, his missed walking down those stone corridors, climbing the winding staircase, playing Quidditch, trying not to get detention every other day. Harry didn’t want dwell on Hogwarts or the people back home, it always made him depressed. Harry to admit it though, it was nice not having to worry about a dark force solely after him. The enemies they had to face, the leaders especially, didn’t even know he existed. That was nice; he could carry on his little quest with relative safety.

It wasn’t long after they passed the giant statues that they finally pulled onto shore. They pulled the boats ashore and unloaded them. Gimli got a fire stared, and with some of the extra food Harry packed away in his pack, he made them a modest sort of stew. It was too bad that he couldn’t keep
“This is where we have to decide which way we are to go.” said Strider poking the fire slightly. “Do we cross the river and head to Mordor, or do we stay on this side and go to Gondor with Boromir?”

Harry looked at Strider, and then at Frodo. Which way should he vote? He reached into his pouch and took out the compass. He didn’t use it all that often in front of the others; he would look at it at night to make sure he could just continue on with the company. The compass turned around until it pointed out into the distance, on the side where Gondor was. It made sense to Harry, if he had to make sure that the villains couldn’t find them so easily then he wouldn’t put any within arm’s reach, though Gondor, from what he saw on the maps, was right next door.

“Looks like my travels take me to Gondor.” said Harry out loud. “So this might be where we part.”

“But…we…” said Merry and Pippin together. They didn’t want to say goodbye, right after they almost had to the other day! This wasn’t fair!

Boromir turned his head in Harry’s direction, he was going to Gondor? Perhaps…he was wrong about the boy. At first, Boromir didn’t know how he could trust the boy when he seemed to have powers that he didn’t understand. Gandalf was one thing, but this boy that needed whatever was in that pouch was someone completely different. But, the boy did decide to leave the safety of the wood to continue on with them. He was impressed.

Strider on the other hand was torn, he promised Frodo that he’d go all the way to the fiery pits of Mount Doom, but he didn’t want to lose sight of Harry. If their paths had to break now…he hoped the boy would be safe.

“What if you run across orcs or something even worse?” said Pippin.

“Gee thanks. But I should be fine, if anything, I can turn into a bird and fly away pretty quickly.” said Harry with a laugh.

“So you could go back to Bree and be with Anya?” asked Pippin, who was always a sucker for love stories.

Harry froze. Strider smacked the back of Pippin’s head sharply.

Harry brought his knees up to his chest and thought of that pretty barmaid back in that small village. His thoughts were dwelling back and forth between Ginny and Anya and it was driving him absolutely mad.

How could he possibly choose between which world to try and make a home out of? He didn’t want to lose his friends that he made here. He couldn’t believe it; he was more focused on getting back home that he didn’t think about the friends he’d leave behind. Maybe if he asked nicely, the King would allow him to go back and forth if he wanted to come for a visit, without taking the damn throne.

He remembered telling Anya to not wait for him, to go on with her life. He hoped she had taken his advice, especially now. They had already met up with a hoard of goblins, he had a feeling things were not going to get any easier. So if he didn’t make it back, it was best if she just went on with her life.

He didn’t know why he made that music box, but he wanted to give Anya something. Thankfully, there was a dwarf passing through Bree that taught him how to make a different assortment of
things. Took him a long time to get the music right.

He was shook out of his thoughts when Boromir spoke up. “I’m going to go and get some more firewood.” Wishing for an excuse to go for a walk, Harry offered to go looking for some as well.

Harry wandered about the woods, not even bothering to pick up any twigs or fallen limbs, just passively looking around the area, making sure to keep within eyesight of the river so he could find his way back. He just wanted to allow his mind to almost blank, just like he used to, it was a nice calming experience. It wasn’t until almost a complete hour went by that he decided to head back.

He turned on his heel and started to head back when he heard a sort of deep throated growling from off to the right. He turned and saw a troop of the ugliest things he had ever seen. They had white jagged teeth, soot colored skin, long coarse black hair, and immensely strong, much stronger than those goblins.

“Hi?” said Harry weakly.

The leader sneered over to Harry, picked up its bent blade and they all charged him.

“Fuck.” said Harry with wide eyes. He drew his sword with his right hand and took out the opal with his left.

“Another battle, lad?” said the voice.

“You know it, and we’re out numbered easily.” thought Harry rushing forward to meet the monster head on.

The leader and the rest of them, moving sluggishly, took a step back when they saw this scrawny boy rushing them with a gleaming sword. Harry swung his sword clean through the leader’s head and moved onto the next.

Harry easily dodged the monsters’ weapons and sliced his way through the forest of bodies. He didn’t stop until all of them were on the ground and not moving anymore. He looked down at the ground, breathing hard, where the hell did these things come from, and what the hell were they? He then ran as fast as he could to the campsite, he had to get there before any more of those things could get there, he needed to warn them!

He threw himself through the woods, just following the current of the river until he got to the campsite, everyone was gone. He looked around frantically and saw one of their boats heading for the opposite shore, but the boat wasn’t unoccupied. He saw two short figures paddling away.

“Sam! Frodo!” he shouted across the water.

They turned and looked back at him, “We’re going to Mordor!” said Frodo back to him.

Harry turned and dug out his pack, he emptied his bag of the lembas bread and a flask of elven spring water into another pack. He reached into his pouch and grasped the diamond, thinking of an eagle and allowing the magic to change him.

He felt his entire body stretch, his hands, arms, legs and feet. Then a warm covering came over his body, and his nose stretched and hardened. This was really the only part of the transformation he detested, it was quite painful changing from one animal to another, but he relished the strength it gave him.

Frodo and Sam watched in wonder as Harry’s body was replaced with a massive giant eagle’s, the
feathers on the eagle were black and gold. The sheer size of the eagle was staggering, it looked big enough to pick up a cow in each of it’s talons. The eagle picked up the bag with the curl of his talons and flapped over to the boat. He dropped the pack into the canoe, and then a thought struck Sam.

“Can you fly us to Mordor?” asked Sam loudly.

Now why didn’t that idea strike Harry? It was perfect; it got it all over within a matter of a few days! Harry dropped a little bit so they could climb onto his back a little easier, but the moment Frodo touched him, Harry was knocked almost out of the air.

“It’s the ring, he can’t even touch me when I’m wearing it.” said Frodo looking horrified at Harry who nearly fell into the water.

Harry rebounded quickly and landed back on the shore he came from. He stuck a talon in the pouch that had fallen to the ground when he transformed, and turned back to normal. He turned towards the two hobbits and shouted over to them.

“There’s more food in that pack for you, and some elven water! Be careful!” shouted Harry over to them and waving.

“You take care too!” said Sam.

Harry watched as they paddled over to the other side of the river and disappeared into the woods on the other side. He heard someone coming up from behind him and he turned with his sword unsheathed. It was Strider, Gimli and Legolas. over Strider’s shoulder, was Boromir.

“Are you alright?” asked Strider. “Where’s Frodo, and Sam?”

“I’m fine, and they’re over on that side now. What about you, are you alright? What’s wrong with Boromir? Where’s Merry and Pippin?” asked Harry.

“Merry and Pippin have been captured, by those vile things.” said Gimli.

“And Boromir was killed.” said Strider softly as he laid Boromir gently on the ground.

Harry’s breath caught in his throat. Merry and Pippin gone? Boromir…dead?

“Boromir wanted me to tell you, he was sorry that he was so coarse with you.” said Strider.

Harry leaned against a tree, needing it’s support. They had to go after Merry and Pippin! He had to get revenge for Boromir! He wished he and the man could have patched things up completely, they were finally making some headway and this happened!

“I’m going after Merry and Pippin.” said Harry pushing himself off the tree and grabbing his pack.

“We’re all going after them.” said Strider. “It seems that I cannot go no further with Frodo, but we will not allow Merry and Pippin to their fates. But first, we need to see to Boromir.”

They placed Boromir into a canoe gently, laying all his possessions with him, his shield, horn and sword. His horn…from what Strider said, he blew it and they all came to him to try and help, but Harry didn’t hear it. He supposed that wielding the opal, sound slows down as well, because he did hear a sort of low mooing sound, so that must have been it.

They bowed their heads, in grief, and Harry sang a soft rendition of ‘Danny Boy’ for him. It was
the only funeral like song he knew. Once they steeled their sadness and turned into vengeance. They took only the most important things, weapons, little food and little water and took off at a run. Before, however, Harry handed Strider his now lighter pack and turned into a stag once again. He couldn’t hope to keep up with them so he made up his mind to transform.

He easily kept pace with the other three, they ran all day and well into the night after the trail of monsters. He was right, Harry would have collapsed with exhaustion if he had stayed in his original form, this was much easier to deal with. He even had the strength to pick them each up in rotation so they could rest when they needed to.

Harry continued onward with the remaining members of the Fellowship. All he could think of was, those things better just drop off Merry and Pippin safely and run away as fast as they could. Cause he was going get each and every one of them.

Voldemort sat in the Malfoy dining room, listening to each of his Death Eater’s reports. He was still seething from their incompetence, the ones that were supposed to guard the painting were still missing. These fools should have done better to pick lackeys that were smarter than pixies dung to guard the painting.

They were discussing the different ideas they each had for taking over the Ministry and then taking over Hogwarts. They were running with their idea as fast as they could, for characteristically, the Dark Lord would step in quickly, call them all fools and come up with his own plan. This way, they’d be able to show him they too had original idea, and perhaps they could sell him some of their points. Though it was a double edged sword, if their idea was an imbecilic one and proven so, the Dark Lord would punish them personally.

Once the meeting was over, without anyone dying or being tortured for a change, the Dark Lord sat in front of the fire, with Nagini at his feet. He had to find the boy….find him and extinguish that green tint in his eyes that haunted his thoughts. He wanted the boy dead…NOW!

The light from the fire turned from red to black, Voldemort moved swiftly from his chair and drew his yew wand. The fire crackled, still black as death, but then a giant fiery red eye erupted from the darkness.

Greetings brother. hissed a voice coming from the eye.

“And you are?” said Voldemort coolly, his wand still pointed towards the eye.

_I am Sauron, and you and I have a common goal._ whispered the voice.

“Do we now, and that would be?” said Voldemort, still not lowering his wand.

_“I have a little mouse scurrying around my world, and from what I understand, you want this mouse dead.”_ said the eye.

Voldemort tilted his head but then his eyes flashed. _Potter._ “You willing to give me the boy?” said Voldemort with an excited sneer.

_“I’m willing to bring you to my world, it’s up to you to find him.”_ said the voice.

Suddenly the black fire swirled about Lord Voldemort, leaving nothing behind, except Nagini and his cloak.
What he didn’t notice, was someone peering through the door at the fireplace, then the face disappeared.

Lord Voldemort opened his eyes, he was lying on the ground amongst sweet smelling grass, a new set of black clothes, a tunic, pants and leather boots upon his body, his black cloak gone. He drew his eyes from himself to look around his person and saw a small river beside him. He stood up and walked over to the river, gazing down into his reflection, and nearly fell in from shock at the reflection he saw. The face that he had been cursed with from perfecting the Dark Arts, was gone, his original face, the face of his accursed father was restored. He was a handsome man in his middle ages, and his black hair was completely restored.

He lost the ability to frightened people on sight, but now he might be able to worm information and trust out of people once again. He looked back to where he landed and saw a black steed standing beside a pouch of gold coins and an ornate staff made of ebony.

“So the hunt begins.” said Voldemort with a sneer.

Chapter End Notes

A few people were wondering why Voldemort got a horse, gold, clothes and a staff and Harry got jack. That's because Sauron brought him and wanted to equip him. Harry came in through a completely different way and thus, he didn't get squat when he arrived.
Legolas, Strider, Gimli and Harry continued on with their chase of the monstrous orc-goblin creatures. They hadn’t stopped for three days straight, only resting when Harry carried each on his back. Harry was getting tired himself, but he couldn’t allow himself to slow down.

Despite their breakneck pace, Strider and Legolas made sure to give him drinks of elven water, and several pieces of thick and tasty grass for his stag form to eat. They kept telling him that they could carry him for a while, (if he’d turn back to his normal self) but Harry refused to stop and transform back. He had to keep going, cause if he didn’t they wouldn’t be able to rest, then they’d lose what little ground they had gained from chasing after them.

They continued on, not stopping for even an instant. When they finally did take a bit of a break, Strider examined the trail they had been following a little bit closer he picked up a small leaf shaped brooch.

“It’s not often the leaves of Lorien fall.” said Strider in a whisper. He held up the brooch for all of them to see.

“It’s a good thing it’s daylight, if it were night we could miss more signs like that brooch.” said Gimli.

“There will be no more signs!” said Legolas running after Strider.

“I’m wasted on cross-country, we dwarves are natural born sprinters. Very dangerous within a short distance!” said Gimli as he ran after the two of them. Harry ran beside Gimli and motioned with his large antlers for him to climb on. Gimli hesitated, noting how tired his young friend looked, climbed as best he could onto Harry’s back.

They stopped once again once they entered a large open meadow. Strider said that they were finally gaining on them, but Legolas said they were heading towards the direction of Sauruman’s tower. Sauruman? Didn’t Gandalf say that this wizard was now in league with the Dark Lord of Mordor?

Harry reared on his back legs, dug his hooves into the dirt and pushed off with such force that it
nearly sent Gimli sprawling to the ground.

“Harry!” said Strider.

Strider and Legolas hurried after Gimli and Harry as fast as they could. Harry wasn’t going to let Saruman get his hands on Merry and Pippin. They were pretty much a constant reminder of Fred and George and he didn’t want to lose that, and they didn’t deserve that kind of fate.

Onward they ran, far into the night and well into the next morning. Harry was becoming exhausted, he could barely carry any of them on his back anymore. He was panting and almost foaming at the mouth from pure exhaustion. He didn’t stop till his legs began to buckle underneath him.

“Lad!” said Gimli sliding off the stag’s back.

"Harry!” said Legolas coming up quickly. "Are you alright?"

The stag finally came to complete stop and breathed heavily through both it's nose and mouth. Finally the legs of the stag gave way and he crashed down in the meadow grass. Strider pulled Harry's pouch from his own pack and dug for the diamond. Suddenly, the thundering of hooves came towards them, and then a Calvary of horsemen rode over the small hill.

Harry didn't care what was coming towards, him; he just needed to rest a moment longer. Harry laid his antlered head down on the grass and closed his eyes.

The riders quickly approached where they were taking their rest.

"Riders of Rohan! What news from the Mark?" shouted Strider as the riders galloped towards them. They went past them and then circled around them, they enclosed their giant circle until their spears were pointing directly at their chests.

One of the riders pointed his long spear down at the fallen stag. Harry’s eyes were closed and he was almost gasping for breath. “I’ve never seen anyone run a stag to near death, I’ll finish him off for you.” He raised his spear high into the air, directly over Harry’s fur covered chest.
"You will die before your strike falls." said Legolas pulling back an arrow in his bow.

The spears came closer together at the sight of the arrow.

“Such strange loyalty you have to a piece of game meat.” said one of the riders.

Aragorn, diamond in hand, nudged a few of the spear heads aside, and walked to where Harry lay. He placed the diamond on the tip of Harry’s nose and a bright flash of white light, Harry’s original form was restored. The horses reared up and backed up despite the commands of their riders.

The leader of the riders stared at the sleeping figure in amazement. “It’s a lucky thing that we didn’t decide to slay him for ourselves.” he said weakly.

“You wouldn’t have been able to catch him Horsemaster, he’s faster than any horse, and can run for days without stopping.” said Gimli proudly.

“And yet you appear unwearied.” said the leader with a smirk.

“He carried us, each in turn.” said Gimli.

The leader looked at Gimli in disbelief. “What brings an elf, a man, a dwarf and a boy to the Riddermark?”

“We are friends of Rohan, and of Theoden your King.” said Strider.

“Theoden doesn’t recognize his friends, nor his own kin.” said the leader removing his helmet. “I am Eomer, nephew to King Theoden, though, it should be said that Saruman the White rules, for the White Wizard has poisoned his mind against his own family.”

“We are no friends of Saruman, we have been hunting a company of his orcs across your lands.” said Strider as he placed a hand on Harry's shoulder, the boy was still gasping for air.

“We have seen his Uruk-hais, and they have been destroyed.” said Eomer stiffly.
Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli lost whatever breath was left in their bodies. “Two hobbits, did you see two hobbits with them?” said Gimli quickly.

“They would be small, only children to your eyes.” said Strider quietly.

“We noticed not, we piled their carcasses and burned them.” said Eomer. He addressed two of the other riders and three horses came galloping up to them. “Take these horses, may they bear you to better fortunes than their former masters.”

Harry groaned and sat up. “Come on, can’t I get five minutes rest?” he moaned.

“You’ve had ten at least, come on.” said Strider pulling Harry to his feet. “We need to go, they’ve destroyed the orcs.”

“Did they find Merry and Pippin? Are they both alright?” asked Harry quickly as he scrambled to his feet. His legs still were not strong enough to support his weight and he leaned heavily against Strider.

“We’ll find out what happened when we get there, pick a horse.” said Gimli trying to climb a brown stallion.

Harry was about to say he could just become a stag again, but he was still too tired to even go through the painful transformation. He felt a slight nudge into his shoulder and saw a beautiful horse with a long flowing black and white mane and slightly long hair on it’s legs of the same colors. It’s body had patches of black hair and then white all over. For some reason he could feel it, this horse wanted him to be his…Harry looked quickly…her rider.

“I think the older ones should ride that one, she has a temper.” said one of the riders. The others around began to snicker.

“That’s right, she’s never allowed anyone to stay on her for very long.” said another rider.

“What happened to her previous rider?” asked Strider.
“He rode with me to battle.” said one of the other riders. “That mare wouldn’t carry him more than a league without trying at least fourteen times to buck him off.”

“What’s wrong girl, don’t you like anyone on you?” said Harry tentatively. He was used to dealing with an animal with the personality of a teenage girl. Hedwig was always a handful whenever he would accidentally tick her off. The horse reached around and nodded towards the saddle.

“When was the last time you took her saddle off?” asked Harry as he reached around.

“We take the saddles off every night while we rest.” said Eomer.

Harry took great care in taking the saddle off, working hard to remember where each strap went. He lifted the saddle off carefully and lifted it up.

“When did she start throwing her last rider around?” asked Harry.

“Fourteen days ago, when we first caught her.” said Eomer.

“She’s got a sore spot…right here. Is there any way to ride her without hurting her?” said Harry.

“Bareback is the only way.” said one of the riders. “We've seen the sore and tried to treat it. The sore will not go away, not with any ointment we have.”

“Well, this will be fun.” said Harry sarcastically. “I've never even ridden a horse with a saddle.”

Several riders laughed. “How can a lad your age go without learning how to ride?”

“I’m a lot better at flying.” muttered Harry. “Let’s see you ride a broomstick.”

“I’ll ride close to you.” said Strider, “until you learn how.”
Strider was about to kneel and give Harry a leg up when the horse fell to her own knees and allowed him on.

The riders stopped laughing. “What in the world?”

“Why is that horse doing that?” said another rider.

Harry climbed nimbly on, making sure not to sit right on her sore and hung on tightly as the horse stood up.

“Does this horse have a name?” asked Legolas, he looked at Harry form his own horse that he shared with Gimli, the horse looked as if it were bred especially for the youth.

“Plenty, but none a lad that hasn’t even seen his first kill should hear.” said one of the riders with a laugh.

“You’d be amazed of what I have been forced to see.” said Harry with a cold tint in his voice.

The riders went silent, the look in the youth’s eyes told the truth.

“Nay, she does not have a name.” said Eomer, “Perhaps you may be able to come up with a name she would come to.”

Harry ran his fingers through her mane and whispered into her ear. “I’ll try and find a really great name for you.”

The horse whinnied in agreement.

They galloped away Strider keeping close to Harry in case he was bucked off or fell off. Harry had to hold onto the horse’s main very tightly to stop himself from falling, but he never did. He didn’t keep the bridle on her, just in case she didn’t quite like that either.
“Beats riding Buckbeak.” said Harry as he was bounced around on top of the horse.

*You've found yourself a majestic horse, lad.* said the voice hidden in the sword.

“I just hope she likes me and won’t buck me off.” thought Harry.

They continued on, heading straight towards the small pillar of black smoke high above the fields. Harry hoped that they would find Merry and Pippin safely; he also hoped that Sam and Frodo were both alright too.

His thoughts were broken by their arrival to the mound where they saw a pile of those monster’s bodies. Strider said they had a name, Uruk-hai, in Harry’s opinion; ‘monster’ was a much better name for them. “Any sign of them?” said Harry looking around, all he saw were those thing’s bodies burning on the heap.

They stepped off their horses; Harry needed some assistance, and looked around trying to find some trace of the hobbits. They peered fearfully into the mound hoping the worse was not true.

“Look,” said Gimli, he held up a burnt piece of braided leather. “It’s one of their elven belts.”

Harry took a step back in shock. “No, we didn’t lose them, we couldn’t have.”

Strider kicked an Uruk-hai helmet out of grief and fell to his knees screaming.

“That broke his toe, easily.” thought Harry. Tears fell from his own eyes and he fell to his knees and covered his face with one of his hands, he couldn’t believe that they were gone. Losing Gandalf and Boromir was bad enough, why did they have to loose Merry and Pippin now?

Harry didn’t notice Strider looking about the ground; he was too busy trying not to start weeping. The horse that bore him to this place nuded his cheek with her nose, in a comforting sort of way.

“Their tracks lead away from the battle!” said Strider excitedly.
Harry snapped out of his thoughts and ran after Strider, who was heading towards the dark forest beside the burning mound of flesh. He noticed that Strider was limping slightly but he didn’t take any notice of Harry when he asked if he wanted to ride to where the trail ended. They had to find the hobbits, before someone else got their hands on them.

Voldemort rode his black steed up to a giant wooden wall; the sign post about a mile back said the name of this homely little village was called Bree. The door was shut, and there was no one around to open it. How annoying, it seemed he’d have to get off his horse and knock on the door.

He stepped down off his horse and knocked sharply on the door. The window slid sharply open and a craggy looking face opened.

“What do you want?” said the man.

“A meal and a night’s rest.” said Voldemort smoothly. He was almost nauseous from all pleasantries he’d have to spew just to get his way. His wand was no longer present, but that sword on his hip was all the power he would need, but this wall was better than a shield spell to protect this man from his steel. He had a staff, but he was unsure how to make it do what he wanted, learning to wield that would take time.

The man allowed Voldemort to enter Bree, in the dirt beside the door was stone monument, but he paid it no further mind. He rode through the street, trying to catch word if the boy was there or had passed through. He got his wish.

“Aye, the Prancing Pony’s not the same without Harry, the food’s not as good.” said one of the men standing beside the blacksmith shop.

“Though that woman tries, she just doesn’t have the talent that kid did.” said another one of the men.

*Gotcha!* thought Voldemort with a cruel smile.

He walked around the town, urging his horse onward. Now he had the task of finding this place called ‘The Prancing Pony.’ It wasn’t as hard as he thought; the Prancing Pony was right on the main road of town and easily the biggest inn. He tied his steed to a large pole and walked inside, the interior was just as busy and noisy as the outside street.
“Good evening sir, what can I do for you this fine day?” said a man to his left.

Voldemort turned and saw a portly man standing behind the counter, washing a giant tankard that was just emptied of it’s ale.

“I need a room and food.” said Voldemort stiffly.

“For how long, Master?” asked the innkeeper.

Voldemort tried hard not to smile, that word sounded so... delicious to him. He wanted nothing more than the whole world to call him that, and for it to be true. All that stood in his way, was that blasted boy.

“I have yet to decide.” said Voldemort.

“Well, it’s a silver penny a night.” said the innkeeper. His eyes opened wide when he saw Voldemort lay down several gold coins on the counter.

“I believe this should cover it.” said Voldemort, reading the look in the innkeeper’s face.

“M-M-Most surely, Master.” said the innkeeper happily.

Voldemort turned and sat in the dark corner of the inn. The innkeeper came over with a large tankard of fresh ale.

“I’ve heard that this place has the best food, though it has fallen slightly since your last cook left.” said Voldemort silkily.

“Aye, we had the best good we’ve had in a long time, Harry his name was, came from pretty far away. He had to leave and get back home though.” said the innkeeper. “Our young barmaid Anya was quite taken with him.” He pointed towards a pretty young blonde putting food on a table.

Voldemort looked over to the young lass, and hid a cruel smile. “Was he fond of her as well?”
“Aye that he was, he kissed her right before he left and even left her a present after he left.” said the innkeeper, with tears in his eyes. “A good lad that he was.”

The innkeeper finally left him to his thoughts. “So, he’s fond of you is he? That’s all I need to know.” thought Voldemort viciously.

Chapter End Notes

*How many of you knew that Viggo Mortesen actually did break his toe in that shot? Peter Jackson loved the scream and emotion so much that they kept the shot. He didn’t know it at that time that Viggo actually injured himself!
The Wizard of Fangorn Forest

Harry hurried as fast as his tired legs could carry him into the forest; the horses were absolutely refusing to go inside so they were left to enter the forest on foot. Something about the forest seemed to frighten them, and made them uneasy and skittish. No matter what they did to try and urge them inside, they would not enter under any circumstance.

Harry was still exhausted from all the running he had volunteered to do, and was trying as hard as he could to keep up, but little by little, the other three were pulling away from him. His lungs were aching, every muscle in his legs was screaming for relief, his face was drenched in sweat and the tunic was sticking close to his chest due to the perspiration.

Harry tried to catch up after Strider, Legolas and Gimli when something that felt like a heartbeat coming from the pouch. He stopped, took the pouch off his hip and took out whatever it was that was throbbing. It was the emerald. The stone was pulsing as if it held a little heart inside, and blinking like it was a Christmas tree light.

“What’s going on with this thing?” asked Harry holding out the jewel, all the while, the light was fading in and out.

“What is it?” asked Strider in a hushed voice as he fell back to Harry.

“This emerald, it’s going mad.” said Harry in an awed voice.

They stopped for a moment so that Strider and Harry could examine the stone. Legolas kept a sharp eye out on the surrounding area, while Gimli further examined the tracks. They had snuck a glance at what was in the boy’s hand, but neither of them could see whatever it was, all they saw was the boy’s palm, nothing more.

It never ceased to amaze them that only some people could see those stones and others could not. Legolas was an elven prince and couldn’t understand why he couldn’t see them, but Lord Elrond was another to be unable to see the stones. Gandalf could offer little to no insight into that curiosity, for it vexed him too.

“I’m not completely sure what is wrong with this emerald. What is the power this stone has?” asked Strider.

“From what I can tell, it controls plants.” Harry said. “So it might just be reacting to all these trees and other plants, but it didn’t do this in Lothlorien."

Suddenly Gimli made a disgusted sound. “Orc blood.” he had just spat out the liquid he had just tasted.

Why did he even taste it to start with? thought Harry with a crooked brow.

“We must go on.” Legolas said looking around. “They might be close by.”

They started running once again. Harry continued on with the trio, still holding the emerald in his hand and yet still staggering from exhaustion. What was going on with this emerald? It didn’t do this at all before, none of them have actually that he can remember.

Was it because of all the trees? Was there something of the King’s hidden here? Or was he supposed to do something? The list on continued to grow in his mind, and there was no time to
They followed the hobbit tracks in the dirt, until the trail ended, but another one began. It was freshly made hole in the ground, and more continued on down the forest path. It had to be something huge to make those tracks, if they were tracks. The first one looked as if they just uprooted a giant tree, and then stamped it on the ground in a sort of pattern down the way.

There wasn’t anything back home that could do that to a tree, except maybe a giant or a troll.

“Are there any giants in this area?” asked Harry.

“Not in Fangorn, but there are treeherders, Ents.” said Legolas softly.

Harry remembered when Lord Elrond spoke of Ents back in Rivendell, Ents were huge trees that could walk and talk. And here he thought the Whomping Willow was creepy.

“Are these holes, Ent tracks?” asked Harry with a little gulp as he looked at the deep hole.

“It is possible.” said Legolas. “It has been long since the last time I’ve seen a treeherder walk.”

Harry walked a little ways over to the second hole. “Strider, look at this.” he said looking own into the hole. They all came over and saw the crushed body of an orc.

“I’d say poor guy, if he wasn’t chasing Merry and Pippin.” said Harry looking disgusted.

“Serves him right.” said Gimli with a smirk. “Now let’s find the hobbits.”

They continued following the path, as it was their only lead to where the hobbits went to. They continued into the heart of Fangorn in relative silence till they heard a sort of low groan coming from somewhere nearby. Harry looked around quickly at the surrounding wooded area, but he wasn’t seeing anything. He did however see Gimli fingering his axe.

“The forest, it’s becoming angry.” said Legolas softly, they turned and looked over to Gimli. He was looking around quickly and tightening his grip on his large axe.

“Gimli,” said Strider quietly. “Lower your axe.”

Gimli looked around quickly and lowered his axe slowly to the ground.

And as if the groaning wasn’t already stressing Harry’s nerves, Legolas hurried over Strider and spoke in elvish.

Despite all that time in Lothlorien and Rivendell, Harry picked up a few phrases and words, but not enough to hold a confident conversation with Legolas. The only word he could get out of it was “White Wizard”

Harry tightened his hand around the pouch, he heard Saruman described as the White Wizard and he was warned that if *he* came near Harry…to fight, and only if he had all the stones and/or hide as best he could.

“Harry! Go! Go back to the horses!” hissed Strider back to Harry. “Legolas will send an arrow to let you know that all is well.”

Harry wanted to stay, but a quick look from Strider’s Legolas’ and Gimli’s faces told Harry that his wish wasn’t going to be granted. He hurried as fast as he could out of the forest. Legolas turned to make sure Harry left safely and not contacted with any orc they may have not noticed, he noticed
something extremely odd though. The forest floor, when they first entered, was full of fallen leaves and dark green grass and ferns. When Harry left, the grass was a bit lighter and flowers were starting to grow.

Before he could draw Strider’s attention to the improved foliage, Strider reminded him of the task at hand.

“We need to attack him quickly, before he puts a spell on us.” said Strider softly.

Harry ran as fast as he could to the horses. He didn’t stop running until he reached the open meadow and stood beside the horses. The horse that bore Harry to where they were, was most excited to see Harry. Then again, it was sort of hard to read a horses’ emotion when he had never been up close and personal with one before.

“Okay girl, we just wait for them to send a message that everyone is alright. If not, you and I run as fast as I and you can.” said Harry in her ear as he patted her nose.

Harry held onto the reigns of the horses and waited, and he was getting bored really fast. He almost had to bury his feet in the ground to make sure that he stayed in one place. This was not the time to wander and enjoy the scenery, he had to stay focused.

Suddenly the horses began to whinny and Harry walked around his horse and saw the arrow sticking in the ground. They were all okay.

Harry stayed close to the horses, trying to calm them down. He couldn’t blame them for being a bit jittery, an arrow came close by them and they weren’t too sure where it came from. Harry waited until he heard the sound of footsteps and the thud of swords against their legs. Harry was going to go greet them, till he heard another pair of footsteps. Did they lose their fight, and were now bewitched by Saruman? He dragged his own horse and hid behind a giant rock they were standing next to.

“Come on.” said Harry in a whisper. “We need to get out of sight.”

He heard the footsteps come closer until finally they stopped.

“Didn’t we say that an arrow meant that all was fine?” asked Gimli’s voice.

“We did.” said Legolas’ voice. “But perhaps he forgot and bolted instead.”

“Oh, I would have dearly loved to see that boy again.” said a voice that sent a jolt straight through Harry’s heart. It couldn’t be!

He came scrambling out from behind the rock and nearly crashed into Legolas who was looking at the tracks and following them behind the rock. The first thing that struck Harry’s eyes was a blur of white. He thought of Saruman but then…he recognized the face.

It was Gandalf.

Gandalf smiled warmly at the boy, but the smile faded to a look of shock as Harry fell to the ground in a dead faint. The horse followed Harry from around the large boulder, when she saw Harry lying on the ground; she reared up her on her back legs and kept them at bay.

“What has gotten into this beast?” asked Gimli.
“She’s protecting him.” said Legolas looking at the horse with wonder.

Gandalf soothed the horse with his raised hands, soft voice and a spell for good measure, though it took a while to calm the young mare down despite all that effort. Strider knelt down and lifted Harry into his arms.

Strider reached into his own pack and pulled out a crystal phial he had gotten from Lothlorien. He placed the phial and tentatively placed it to Harry’s lips. He parted Harry’s lips slightly and poured a little of the liquid into his mouth. The unconscious lad groaned and his eyelids fluttered open.

“G-Gandalf?” whispered Harry. “You’re alive!”

“That I am lad.” said Gandalf. “Are you alright?”

“Shocked.” said Harry simply.

Legolas and Strider helped pick Harry up off the ground and allowed Harry to lean on the both of them.

“We must move on, to Edoras, and see to King Theoden, whose mind has been overthrown.” commanded Gandalf, but he still held onto one of Harry’s shoulders to stop the boy from collapsing again.

“What about Merry and Pippin.” said Harry looking around, he didn’t see the little ones anywhere around.

“They’re safe, I have an old friend keeping an eye on them.” said Gandalf with a smile.

Gandalf then turned to face the open space as they took a hold of each of the horses’ reins, he began to whistle loudly. Harry stared at him in amazement; he had never heard anyone whistle like that without a flute pressed to their mouth.

Suddenly a beautiful white horse came galloping up to them. The moment it came closer to them, Harry noticed that the horse didn’t seem to even touch the ground as it cantered up to them.

“Shadowfax, the lord of all horses, he’s born me on many travels, and has been my friend for many an age.” said Gandalf as he stroked the horse’s mane.

Harry’s horse nudged his shoulder as she moved forward and rubbed noses with Shadowfax. Shadowfax whinnied and return her little caress.

“I think, this horse of yours Harry, may well be one of his foals.” said Gandalf with a smile.

Voldemort sat in one of the booths in Bree, drinking his tankard of ale, and slicing off a piece of bread and cheese. He hadn’t left the town of Bree, and had no desire too since he learned that the boy had left a love interest behind. He needed to find out where the boy was heading, and then he would follow, and perhaps Miss Anya could be persuaded to leave as well.

He had the mad desire to kill her the first night he arrived, but that would not do. Her death would mean nothing; he would have to have her in his clutches in order to control the boy completely.

Her dead body would only spur him into battle, and without competent magic on either side, it could get bloody. He was would no doubt win any battle that came his way, he was the Dark Lord
after all, but he wanted Potter to suffer long and hard now. Killing him in battle is too good for him he needed to die like the cowardly dog he was. And his imagination dwelled on the several different ways he could kill the blasted brat and have it last days.

Anya came over and refilled the brooding man’s tankard. She didn’t know what to think of this cruel looking man. Mr. Butterbur seemed to like him, because he paid twice the amount for almost everything the man asked for. The elderly and middle-aged women all seem to adore the man. For despite the cruel nature she could see, Anya had to admit that he was very handsome man, but she just didn’t feel the same way as the older women did. He asked way too many questions about Harry and she didn’t like that.

She loved telling everyone that passed through here about him, but this man…was too interested.

“Good evening Anya.” said Voldemort smoothly. He could tell that she didn’t trust him; he would have to work on that if he wanted to use her efficiently. Her trusting him was imperative to his plan of spiriting her away and crafting a perfect trap around his beautiful bait. “How are you this evening?”

“Fine sir.” said Anya pleasantly, no matter what she felt towards the man, she had to be nice, or she’d lose her position. Though she would most likely be able to get it back once the man left.

“You don’t seem to like me very much do you?” said Voldemort smoothly.

Anya said nothing, but walked away as quickly as she could.

Voldemort did his best not to scowl. This girl was too much like the boy, he couldn’t sway her like all the other fools in this village. He was growing weary of this place.

Tomorrow night, he was leaving.

And Anya would be accompanying him, whether she liked it or not.

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Snape sat in the Malfoy Manor dining hall, as still as stone. Everyone was curious as to where the Dark Lord went. No more so than Bellatrix.

“He would have told me at least if he was going somewhere!” shrieked Bellatrix, with a hint of pride in her voice.

“Could he have been captured by Dumbledore?” said a younger Death Eater.

In an brief instance, the once live Death Eater, laid dead upon the floor.

“That old fool could never defeat the Dark Lord!” screamed Bellatrix.

Snape raised his brow, but withheld the smirk that flashed through his mind. He wanted dearly to say that he saw the Dark Lord whisked off by someone of infinitely more powerful, though he didn’t want to dodge Bella’s spells for his moment of ill-timed humor.

The only safe person to tell this information to was Dumbledore.

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“Are you certain of this, Severus?” said Dumbledore.
Both Snape and the Headmaster were in his office, Dumbledore sitting in his large winged chair, a cup of hot chocolate laid before him and his eyes almost widened to their limits in shock.

“Yes, Headmaster, Voldemort has gone after the boy. Potter most likely doesn’t realize that he’s being pursued.” said Snape smoothly.

“There has to be a way to get that information to Harry. To warn him.” said Dumbledore pondering quickly.

“Did the King mention if Potter could hear what was being said to his unconscious form?” drawled Snape.

“No amount of speaking or shouting will get the boy to hear you.” said a voice in the corner.

Dumbledore looked over in the corner of the room; standing beside the fireplace was King Meandenbor.

“Lemon drops, a shame they didn’t have these back when I could actually consume food.” said King Meandenbor peering into a glass bowl on the mantle.

“What brings you here, your Majesty?” said Dumbledore standing up swiftly.

“You said my name, and had a desire to see me. I’ve never heard my name mentioned this much over the past hundred years.” said King Meandenbor gliding over to Dumbledore’s desk. “I’m starting to miss the forgetfulness of this world.”

“Is there any way we can contact him and warn him?” said Snape, trying not to show how interested he was in the boy’s welfare.

“Would you be willing to change your mind, and send someone…” said Dumbledore.

“That world has strange magical laws, that you cannot possibly begin, well...perhaps you can, but others...no. People can’t just jump from that world to this one whenever they feel like it.” said King Meandenbor. “I could, but that was when I was alive.”

“But we need to warn him!” said one of the paintings on the wall.

“I’ll see what I can do.” said King Meandenbor. “But I personally would keep an eye on that Death Eater group, without their leader to keep them in check, it could get rather unpleasant.”

“Bella has already killed a fellow Death Eater.” said Dumbledore nodding towards Snape. “I fear what she could do those who cross her path unwittingly and without god-like reverence.”
Edoras

The moon shone down on the small town of Bree and the entire town was still, only the sound of the horses snorting and stamping their feet was present in the sleeping town.

In the moonlight a lone figure headed towards the stables with a large sack over his shoulder, he slowly opened the door that led to the only black horse in the entire town and climbed into the saddle, laying the large sack in front of the saddle. He turned the head of the horse and galloped out of town. Leaving the quiet town, to never return.

The next morning, the word spread far throughout the town, Anya the barmaid was gone and so was the mysterious rich stranger.

Many of the women muttered that Anya had run off to be with the rich stranger like so many of them wished to, but Mr. Butterbur wasn’t too sure. He saw how she looked at him, and how she refused to serve him a few times. Young Anya could barely stand the man, she found him shifty and untrustworthy, and besides that, she still wasn’t looking at anyone the same way she looked at Harry, she wasn’t going to just run off with this stranger.

He had the bad feeling that she didn’t want to go anywhere with him. So that meant...he took her by force. He called a few of the local Rangers and told them his fears.

They had figured the same as the woman had, even one of the Ranger's wives seemed take with the mysterious stranger but they said they would follow the trail, try and catch up to the pair and see what the actual truth was behind the disappearing barmaid.

The remaining members of the Fellowship traveled onward to Edoras, everyone but Gandalf was unsure what sort of welcome they would receive. The words of the riders that they had met before reaching Fangorn were still weighing heavily on their minds. If this King would exile his own flesh and blood out of the. Golden Hall, then what was this ruler's behavior towards strangers?

“You stay close to us, Harry.” said Legolas softly as they galloped closer to the city of Edoras.

“Yes, if indeed Saruman is exerting his will here, it may be best to keep those stones a secret and not to use them.” said Gandalf. “If he caught word or rumor that the jewels were close by, he would use all of his resources to get them.”

“So stick with sword fighting?” said Harry riding alongside Aragorn, his hand holding onto the mane of his horse. Gandalf explained to him that Shadowfax also did not like having a bridle on him, so he assumed that it was only natural that his offspring would also not be fond of them.

“I think that would be best, but do not draw attention to yourself here, not with him so close.” said Strider solemnly. “We can only hope that they do not recognize your horse and the apparently legendary temper she had.”

They made it to Edoras without much interference, and even got to the Golden Hall without being stopped, but they were stared at. Harry noticed that Rohan didn’t really have a castle to house their
royalty; they had something that in Harry’s opinion looked like a giant ornate stable.

They trotted through the town, seeing many people come out of their houses and look at the travelers warily. The town was full of wooden houses, and from the looks of the people, he couldn’t really call this a city…it was more of a poor village.

*For a city of men, I expected the people to be…well…cleaner.* thought Harry as he looked around. *No wonder Aragorn prefers Rivendell and Lothlorien. Wonder what Minas Tirith looks like?*

“Yeh find more cheer in a graveyard.” muttered Gimli.

Harry had to agree. These people looked absolutely miserable, and he couldn’t even see any children around. What the hell could stop even the kids from playing about during the day? Back in Bree, you couldn’t walk down the street without having to stop for at least three dozen kids protecting the town from imaginary villains.

They made their way to the large horse stable looking building, and they left their horses. Harry was amazed that they didn’t have to tie the horses up to anything to keep them there. Strider said they were trained by the best horse-masters in Middle Earth, so they knew better than to stray. Though, his horse wanted to follow him up the stairs at first.

They climbed the stairs to the Golden Hall and made to enter, but the guards soon stopped them.

“No one is to go in and see the King so heavily armed. By order of,” he sighed heavily. “Grima Wormtongue.”

“Wormtongue?” said Harry accidentally out loud. That name sounded way to close to Peter Pettigrew’s nickname, Wormtail.

“Yes, he is the King’s adviser.” said the guard, Harry could tell the guard wished the man was anything but.

“I take it you don’t like him much.” said Harry with a gentle smile.

The guard looked at him warily. “You speak strangely boy, but yes, I do not…like…him.”

The guard looked at this youth with confusion settling in his mind, if his son had been this outspoken in front of his elders he had been clouted across the ears. But this boy had strange eyes, not the eyes of a youngster who can’t wait to break his first stallion though they were still bright and alight with an eager fire, but of a man who has tasted fear, pain, death and yet still lived on to fight another battle.

“Please hand over your weapons, if you wish to see King Theoden.” said the guard with a stern voice, tearing his eyes away from the green orbs looking back at him.

He watched as they all removed their weapons and laid them carefully in the arms of the other guards standing around. His eyes scanned the powerful weapons that the visitors laid in his guards’ arms and noted that each of them had seen use, and quite recently. The boy reached for his own blade, the guard barely had time to scoff.

*A lad his age has most likely only slain a few deer or a wild boar, nothing more than…* He then noticed the boy’s sword, it was clean, except for perhaps a few blood stains on the hilt, and sword, though the edges still looked sharp enough to cut through a body in one quick slice, it had some use to it. Despite the boy's youth, he didn't just use this on animals, the blood was black, like that of an orc or goblin.
Strider stopped Harry from handing over the blade, “You’re going to stay outside.”

Harry looked at him quickly.

“If Saruman is indeed giving orders through the king, it’s best if he is not aware of your presence just yet or at all.” said Strider quietly in Harry's ear. The guards looked suspiciously at the pair of them.

Harry sheathed his sword again and backed away down the stairs a bit. Well, he had to admit this was the complete opposite of the other world, the other world he was pretty much kicked into the fighting. Trained right off the bat, and expected to hold his own against the world. Then again, not really kicked, they didn't really want him to go down under the trapdoor and all those other things, but it still felt as if he was forced into it. In this world, there were plenty of people that didn't want him to fight, they wanted him safe, hide him behind themselves or in the safety of hidden valleys and the trees. The other world, he could count the number of people that wanted him safe on both hands. The Weasleys, Sirius, Remus, Hermione, Hagrid, McGonagall, after that...he couldn't really count on anyone else. Especially not Dumbledore, he was the jackass that kept throwing him into the fray.

Him and fighting, he couldn't help but feel sort of confused on his standpoint. He wanted to fight, but then again he didn't want to. He made little sense, especially to himself.

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Gandalf looked to the guard with a smile, he then took a step forward, but the ever vigilant guard stopped him.

“I’m afraid I’ll have to take your staff.” said the guard.

For the first time, yet for the briefest moment, Harry saw Gandalf genuinely shocked. But he recovered quickly enough.

“You wouldn’t part an old man from his walking stick would you?” said Gandalf softly.

The guard looked at the Gandalf for a moment, unsure of what to do.

As they walked inside, Gandalf still in possession of his staff, Harry had to smirk. You had to hand it to that man, whatever he wanted, he normally got. They left Harry outside and made their way into the hall, Gandalf acting all the while as some vulnerable old man and leaning on Legolas and the elf playing along. Harry doubted that the man vulnerable at any part in his life.

But, now that they went in, Harry found himself alone. The guards followed the adult men inside, led and followed by the guards. He walked down the stairs and went to stand beside his horse.

“Hide here, stand here, don’t draw attention to yourself.” said Harry leaning against his horse. He was pretty amazed that she didn’t move, but that was one of the reasons he loved her so much, she reminded him of Hedwig. He had half a mind to name her Hedwig, but that would have been really awkward. No, he’d have to give her, her own name. “This is getting old and fast. But, really...I’d rather sit back and take a break, but I’d rather make up my damn mind about which way I'd rather live my life.”

Harry spent the next few moments just quietly watching the clouds overhead pass him by, he missed doing this. He’d do this when he was little at the Dursleys, hiding from Dudley who would come skulking around with his little band of thugs and beat the living crap out of anyone and anything that even breathed the same air as they did. His favorite place to hide from them
would be on one of the upper branches in an elm tree, he’d lay back against the tree and look up at the clouds through the leaves.

Without any warning, the door to the Golden Hall burst open and a man was sent crashing down the stairs by the guards. One of the guards had a smirk on his face, as if throwing the man around was the most enjoyable part of his life. The man that came tumbling down the stone steps was a pale skinned man, with bulging eyes and long greasy black hair. Harry was vividly reminded of Severus Snape, but only if he was hit several times about the face with an ‘ugly stick’.

Harry hurried over to the fallen man but Legolas, Strider, Gimli, and Gandalf shouted “Harry! Keep away from him!”

The man on the ground, looked up to Harry, and then back to the people on the stairs as the King came down to the man. The man on the ground crawled out to Harry, to try and latch onto him and use him as a hostage, Harry was standing in shock, he didn’t have much time to react when the pale grabbed him and held a jagged dagger to his throat.

“You’d better surrender, Gandalf, or this lad’s blood will paint the ground!” sneered the pale man.

Harry took his elbow and slammed it into the man’s stomach. The man doubled over in pain and accidentally dropped the knife, in the confusion Harry pulled away from the man and as he did so, he pulled the sword from it’s sheath and pointed and held it right between the man’s eyes. The man looked at the boy fearfully.

“I’m not all that fond of being grabbed onto.” said Harry coldly. “So kindly back off.”

The man recoiled, decided against trying to use the boy to aide in his escape and hurried away to the stables to grab a horse and flee. He would get no easy hostage here.

Harry watched the man leave and then turned his attentions back to the people who came out of the hall. The guards were looking at the youth with surprised countenances, even the King seemed to stare at the youth for a brief moment.

Harry looked back at the King interestingly, he didn’t look like he had his mind taken over, sure he moved a bit wobbly, but other than that, he seemed fine. He expected him to look really sick, but then again, Ginny didn’t look like she was on her death bed when Riddle possessed her, least not until the end.

“All hail Theoden, King!” shouted one of the guards.

The crowd that surrounded them knelt low; Harry looked expectantly up to Gandalf, who quickly nodded, so Harry bowed.

He stood up only when Gandalf and the King came down the stairs and walked out the city walls.

Legolas, Gimli and Strider came down to Harry, “What’s going on?”

“His son has passed on, that is what the guards say.” said Legolas watching the men leave the city. “Gandalf is taking King Theoden to his grave.”

“What about that mad man?” asked Harry.

“He was a servant of Saruman.” said Gimli gruffly. “Glad you decided against using those stones.”

“I was thinking of using them, but I didn’t want to answer to you fellows.” said Harry with a smile.
"Especially after you told me not to."

“Good call.” said Aragorn with a smile.

“You're starting to sound like me.” said Harry with a laugh.

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Voldemort rode as swiftly as he could, pushing his horse onwards without relenting. For almost an entire night and day they rode, not stopping for hardly a moment. He did not care if the beast under him was tired, hungry or thirsty, he had to find Potter and show him the prize he had. Also to put some distance between himself and whatever other men clad in green and brown clothes.

The first day, he saw men come riding up to them, calling for him to halt, but Voldemort was surely not going to. He took a firm hold of his staff and brought it down in a sweeping motion, he had so far only managed a few effects from the staff, but that particular motion was enough to cleave trees in half, sending them to the ground. The bodies of three Rangers, were much thinner and were easily dispatched.

The sun was beginning to set and darkness was starting it’s slow creep across the land. The Dark Lord of his own separate world looked down at the sack that was draped in front of him. The sack was now moving furiously, the thing inside was struggling to get out.

He pulled on the reins to stop the horse in order to put a stop to the stupid wench from struggling. He strolled around the immediate area, grabbing twigs, branches and other items of combustible fuel. He threw them down on the ground, and then he reached over the beast and ripped the sack off the horse’s back and dropped it unceremoniously to ground. He took a hold of the staff and pointed it down on the small pile of wood, a spark flashed out of the end and a fire started up.

He took an end of the bag and pulled it down forcefully, and out popped Anya’s head, her mouth was gagged and her hands were tied and held to her breast. She glared at Voldemort in the firelight, he only replied with a chuckle.

“You know you should be thanking me, back in my world, I would have killed you by now.” said Voldemort cruelly.

Anya’s eyes widened. His world? Harry mentioned something like that when he was in Bree. Does Harry know this man? Did they come from the same world?

“You’re correct, I do know him. And I thought it was very interesting that you knew him too.” said Voldemort with a smirk.

What? He can read my mind? And what did he mean by knew him? I KNOW him! screamed Anya in her own thoughts.

“’Reading your mind’? I don’t read your mind, I see what is in your mind and there is nothing you can do to stop me. And as for the ‘knew’ part. I’m sorry to say that I meant what I said, for not long from now, I plan on killing that pesky little wretch.” sneered Voldemort.

Anya’s eyes grew large.

“With you, as the perfect bait, he’ll come running to save you.” he said taking a hold of Anya’s chin and forcing it up for him to look in her eyes.

No, no he won’t, he can’t! thought Anya in shock.
“You doubt me? I feel that I know him…much more than you ever will…his greatest weakness, is his desire to play the hero. And you…well, every knight in shining armor needs a princess to save.”

Voldemort’s high cackling laugh rang through the dark forest.
As they traveled the next few days, Anya discovered that the horse that bore them over meadows, through forests and past mountains, could not be a normal stallion. No horse could gallop this fast or leap over the chasms that seemed to be a quarter of a league away. Most horses had a gentle side to them, but this one, much like it’s rider, was just full of pure malice.

They would never stop, not even to rest, this man, this diabolical beast and his steed would only continue on with their journey. Any hopes of the men of Bree or anymore Rangers finding her and rescuing her were pushed out of her mind. None of the horses in the area could match this man’s hellish beast. It would take them three days to get as far as they did in one single day.

One day, a week after she had been captured, as they galloped through a thick forest, well beyond the Misty Mountains, she began to plan a means of escape. She wasn’t draped over the front part of the saddle anymore, but sitting side-saddle in front of the devilish man and hanging onto the mane of the horse. When they slowed down to get through a tight patch of trees, Anya slid out from under Voldemort’s arms, landed on the ground and ran down the path that she had just come from.

“Blasted Girl!” hissed Voldemort as he turned the horse around and galloped after her. She’ll pay dearly for this delay!

As Harry was in the kitchen of the Golden Hall of Edoras, he turned his head. Something was wrong; he could feel something stirring in his heart and causing him to worry. If he had to hazard a guess, it was the same sort of jolt that he got from his scar. It was sort of shocking to feel the pain coming from another part of his body.

Something wrong, lad? said the voice that originated from the sword.

I’m not sure, something that…doesn’t feel right. thought Harry.

Does it remind you of something? asked the voice.

Something that doesn’t mean good news for anyone. thought Harry I’ll tell Gandalf and Strider about it later when I see them.

Harry continued on with his cooking in the royal kitchens, there were two children that came to Edoras and they looked completely exhausted. They had rode up to the gates of Edoras on a very large horse, the little girl looked absolutely terrified and the little boy was nearly out cold from exhaustion.

Harry helped Gandalf and King Theoden with the two children and carried the little girl as the King of Rohan carried the boy into the Golden Hall. While the children rested in the throne room, Harry offered to go down and make the children a hot meal.

Harry looked around the kitchen, he could see a large amount of fruits and vegetables, some large pieces of lamb hanging from the kitchen ceiling and even some jars of honey and barrels of apple cider. He smiled, everything he would need was right here.

He took a some of the honey and covered a pair of leg of lamb with it, then sprinkled it slightly with some salt and pepper. He placed it in the large oven along with a lattice crusted apple pie, that way they’d both be done for the kids. In a large pot, after the lamb was done cooking and the
lamb’s juice was poured into the pot, he added some cider and a little more honey. He heated the concoction until it began to boil and until the sauce was finally ready. He then sliced the lamb up onto a few plates and spooned the sauce over top of it.

He asked one of the serving maids for help and they both carried the food up into the hall. He placed the plates of food in front of the children, as well as the pie and smiled.

“There you go. You guys look like you could use a good meal.” said Harry with a smile as he pushed the plates a little closer to the boy and girl.

The little boy and girl looked at the food nervously, then they slowly brought the food to their lips. When they both began to eat the food, their eyes lit up and they began to eat quickly.

“I take it you like it.” said Harry with a smile.

Strider, Legolas and Gimli came over quickly and looked at the plates of food. Harry smiled to them as well, “Don’t worry, I’ve got plates here for you too.” He lifted the plates up to them and beamed as they began to eat the food eagerly.

“It seems the youth is a decent cook.” said King Theoden with a warm smile.

“If he has a spare plate or two, you’ll see for yourself.” said Gandalf with a chuckle. “Harry? Do you have a plate for the King and I.”

“Sure thing.” said Harry as he picked up another two plates of food and walked it over to them. “It’s the fastest thing I could come up with.”

The King brought the fork to his lips and took a bite of the strange looking dish. He could hardly believe the flavors that exploded in his mouth; it was a wonderful medley of lamb, apples and honey. Just where did this boy learn this trade?

King Theoden looked at Gandalf in shock and amazement, Gandalf (while he enjoyed his own dish) chuckled warmly. “It’s true, his abilities in the kitchen are not outdone by no one, but that’s not his most special quality.”

“And what’s that quality?” asked King Theoden as he watched the youth interact with the children and made especially sure that they ate their fill.

“He has a certain knack for capturing the hearts of those around him. He is quite…precious…especially to myself and to the Elven Lords Elrond and Celeborn.” said Gandalf.

“And he was allowed to leave the elven realms?” said Theoden in shock. “I have thought that the elves keep whatever is dear to them, close to them.”

“It is in that, that the dwarves and elves have a lot in common, yet they would be the last to admit it.” said Gandalf as they watched Harry slice the apple pie that was sitting on the table, awaiting to be devoured. “The lad has a task to perform, though I have sworn to not reveal it.”

The King looked at him.

“But I can say, that if he succeeds, we may either see a lot of him on different occasions, or…we may never see him again.” said Gandalf, his words, and his heart heavy.

“Gandalf? Your majesty? Would you like some of this, the young man made it.” said one of the serving maids gently.
The King and Gandalf gave their plates to the other girl and took the plates bearing the apple pie. “If this is as good as that lamb, I may want him to be my personal cook.”

“If he behaves the way he normally does, you may want to take him into your family.” said Gandalf with a small smile.

Harry looked at the children worryingly. They looked worried about something, and the little girl, no matter how good his food had tasted, still looked ready to cry.

“What’s wrong, munchkins?” asked Harry kindly.

The children stared at him, looking confused.

“Sorry, term from where I came from. What’s wrong little ones.” said Harry quickly.

“It’s our village.” said the boy softly.

“What about it?” asked Harry pressuring the child onward gently.

“It was attacked, by the wild men.” said the little girl rubbing the tears from her eyes.

“The wild men?” asked Harry to the King’s niece Eowyn.

“They are men from Dunland, we…are not on the best of terms.” said Eowyn, keeping the explanation short.

“They came to our village, and began burning and attacking everything and everyone. I hope momma got out of the village alright, she sent us…..” said the boy, he tried to be strong but, the tears came nonetheless. He tried to wipe his eyes with his sleeve before anyone noticed them.

Harry didn’t quite know what to do; he laid his hand on the boy’s shoulder. “I’m sure she’s alright.”

“But what if she isn’t?” cried the little girl. “Who will take care of us?”

“Then I will, until more permanent arrangements can be made.” said Harry quickly. He didn’t know what he was thinking about volunteer, he can just barely take care of himself. That was evident by his first day in this world. But they needed someone, and he had some free time…sort of… Everyone else was busy. “But I’m telling you, your mom is fine.”

“How would you know?” asked the boy.

“I don’t have a mother anymore or a father.” said Harry plainly. “I had to go my whole life without them, so I had to pretty much take care of myself.”

The children looked at Harry in awe, “And besides, you can’t get rid of a mother that easily, I’m sure she’s just fine.” he added with a smile.

The King watched this interaction, this boy went his entire life without parents, and yet he still grew to become a very strong, handsome young man. He was greatly impressed. Gandalf was right, if he wasn’t too careful, he could see himself making this lad a permanent home in his house. He looked over to Eowyn, thinking that perhaps she would fall for the youth, but she saved her
looks of romance for the man called Aragorn. There may be no changing her mind; she was possibly the most stubborn out of all the children he had raised.

But with this new information, about the wild men of Dunland attacking his people, he had to act, but he wouldn’t risk open war with the White Wizard Saruman. Especially with his Uruk-hais, despite his mind and body being controlled, he could remember the stories that his nephew Eomer and son Theodred had told him.

But with his son gone to the halls of his fathers, and Eomer apparent treason, he didn’t have the strength to fight.

“Eomer is still loyal to you.” said Aragorn to the King. “He will come to your aid.”

“By this time, he will be days away.” said Theoden somberly.

“I could go after him.” said Harry quickly. “All I would have to do is…”

“No Harry, the skies are not safe for any bird that is not under Saruman’s control. There is no way to stop the Uruk-hais from shooting you down with their arrows.” said Gandalf.

“What do birds have to do with the lad going after my nephew?” asked the King wonderingly.

“Never mind, your majesty.” said Gandalf. “I will go after Eomer.”

King Theoden nodded.

“Lead him to Helm’s Deep, that is where I will take my people, they will be safest there.” said King Theoden as he walked to the doors of the hall.

“Fool.” muttered Gandalf.

“Why is that?” asked Harry.
“Theoden is leading his men right into a trap, Grima Wormtongue is sure to tell Saruman what the King would do with such a circumstance overlooking him.” said Gandalf shortly.

“Is there nowhere else that the people here can go?” asked Legolas.

“To be honest, there is no place else, but it is still a trap.” said Gandalf as he strode swiftly out of the hall, with the remaining Fellowship close behind. They strode out to the stables of Edoras and down to the pen with Shadowfax and Harry’s horse.

"I will ride as fast as Shadowfax can take me to Eomer. On the third day, look to the east."

He climbed onto Shadowfax, before he left he looked down at Harry. “Refrain from using the stones, unless you have no choice.” He spurred Shadowfax out of the stables and left the city of Edoras behind.

Harry watched as the old wizard galloped away. It wasn’t until Gandalf was almost a white speck in the distance that he remembered that he forgot to tell him about the feeling he had down in the kitchens.

“He will find Eomer, not to worry.” said Gimli gruffly.

“I’m not worried about him finding Eomer, I’m more worried about the battle that is coming.” said Aragorn quietly, he looked at Harry as he spoke.

“I agree.” said Legolas.

“Aye.” said Gimli nodding.

Back at Hogwarts, Dumbledore buried his face in his hands. He felt as old as he really was for the first time in a long time. Every day, since Harry had been struck down, the guilt and regret that
weighed heavily on his heart increased. All he wanted to do was to hold Harry in his arms, beg for his forgiveness for all the trials he had put the poor boy through and promise him that he would no longer fight alone.

He felt terrible; he couldn’t go to the boy’s aid and warn him about the arrival of Voldemort in that world. If Voldemort managed to catch up to Harry, wherever he was, then the results would be disastrous.

It was all up to the King and Harry now.

Sirius and Remus sat on either side of Harry, just watching him. Hagrid was taking a bit of a break from guard duty and spending some time taking care of Buckbeak.

“Hagrid should consider taking a week long break, as should you.” said Remus gently.

“I can’t leave him.” said Sirius.

“Not even for an hour?” asked Remus.

“I want to be the first person he sees.” said Sirius firmly.

Remus stared, but then he smiled. “Okay.”

Suddenly, the door opened slowly and Ron’s head gently peeked out. He came slowly into the room and sat in a vacant chair beside Sirius.

“How’s he doing today?” asked Ron.

“About the same, how are you doing?” asked Sirius politely.

“About the same.” said Ron. “You remember what Dumbledore said about Harry becoming king?”
“Yeah, what about it?” asked Sirius.

“I sort of hope he does take the throne.” said Ron.

“Why do you say that?” asked Remus in a shocked tone.

“I can’t think of anyone better to become King.” said Ron simply.

Sirius and Remus opened their mouths, but then shut them. He had a point, Harry was a kind soul, and the world could only get better under Harry’s watchful eye.

“If he were king, he’d whip the Ministry in shape.” said Sirius with a smirk.

“Though, knowing him, he’ll fight, kick and scream to avoid being crowned.” said Ron with a smile.

“Yeah, he would.” said the two men with fond smiles down at the youth.

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Anya hid under a thick, prickly bush. She had been hiding from the man for almost three hours. She could dart and weave about the forest a lot easier than the man could on his horse. She knew that going out into the open meadow that was at the edge of the forest was a bad idea. She wouldn’t be able to hide out on the meadow like she could in the forest. Staying in this dark forest wasn’t a great idea either, something about this place made her feel very nervous.

Out of the corner of her eyes, she could see something moving about in the darkness and that frightened her, but nearly as much as the man that wanted to hurt Harry. She had to protect him, and if that meant to stay away from him, she would do it.

She looked around the forest, trying to find the next hiding place, there was a tree just ahead of her, if she could get to the tree, she could stay in the canopy and maybe go through the treetops to some relative safety…
Suddenly the man came swooping out of nowhere and dragged Anya out of the bush and threw her over the saddle.

“Do that again and I’ll kill you. He can come and save your corpse.” hissed Voldemort.

“I’m going to keep escaping! I don’t care what you do!” screamed Anya as he turned towards the meadow at the entrance of the forest. He didn’t want to have to hunt this little wench again in the woods.

“You will care…if I have to catch you again.” growled Voldemort.
Harry walked along the stone halls of Edoras alone. Strider told him that they had to wait until everyone was packed up and ready to go, though at first he wanted to take Harry to Helm’s Deep and then double back quickly, but Theoden squashed that idea.

“It isn’t advisable to travel to Helms Deep without a large escort, not with the wargs about.” said Theoden.

Harry didn’t mind, every time he would walk down the corridors in this place, and if it got real quiet, he could hear music, the same kind of music that the stones would give off. He had been searching all over the place for hours, and he couldn’t find it anywhere. Every time he thought he was getting close, suddenly, the music would fade away again.

He was quickly getting frustrated and he wanted some help coralling it into one spot, but no one else could hear it, and only Strider could see the stones. He figured that King Theoden would see the stones, but Gandalf told him to keep the stones safe and the less people that knew about them the better. That and the King was busy, he kept walking around the Golden Hall as well, trying to decided what to and what not to take with them.

But that didn’t make his job any easier with this particular stone. He had been all over the Golden Hall and he couldn’t get any closer to the stone. The two small children that followed him around everywhere couldn’t figure out what he was looking for.

They began to follow him around, especially after he said he would look after them. They didn’t have anyone else willing to look out for them, except for the King’s niece, but she had a city full of people to worry about, she didn’t need any more people to fret about.

This older boy was willing to make them snacks whenever they felt hungry and was willing to play small games with them, but ever since they played a hiding game in the Golden Hall, Harry was sort of troubled by something.

“Harry, sir? What are you looking for?” asked the little girl.

Harry sighed, how should he put this? He couldn’t exactly tell them what he was looking for, especially not when they were so close to Saruman’s tower. But his little charge asked him a question and with her and her brother worrying about their mother, he didn’t want to just brush them off.

“I’m looking for something I can hear, but you cannot see.” He decided for sort of the truth, and sort of not. Strider called them riddles…well…any port in a storm.

“Something you can hear, but you cannot see?” said the boy softly. “I don’t know what that is.”

“That’s alright, I’m not too sure what it is either.” said Harry. “But hopefully I’ll find it.”

The kids looked at each other worriedly. They were afraid that he was going mad.

“Harry, sir! Let’s go see your horse!” said the little girl.

“Maybe we’ll help you pick a name for her!” said the boy hoping to take his older friend’s mind off whatever it was that was troubling him. That and they loved his horse, they had never seen a horse like the one he had. They couldn’t play with his horse like they could with their father’s, (she
was a bit possessive of her master) but she was still very beautiful.

Harry sighed, the music was growing faint again, and he supposed he didn’t have much choice. Perhaps Strider was free now and he could ask for his advice, though he was sure he’d still be busy. He was helping Eowyn and Lord Theoden with their preparations to Helms Deep and Harry didn’t want to pester him.

They turned and walked out of the Golden Hall and down to the stable, Harry’s mind was elsewhere, he was outside the Golden Hall, but now, the music was getting louder. It had never happened while they were outside before, what could be the cause now?

“Harry!” shouted a voice.

Harry looked up, but it was too late, he crashed right into King Theoden, wearing his battle armor, his shoulder crashed into the stone right over his heart, a polished piece of turquoise.

The King of Rohan still remained standing while Harry was sent sprawled onto the ground. Despite the constant worry on the King’s mind, he couldn’t help but smile at the lad. The boy seemed wiser than his years, but still retained a bit of youthful innocence, a strange ability to have.

The only thing he was sort of put off by, was the boy’s social habits. The boy was as polite and gentle as a baby lamb mixed with a light spring shower, but lately, he had been seen skulking around the Golden Hall, and not speaking with anyone. He had the notion to bring the subject of the youth’s bizarre behavior to Aragorn, but the topic never arose, not with the threat of Saruman upon them.

“Sorry sir.” said Harry standing up quickly.

“What has you so distracted, young man?” asked Theoden.

“Nothing sir.” said Harry quickly.

“You seem to be a bit too preoccupied for it to be merely nothing.” said Theoden.

“Harry, are you alright?” asked the voice that had yelled his name earlier.

Harry turned and saw Strider, and Legolas walking towards the King and him swiftly.

“I’m fine, just didn’t see where I was going.” said Harry.

“I asked him what had him so distracted.” said King Theoden.

“What is it, Harry?” asked Strider.

“Um…” said Harry, he looked down at his side and touched the pouch slightly.

“Ah.” said Strider.

“I understand.” said Legolas.

“Well, I’m pleased someone does.” said King Theoden with a slight smile.

“We’ll tell you about it at a later date, when it is safe.” said Strider quietly, and calmly.

Theoden stared at the trio for a moment, “Alright, but I hope this secrecy won’t last too long.”
He walked slowly away, ushering the children to go and help an elderly widow load up her mule with supplies. Legolas and Strider led Harry over to where Gimli was standing, sharpening his axe on a sharpening stone.

“What is it, Harry?” asked Legolas.

“Did yeh find another stone lad?” asked Gimli.

“I think so, but the damn thing keeps moving around on me, I hear it inside the Hall, but it doesn’t like to stay in one place.” said Harry.

“So…it might be on a person.” said Strider thoughtfully.

“Yeah, but who? And how do I go about asking people for the stone?” said Harry. “I can’t exactly go about and ask people about it.”

“Perhaps, we should tell Theoden about the stones. He might have an idea.”

It was storming at the ruined fortress, in the dark forest where the vicious man had brought Anya. The storm savagely attacked the already weather-downed stones of the ancient fortress that it could barely stand the assault. Lightning forked across the sky and threaten to bring its blinding power down upon them.

Anya strained against the chains that held her fast to the old wall. She had been stuck in this new predicament for a few hours and hadn’t seen the man since he put her there for so long. She hadn’t tried escaping since he caught her, and with very good reason. He had tied her up a strong piece of rope and she was unable to even shift herself to make the ride more comfortable.

“I made you comfortable before, now thanks to your insolence, you’ll get what’s coming to you.” snarled the man as he held her down on the horse as they rode through the trees.

She could still feel the rope burns from when he pulled her off the horse and led her forcibly up the crumbling stairs of this run down fort. All she could do was wait for whatever was coming from that despicable man, and she didn’t want to think about what he would do.

Suddenly an old, rot infested door creaked open and the man walked down the steps, his staff tapping loudly on the stone floor.

“You know, back in my world, I’d have you screaming on the ground, begging me to kill you.” said Voldemort with a sneer as he leaned on the staff. He almost looked mad with glee at the prospect of killing her.

Anya glared at him.

“Strange, the look on your face reminds me of someone…someone else foolish enough to defy me.” said the man, still sneering maliciously. “And when I find him, I’ll finally be able to take the wretched light of life out of his eyes.”

“He’ll beat you, just like he always does!” said Anya angrily.

“And what would you know about him beating me you little wretch?” spat Voldemort angrily. His hands clenched on the staff in his hands.
“He’s still alive isn’t he?” said Anya with a smirk.

Voldemort snarled and slammed the end of his staff down onto the ground, a crack of red skittered across the floor from the base of his staff and towards Anya. Once the red cracks reached her, the light shot up into the sky and she felt a hot searing pain overcome her entire body. A scream tore it’s way from her heart all the way through her throat. This was pain she had never experienced before, it was barely endurable. Like hot spears being stabbed into her body repeatedly.

Both the pain and the light went away soon after, as Anya began to gasp for air, Voldemort walked over and lifted her chin up. Her cheeks were hot with the tears that fell down from her eyes. He could feel the pain, almost smell it in the air. “That wasn’t as strong as I used to be able to do it, but that scream was such a pleasant sound. I missed it so much.” he smiled wickedly.

“You...You’re vile.” she gasped.

“And that’s your opinion of what I’ve done so far to you, you’ve seen nothing yet, little girl.” snickered Voldemort. “Can you just imagine what Potter’s been through? I was toying with him then, but now…I’ll break him.”

“What...What are we doing here?” she gasped out defiantly.

“Oh, so you don’t want to hear what I’ll do to him, fine, I’ll save it for another time. I need to figure out where the brat went, and where’s he going. I plot better when I’m not traveling.” said Voldemort with a smile.

*Why are you telling me that last part?* thought Anya.

“I’m telling you because, who else are you going to tell? The moment I kill that boy, I will have no further use for you and you will join your beloved Harry in hell.” said Voldemort with a maniacal laugh. “But not before, I have my fun…with his body, while you watch.”

Anya trembled, *he wouldn’t!*

“My, your mind is like Bella’s, nothing like that my dear little lamb, you just get to watch me...harvest him.”

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Ginny sat in one of the chairs down in the living room, looking through a photo album of Remus’ past days in Hogwarts. She couldn’t believe how much Harry looked like his dad.

“Explains why Sirius starts saying your name with a ‘J’.” said Ginny softly with a smile. She turned the page and saw something that startled her so badly that she dropped the book.

Remus walked into the room, to investigate the noise, when he saw the photo book sitting on the floor. “I didn’t expect you to drop a book on the ground, Ron maybe, but not you.”

“Sorry…I just...noticed something.” said Ginny, her eyes slightly wet.

“What’s that?” asked Remus picking the book up gently and turning to the page she had stopped at.

“I look...sort of...kind of...like Harry’s mom.” said Ginny softly.

Remus looked at her and then at the picture of his friend, Lily. “There are some similarities, I’ve got to admit that. You both have red hair, also you and her would be about the same height at the
age you’re at now. So what’s the problem? She was a stunning woman, I’ll be frank and say Sirius and I had dreams about her when we were young.”

“It’s just…I don’t think…” said Ginny. “I don’t think it will work between us.”

“What…?” said Remus. What was she talking about?

“I really really like Harry, I always have…but…if I look like his mom, it would make me look a little creepy.” said Ginny.

“It doesn’t matter what his mom looks like or what you look like, if he likes you for the person you are, then he’ll reciprocate your feelings.” said Remus with a small smile. “Also, if Harry’s a true Potter, he’ll be attracted to you, that or blondes.”

“Huh?” asked Ginny looking up.

“All the Potter men and women have been marrying red head’s or blondes. It’s amazing that the offspring mostly have black hair.” said Remus with a laugh. “Here let me show you.”

He sat down beside her and flipped through the pictures. “See, every one of his grandmothers had red hair. It’s a sort of generic tradition that happens on accident. Most of Harry’s past aunt and uncles fell for blondes, explains his Uncle Rudolph.”

“His Uncle Rudolph?” asked Ginny with a smile.

“Yeah, here he is, he married a Malfoy, Leroy Malfoy.” said Remus.

“Wait…what?” asked Ginny. She looked at the picture, it was a pair of men, wrapped in each other’s arms, pure happiness on their faces. There was a tall lean man with black hair that went all the way down his back and a slender, short haired blonde man that height only reached the other man’s neck.

“Yeah, they’re in Africa, they won’t be back in this country for a long time.” said Remus as he flipped through the pages to a pair of men a blonde man with his arms around a dark haired man and laughing. He showed the girl the picture. “They’re a great pair of guys, they were James’ favorite uncles.”

“Does Harry know about them?” asked Ginny.

“No, he’s only met them in his infancy, and I guess we never told him.” said Remus guiltily. “But they loved him, they doted on him so much, it was almost sickening.” he added with a smile.

Ginny looked at the pair of men with a fond smile. Maybe, she and Harry…or…well…whoever Harry wanted to be with…she hoped they could have the same happiness.

“So it doesn’t matter if you and Lily look alike, if Harry likes you for you then you’re meant for each other. If Harry likes a blonde for who she is as well…then he’s got a tough decision to make.” said Remus. “Blonde or redhead.”

Harry brushed his horse’s mane and the hair on her legs as the three Fellowship members came walking up to him.

“No name for your horse yet?” asked Strider with a smile.
“Every name that the kids come up with she doesn’t like. One name I absolutely refused.” said Harry.

“What name was that?” asked Gimli.

“Lily flower.” said Harry. “Lily was my mom’s name.”

“Beautiful name.” said Gimli.

“Yeah, it is, but I didn’t want to ride a horse with my mom’s name on it.” said Harry with a smirk.

“But you haven’t come up with a name for her yet?” asked Legolas.

“I’m having a hard time yes.” repeated Harry.

“Well, you’re a wizard, correct?” asked Gimli.

“Yeah.” said Harry.

“Then why not come up with a magical name?” asked Gimli.

Harry blinked. “I hadn’t thought of that.” said Harry. He gave the idea a thought. “Well, there’s another name, but I don’t know about it.” said Harry.

“What name is that?” asked Strider.

“Will-O-Wisp?” asked Harry giving the horse a sideways glance.

The horse whinnied loudly.

“She seems to like it enough.” said Aragorn with a smile.

“Willowisp…it sounds very graceful…” said Legolas stroking the horse’s mane.

“What’s that in your world?” asked Gimli.

“Well, they’re either spirits or little lights held on by fairies as they lead people to their deaths, I forget which.” said Harry scratching his head. “It might be both.”

“Your horse seems even more excited at the name now.” said Legolas with a laugh. The horse threw her head back and whinnied once more.

So…after a couple of days, he finally found the perfect name for his horse. Will-o-Wisp.
Finally, the people of Edoras began to start their long journey to Helm’s Deep. They could only bring the bare necessities, food, some clothes, and perhaps a weapon that they may have to defend themselves on the road. Harry was a bit put off of leaving there without finding the jewel.

“There’s a jewel here, I can hear it.” said Harry. “I don’t want to lose it now! But the thing is, it’s so close, yet I can’t seem to see it and find it.”

“Is there a time when you hear it the loudest?” asked Gimli. “Perhaps we can narrow down the search.”

“No, the darn thing seems to move around all day long, it goes from one part of the Golden Hall to the other and sometimes...it...isn't...Harry thought hard then his eyes snapped open. “I’ve got it, but I’ll need yours and Legolas’ help.”

“Help with what?” asked Legolas.

“If you can’t see it, than that’s what I’m looking for.” said Harry.

“Strange choice of words.” said Legolas with a smile. “We will help you all we can.”

Harry, Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas led their horses over to where King Theoden was riding atop his own horse. He was inspecting his guards, to see if they were ready to protect the people of Edoras on their way to Helms Deep. Encouraging them and giving them orders to protect the people will all they had.

The Fellowship stopped a ways away, as to not attract attention, or make Theoden wonder why they had decided to watch him.

“What do you see on his chest plate.” said Harry.

“Nothing, it’s just a plain armor chest plate.” said Gimli. “Though expertly made, it holds no extra adornment that I can see.”

“Nothing on it, nothing at all?” asked Harry earnestly.

“Nothing, is there something there that I or Gimli do not see?” asked Legolas.

“A blue stone is on his chest.” said Aragorn staring at the turquoise stone.

Gimli and Legolas looked once more at King Theoden, they saw nothing. “It’s there, as plain as day to us.” said Aragorn.

“That explains how the jewel kept going around everywhere. The King had a lot of stuff to do.” said Harry with a smile. “It didn’t dawn on me that he would have it on his person.”

“So how are you to get the stone?” asked Legolas.

“Not a damn clue.” said Harry. “Maybe I can strike a deal, but when to do it. If Gandalf is right and there’s another battle coming, I don’t want to leave Theoden with a gaping hole in his chest plate. Hopefully, if we can win this thing, I’ll ask for the stone then.”

“About the battle…” said Strider.
“I’m not staying here, and I’m not going back to Lothlorien.” said Harry firmly, not even looking at his companion.

“I want you to promise me, that if the battle goes horribly wrong, that you run for it. Flee to Lothlorien, they will keep you safe.” said Strider. “Transform into the Lothlorien eagle and fly, do not flee or horseback, you might not get far enough.”

“I can’t promise that, I don’t run away easily.” said Harry. “And besides, if I have to, these stones might help even the odds.”

Aragorn said nothing, he wanted the boy kept safe, but this boy was proving to be as stubborn as he is. And that thought brought a smile to his face.

After discovering where the jewel was, they gathered up all the supplies they had prepared and placed them in the packs of their horses. Harry continued to wear the pack on his back due to Will-O-Wisp’s sore was still not completely healed.

“Sorry Will-o-Wisp, I wish these people had a better ointment to help your sore.” said Harry soothingly. The horse nuzzled her nose against the youth’s shoulder. Harry climbed on her back as best he could and followed the remaining Fellowship members out of Edoras. Harry kept an eye on King Theoden, moving steadily closer and closer to him.

“What’s the lad doing?” asked Gimli.

“I believe he’s going to tell King Theoden about the stones.” said Legolas. “Is that a safe thing to do?”

“I don’t know if it is, with Saruman just removed from his mind.” said Aragorn. “It’s a risky move and I hope Harry realizes that before making a mistake.”

Harry continued riding up to where the King was, leading his people to the apparent safety of Helm’s Deep. The guards made a move to stop whoever was riding up behind them, but the guards lowered his spear when he saw it was the green-eyed youth.

Hamar and Gamling had taken to the lad very strongly, the lad showed strength and bravery even at such a tender young age. Something about the lad made them wish...they could hardly dare believe their own self for thinking such things...to join the lad and fight for him. They couldn’t do that, They were the Doorguard and Lieutenant to King Theoden! They could never leave the King’s side, and They never will! That said, they couldn’t say no to the boy if he asked for their help.

Harry gave the guards a smile and rode alongside Theoden. The King noticed the youth riding beside him and smiled. “So, what brings you to leave Lord Aragorn’s side, he won’t be pleased.”

“Why should he mind?” asked Harry confusedly.

Theoden chuckled warmly. “Another piece of information that Gandalf said rings true. You are oblivious to those who care very deeply about you.”

Harry blushed and cleared his throat. “W..Well, do you remember Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas and I keeping something from you?”

“Yes.” said King Theoden slowly.
“Can we ride a little further ahead?” asked Harry looking behind him.

King Theoden and Harry quickened their pace slightly and stopped a few meters ahead of the guard. “What is it that you wished to speak to me in secrecy about?”

“It’s about that turquoise piece on your chest.” said Harry pointing to the King’s chest plate.

Theoden stared at the boy in shock. “Y-You can see it?”

“Yeah, Aragorn and I both.” said Harry with a slight smile.

“That is astonishing! This stone has been on the chest plate of the King’s of Rohan for generations. You can only see it when you finally take the throne, not one day before. But...how is that you and Lord Aragorn can see it?” asked King Theoden in wonder.

“It’s a long story.” said Harry.

“It’s a long journey.” said King Theoden with a small smile.

“Well, I’ll give you the short story, long one doesn’t quite always match up.” Harry told him the story of King Meandenbor, he wanted to go into detail, but found the story to be a bit fuzzy around the edges of his memory, why could not seem to figure out. So he opted for the shorter version of it. “...The stones were then scattered around Middle Earth, protected from the ones that tried and succeeded to kill him. One of those stones...is that turquoise piece on your chest.” finished Harry.

King Theoden touched the stone on his chest, so not only did it have a history of being the secret jewel of Rohan, it also had prior life before. Not only that, but the stone had power? What powers did it possess? Could he utilize them?

“What power does this stone have?” asked King Theoden.

“I don’t know. I won’t know until I test it out.” said Harry. “But with what could be a battle coming, I don’t want to let you go with a big hole in your chest. That and it’s been in your family for a long time, it’s not mine to take.”

“Would it be possible for I to use the stone?” asked Theoden.

“I don’t know, can you feel anything coming off the stone when you touch it?” asked Harry.

King Theoden placed his hand over his chest plate and closed his eyes. He could feel nothing, only the hard stamping of hooves of his horse and the smoothness of the polished stone, he didn't think he could feel anything, he had felt nothing before all those times he touched it, it would surely not change now.

“No...I feel nothing...” said King Theoden. “Perhaps the stone is not what you say it is.”

“Let me have a shot.” said Harry.

“A what?” asked King Theoden quirking his brow.

“Ah...let me try.” said Harry, he urged his horse to go closer to Theoden and touched the stone and closed his eyes.

He could feel a pulse coming from the stone, but nothing else, he’d have to...wait...there was a flash of something...he saw a lot of fighting, and dying. Then suddenly the severely wounded soldiers would get up and fight again. Their wounds slowly disappeared and they threw themselves...
into battle once again.

Harry removed his hand quickly and stared at the stone.

“What is it? What did you see?” asked Theoden quickly, he caught the boy by the arm before he could slide off his horse. The lad’s eyes fluttered to the back of his head and his mouth fell open.

“We might want that stone at some point, it’s going to come in real handy.”

Anya was still trapped in the fortress, she tried vainly to escape, but she couldn’t even get free of the chains that cut into her wrists. Her arms were only unchained when Voldemort brought food to her and even that was hardly worth it. The food was barely enough to keep her alive and it tasted horrible. The berries he would give her were bitter and the meat had a foul rotten taste and smell to it.

She couldn’t help but cry sometimes, she wanted to go home or to find Harry and warn him. She was cold, hurt, tired and hungry, what people saw in traveling in the wild was beyond her. Her tears cascaded down her face until they made her skin itchy and with her hands chained to the wall, she couldn’t wipe the tears away, nor get rid of the mucus sliding out of her nose.

She had to find a way out, she had to! But how was she going to escape...?

Voldemort on the other hand was busy contemplating his next move, he didn’t have a slew of lackeys to order about and do all the work for him. His magic was reduced greatly and he couldn’t figure out how to cast many spells with the blasted staff he was forced to use. So far he could only manage fire, cut through objects with devastating effects or have a version of the Cruciatus Curse. Sometimes he managed to wield other magical spells, but chances were it was a fluke or he didn’t mean for something to happen.

He wanted his wand back, and he wanted his servants. He was getting sick and tired of trying to play catch up with that blasted Potter brat. That Dark Lord Sauron didn’t mention how hard it was going to be to find the boy, if he did, he would never have agreed to do it. He would have rather just hunted down the boy’s body and be done with it.

“So where is the damn brat now?” muttered Voldemort to himself. He took out a rolled up piece of paper out of his small pack and opened it up to reveal a detailed map.

He had stolen this from the Prancing Pony Inn back in Bree and pondered over it for several nights. Potter could have gone in any direction, and that blasted girl wasn’t talking. No matter what he did to her, how he beat her and how he starved her, she wouldn’t give up the information he wanted.

He knew where Sauron was, and he knew where Bree was. He traced his fingers from Bree over to Mordor. He noticed a large city marked on the map, and smiled. If he would continue down south, he’d reach Gondor and the city of Minas Tirith.

But what would he do with the girl? He’d have to play that one by ear, but until he managed to get a hold on the magic of his staff, he wasn’t going to just go and fight Potter. He didn’t want to just beat him.

He wanted to crush him.
The spirit of King Meandenbor stood in front of a golden mirror, it’s reflective image had a jagged crack down the middle of it, showing both Harry riding on his horse and the visage of Voldemort in the dark fortress. He hoped the dark wizard would leave the fortress soon and not discover the location of the jewel that was so dangerously near him.

The stone was right in that room with him, a glistening jade stone in the mantle. If he were to get his hands on that stone, then the quest that Harry was undertaking wouldn’t be as easy as it had been. And this world might be in grave danger.

How he wished he could either take the stone through the mirror or hide the stone from the man’s gaze. Due to his less than corporeal form, he was unable to just take the stone and give it to the lad without being seen. The boy had become the best candidate he had seen in so many years.

The lad was the ideal replacement for him, he was strong, wise, kind and on top of all that, he knew what suffering was like, and that, was the most powerful of knowledge to know. The knowledge of hardships would help him in being compassionate about the other inhabitants of these two different worlds.

He switched back and forth between watching the wicked figure in the fortress and the boy that he hoped would take over his dust covered throne. Suddenly, his worst fears came true; the man stalked towards the fireplace and looked at the stone intently. He took out a knife and dug the stone out from its resting place.

“Might as well get something out of this.” said Voldemort’s youthful figure grimly. “Other than watching Potter’s life ebb away from his body.”

“Damn.” muttered the King darkly.

If only he had the notion years ago of picking up this particular stone when he still had some solidness to him, to protect it, but no, he had to test anyone who wished to become his successor. Now, he was paying for it.

And so would Harry Potter.
Voldemort looked at the stone in his hand intently. It wasn’t bad looking stone; it would make an adequate trophy for memory’s sake; this jade stone would go nicely with the phial of Potter’s blood and his green eyes. He had been planning this trophy harvesting for a long time, and he couldn’t wait for that fateful day to come.

Once he’d finally rip the life out of the boy’s body, he’d drain the brat of all his blood and place it in the crystal phial that normally hung around his neck. It was empty at the present moment and back in the Malfoy Manor but not for long. He had specially made it just for the purpose of holding Potter’s blood, a sort of an early birthday present to himself.

In addition to the phial, he had a pair of crystal containers, a medium jar that would house the boy’s eyes for all eternity and a large one for his heart. The rest of the boy’s remains would make a fine feast for Nagini.

He sat down in the musty chair and stared at the fire, all the while turning the stone over and over in his hand. Something about this stone kept making him think and almost envision countless daggers, swords and spears flying through the air and embedding themselves into the bodies of faceless people.

He wondered where that thought came from, but he wasn’t complaining, he was relishing the look of pain and death upon their faces. Such wonderful visions he thought. Perhaps this world wasn’t so primitive and without redeeming qualities, he’d have to make plans to thoroughly investigate this world once he was done conquering his own.

Then again, this place had a Dark Lord of it’s own and a formidable one at that. In this world Sauron had much more powerful than he did, and back in Voldemort’s own world, Sauron seemed to be just as powerful, being strong enough to transport him between worlds. Perhaps they could become partners…dismissing that notion quickly as he wasn’t fond of that idea.

He wanted to be the one in charge, he wanted to decide what to do, give the orders…not have someone else join in. Then he gave it a bit more thought…if Sauron was anything like him….he wouldn’t want to share in the power either. Perhaps taking over this world would have to be forgotten, such a pity.

He slammed his arm with the stone in it’s hand down on the armrest. Suddenly a dozen swords and maces came down from the walls and landed on his immediate left. He stood up and moved away from the spot, he looked up around the fortress hall, expecting to see a battalion of foes to stand above him. But no one was there.

He wasn’t imagining the swords and maces sticking out of the floor, so where did they come from and how did they manage to land like that?

Perhaps that girl…

He stormed down into the dungeons and looked through the bars on the door; no…the girl was still there. She was still unconscious from their last interrogation and hadn’t moved. But she was the only one that knew they were there, there was no one else, no one…

He looked at the stone in his hand…it’s the only thing new…and when he grasped it, he did have thoughts of spears, swords and daggers. He took the stone up to the room where the fire was still
going and looked at the weapons still impaled into the floor. He looked at the stone in his hand and lifted the stone in his hand.

The spears, swords and maces rose into the air.

A sadistic smile crept across the Dark Lord of England’s face.

The King cursed under his ghostly breath. “Damn, I thought he’d just think it was a stone.” said the King as he pounded the side of his throne. “That’s the worst one he could get his hands on.”

He began to pace up and down his ancient throne room, with the statues on either side of him, all unable to help him or give him aid with words of collective wisdom. He kept sneaking glances at the statue of Harry, and then into the darker corner. There was always a few statues over in the darkest part of the room, statues that never had the pure sunlight even touch their marble surface for they never let light into their hearts.

The one the King was looking at was another ever changing statue, but this one went from a good looking boy in his teens and late twenties, to a pale figure of a man with the nostrils of a snake and the eyes to match. It was a statue of Lord Voldemort, his past and present self.

“I didn’t choose you then, I refuse to choose you now!” growled King Meandenbor at the statue of Voldemort. “I saw what you were and what you would become; that boy will beat you and send you to where you belong!” He waved his hand to dismiss the statue and it disappeared in shower of gold light.

The King knew that the statue wouldn’t be gone for long; nothing in this castle was banished for any long period of time. Especially the statues and paintings. They were doomed to be a permanent fixture of the palace.

“I need to think, there must be something I can do.” said King Meandenbor to himself. “Fighting orcs and such is one thing. That was part of my original plan for those jewels, but that stone changes everything. No one in that world has able to find those stones, I didn’t figure two people starting to collect them at the same time! I’d never forgive myself if he got his hands on all those jewels, last thing both of these worlds needs is a mass genocide.”

He turned and left his throne room through a side door. He entered another room, with another large collection of statues; the only difference was each of them had a crown or tiara. It was the Halls of Kings, all the Kings of the past had a statue of themselves in here. Each King and Queen had a story to tell, each had a different way of ruling the world and each had a special quirk that Castle Valor tried to accommodate. For it would be their home, until the day they would pass to the other side.

Ultimate power came with a hefty price, not only were they unable to take a vacation for two long, they would be unable to rest until they could find a suitable replacement for themselves once their time was coming to an end. Though, working at home was a bonus, he had known of several kings of the past that have had their children playing at their feet while they handled the day to day work.

In the past it had only happened four times in the countless years of monarchy the magical world had that a King is unable to find a suitable replacement while they were alive. But King Meandenbor’s reign of unrest was the longest by far. No other ruler had gone this long without finding someone suitable to replace them. It wasn’t that he had high standards, but it was just, people nowadays were such fickle creatures.
He made his way slowly down the red velvet carpets looking at each of the statues and reflecting upon some of the more abstract rulers.

He stopped at the very first statue. King Greenglade, the first King of the Magical world, one of seven Centaur Kings the world had any records of. His marble statue was of a powerfully built Centaur, with long flowing hair; a simple vine held his hair back and the traditional crown with the variety of stones was perched on his head.

Centaurs were the first rulers of the magical world, for they were more in tuned with their magic than the humans were in their early years. But as time went by, the balance shifted, Centaurs lost most of their magical capabilities, while Humans picked up the slack.

The Centaurs were not happy with the shift in power, but King Greenglade and the other Centaur tribal leaders knew that change had to happen. They didn’t lose their most important powers, the ability to care for their forests, and they weren’t out of the running for any future crowned Centaurs. It didn’t matter which race of creatures had more strength in their magical cores, all it mattered was that the current King thought they were the best for the job.

Queen Flossy was an excellent example of that, she wasn’t Human or a Centaur, she was a House-Elf.

King Meandenbor gazed up at her statue; she was on a solid gold pedestal with diamonds making elegant designs down the sides. Queen Flossy had pointed ears like a normal house elf, a small straight nose, and big joyous eyes. Instead of the normal House-elf attire, she wore silken robes and a large cloak that trailed down behind her. And in her hands, was a scepter with a heart on the end.

She was one of a kind, there had never been another House-Elf ruler, though there really should have been. Queen Flossy was a kind and generous little House-Elf; she took care of a family with over twelve children under ten, twenty adults over eighteen and even a dozen senior citizens all on her own. Her predecessor saw how much love and attention she gave each person in that household and how they never appreciated it and would beat her for little to no reason.

He commandeered her from her ungrateful and abusive family and brought her to Castle Valor. Instead of making her his House-elf, he crowned her Queen of the Magical world. In order for her to even accept the job, he had to phrase her duties as taking care of the entire world, a House-elf’s dream.

She ruled the Magical world for many a decade, her predecessor arranged to have a counsel made to help her with the day to day activities and they helped her choose a successor when the time came. As it turned out, she chose, all on her own, a human...who was humbled beyond measure, Merlin himself.

Merlin served as King of the magical world, all the while serving as the royal magician for King Arthur. That was the Magical world in it’s golden years. Some of the most important magical discoveries happened in those times and despite his busy schedule with King Arthur he took his duties very seriously. The Core and Balance was maintained, and the world ran smoothly.

King Meandenbor passed a statue of another King, King Weltcorm. He was an odd one, to say the very least. The man was nice and smart enough, but he’d get funny fits from time to time. He was the perfect embodiment of Mr. Toad from the Wind in the Willows. He took care of the Magical world wonderfully, but as for his hobbies, they switched almost day to day. There were rooms in this castle filled with either things he took great care of, his latest hobbies, and then there were rooms filled the broken debris of things he grew tired of.
Even the shed’s on the castle grounds held remnants of the mechanical insides of several different muggle items. There were bikes, boats and even an antique plane. The man had no steadiness when it came to his past-times.

King Meandenbor traveled further down the line. So many Kings and Queens, some experienced challenges others had relatively easy reigns. He himself had the hardest reign so far to date in his opinion; no other King has had to deal with three separate Dark wizard wars. He was around for the Grindewald Wars, and then, in his spectral form, but still forced to look over the world, the years of Voldemort.

The third, was the beginning of Sauron’s crawl to power. All the Kings and Queens of the past knew of Middle Earth, but not one of them had tried to do anything with it. They left the world of Middle Earth to fend for itself. They had everything going for it, clean air, simple pleasures, leave well enough alone. The world of Middle Earth’s need for magic was little to none compared to this one, the barest amount of magical energy was sent through to that world.

But when he came to the throne, he sensed that something was amiss, he couldn’t just let that world go on without any sort of aid. He had to go and help, regardless of whatever consequence he might have suffered at the Final Conference of Kings.

The Final Conference happened every time a King would pass away. It was said to be the most amazing thing, something a King or Queen would be anxious or afraid to have come about. The rulers of both the past and the future gathered together to evaluate how the reign of each king went. Not even he could understand how he could review a king of the past. It just about trashed all the laws of time to even contemplate it.

But the trouble in Middle Earth caused him too much worry to even think about future consequences. Also, he was curious about that unknown world. The Kings of the past wrote little to nothing about Middle Earth, but mentioned that no hands-on ruling was needed. It was completely self-sufficient.

He used the golden stream of magic to travel from this world into the next and found it to be a much more desirable world to live in then the world he originally lived in. The people were more hospitable and more honorable than the ones he was used to dealing with. Also, the very air was much sweeter and more wholesome, a veritable paradise.

He even had a successor in mind, Gandalf the Grey. But that fell through, and very harshly, Gandalf refused point-blank, saying that too much power would corrupt him and he wouldn’t and couldn’t risk it. King Meandenbor could understand where he was coming from; it took all King Meandenbor’s will and strength of character not to abuse his power.

He had gone to Middle Earth, hoping to bring some of the chaos back into order. He helped protect the people against the dragons that plundered the dwarves’ mountains and the orcs and goblins that would assault the villages of men. The elves didn’t really need his help, but he did enjoy their company from time to time.

The wizards, few as they were, weren’t a bad sort, he found Radagast to be enjoyable to talk to, and Gandalf was a pleasure to mentor in his early years...he missed talking to him. Saruman...he didn’t like that man all that much...he never could take him into his confidence like he could the others.

The dwarves were an alright lot as well, his home in Middle Earth was full of the most beautiful hand crafted objects he had ever seen, even more beautiful than what the Kings of the past had acquired from this world. The dwarves were even going to make him a new crown...it was to be his birthday present. He never did get that crown...wonder if they still have it?
He was just minding his own business on his birthday, getting dressed in his best outfit, ready to go out to Peleannor Fields, when he was attacked. He could remember a hot burning sensation attack his back, and then blood filled eyes. He knew he was facing his final moments in that world, he took of his crown, the ancient crown of the Kings of the Magical worlds, the only thing that traveled with him to this world and banished the magical bits of the crown to random parts of Middle Earth. The Jewels were at least safe. He felt his body being dragged, just as the blood that had once pumped through his body now fell to the ground like droplets of rain, out onto the fields. Once they let go of his arms, he felt himself being ripped out of that world violently.

He was thrown back into world where he first originated, knowing full well that he was now unable to return to Middle Earth. As he lay upon the stone cold floor, he clutched his chest. His heart was beating again, but he knew his time was growing short. Dying in that world took his longevity, before he still had a hundred years to use at least, but getting slain in Middle Earth…he now only had twenty or so.

Before he had an immense amount of time to search for a successor, now his time was short.

King Meandenbor shook his head out of his walk down memory lane. This was so long ago, he didn’t find a replacement and now his best choice was in danger from the stones that were supposed to serve and protect him.

“There must be something I can do…but what?” said the King out loud.

Voldemort took all the swords, maces and spears that was in the fortress and placed them in the middle of the room. He took the jade stone out of his pocket and held it in his hand. He lifted the stone and the metallic weapons levitated into the air, he moved his hand and the weapons traveled in the same direction.

“This just made things a lot easier.” said Voldemort with a cruel smile. “Just wait Potter, when I see you next time…” He moved his hand quickly and one of the swords stuck firmly in the chest of an empty, dust covered suit of armor then another, and another until all the weapons were buried deep within it. “It will be the last time our eyes meet and then, your eyes will be mine.”
Warg Riders from Hell

Harry rode along with the rest of the people of Edoras towards Helms’ Deep. He wasn’t paying much attention to where he was going on this journey, but mostly to where he was currently in his quest to getting home.

If he remembered…at least one of the versions…he needed to get the thirteen jewels and use them to get home. One of the stones had the ability to get him back to Hogwarts, the big question was, which one is it?

He had found jewels in almost every part of Middle Earth he had been to, it had to either been one he had already found or the ones he hadn’t located yet.

He had found an opal that slowed time down in Bree, the first town he came to. This stone by far was one of the strangest he had collected. The others he needed to hold onto in order to use it, this one, he just had to be near it and have a need for some aid. When he first found the stone it was in a small chest of jewels, and that was after he had used the stones’ powers to slow down time in order to save a man from a trio of goblins or orcs…whatever they were. He didn’t even know the stone was in there. This stone was just weird.

The next stone he found was in a ruined fort called Weathertop, an amethyst stone that controlled the weather. He liked using this stone a lot more than the others. It was sort of cool being able to control lightning and wind and everything weather related. He thought about the stone and the place he found it in…Weathertop, that’s just weird, weirdness seems to be the theme.

The diamond was the next stone he found, that had to be the second hardest stone to get ahold of, he and Aragorn had to go against the victim of the stone just to get it, and in order to get their hands on it, they had to kill him. Harry felt really guilty about doing so, he couldn’t be sure if the man was a good person or not and there was no real way to find out for sure.

This stone was the most painful to use, every time he’d use it to change into an animal, he could feel his body stretch and change it’s shape, he didn’t like using it if he had another choice, but for the most part, it made some tasks easier.

In Moria was where he found the topaz stone, he hadn’t used it much since they left the ancient dwarf kingdom, so he wasn’t all too sure the limitations of that stone. Maybe he could find a use at Helms’ Deep, without anyone else knowing or seeing what he was doing.

Lothlorien held the emerald; he got in big trouble after managed to get his hands on that stone. He had to climb a really tall tree in order to get it, and in his stupidity he leapt out of the tree to catch it. He didn’t know how he could be that stupid, but then, thinking about his years at Hogwarts, it wasn’t surprising he’d be that thick.

Now there was a jewel right in front of him, and he wasn’t able to get his hands on it. He’d have to wait…but he saw what that stone was able to do, it was a necessary stone for the upcoming threats…...and he couldn’t have it.

Harry was jolted out of his thoughtful ravine when Strider rode up to him shouted harshly.

“HARRY!”

“Huh? What?” said Harry looking at Aragorn. He looked tense and had a firm grip on his sword.
“Wargs are ahead, stay with the people and get to Helms Deep.” said Aragorn.

“We need all the riders we can get, the lad may be of some help!” shouted Gamling.

Harry tightened his grip on Will-O-Wisp’s mane and urged her onward towards where Legolas was standing sending expertly shot arrows. He let go of Will-O-Wisp’s mane for a second and unsheathed his sword. Strangely the voice didn’t come to him, but Harry figured that the sword didn’t need to be told there was a fight about to happen every time he pulled the sword out.

“Alright girl, lets see what we can do.” said Harry in his horse’s ear. She picked up more speed and even began to pass some of the Rohan riders.

*Damn, she’s fast!* thought Harry as he was carried towards the oncoming assault of orcs on wild looking beasts.

While they were still in Edoras, Harry took what he believed to be jousting lessons from some of the Edoras riders. It was as if he were reliving Strider’s sword play lessons and the archery tutelage, it became incredibly painful after a short while. He needed more practice, but the time for that has come and gone.

One of the orcs came riding up to him as he came over the hill. The beast’s jaws opened wide, ready to rip Harry right off his horse and devour him alive. The orc meanwhile had raised it’s spear and prepared to strike the youth.

Harry needed to get a hold of the opal, to slow time down enough for him to get through this battle in relative safety, but both of his hands were preoccupied at the moment.

*I need to slow down time!* thought Harry desperately. Suddenly the familiar sluggishness of time slowing down happened and the orc and warg moved slower towards him.

“Thank freaking god.” said Harry to himself. Will-O-Wisp seemed to be unaffected by the time slow down as well, Harry assumed because she was touching him she was exempted from the effect.

Harry steered Will-O-Wisp away harm’s way and swung his sword right at the orc’s neck. The blade cut clean through the foul creature’s skin and fell to a slow crash to the grass. He pulled his arm back and stabbed the blade of his sword deep into the beast’s body and brought it back out.

Strider watched as he galloped through the hordes of Wargs and their riders that Harry had suddenly began to ride faster and move at an amazing speed. Harry had decided to utilize the opal, against their better judgment…thank goodness.

These wargs were nothing like horses, they could turn at the slightest moment and if the orc didn’t get you and kill you, the warg would. Harry had just learned how to fight while on horseback, and he was far from skilled in that form of combat. While Harry was taking lessons with the Rohan Calvary, he had noticed that Harry was almost on the verge of shouting “Can't you go slower?” the last time he got knocked off Will-O-Wisp.

Well, he supposed that with that opal’s power he *could* fight on a horse. Then he watched as a orc’s blade went unseen by the boy took a swing at him. He watched as Harry reached back and beheaded the orc behind him, apparently Harry did not receive any damage. Aragorn sighed with relief, the last thing he needed was Harry injured during a battle.

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The battle between the riders of Rohan and the Warg-riders seemed to almost go on without much of an end in sight. The horsemen were being knocked off their steeds left and right and the orcs were being beheaded where they sat and their beasts as well.

Out of the corner of his eye, Harry saw Gimli dismount his and Legolas’ horse and begin chopping every warg and orc that came his way. Like Harry, it appeared that Gimli preferred fighting on foot then he did on horseback. However, this fighting on foot had a massive drawback, and Gimli found it.

He ended up being almost squashed to death by the fallen bodies of the Wargs and orcs.

Strider saw that Gimli was in trouble, and even saw another orc creep up to him and try and slay him as he was on the ground. Strider picked up a spear that was impaled in the ground and tossed it mightily into the chest of the approaching orc.

What he hadn’t noticed was that the orc fell right on top of Gimli, causing him more duress. The other thing Strider hadn’t noticed, was the orc and warg that was heading straight towards him. The orc slammed its cruel club into Aragorn’s shoulder and knocked him off his horse. Instead of falling and just hitting the ground, Strider’s bracer was caught in the fur and straps of the beast.

The orc saw this and tried to kick him off, Aragorn endured the onslaught of the orc’s feet, until the creature finally drew it’s crooked and bloodstained blade and rose it high above it’s ugly head.

Strider rose his free arm and stopped the orc from bringing the knife down on his neck. He tried to push the knife down into the beast’s hide, but the orc was not about to lose such an easy target. They struggled until finally the wristlet freed itself and they both toppled off the warg. The warg was killed instantly by a horse-rider passing by with a spear.

Strider and the orc tussled and rolled about on the ground, trying to drive the knife home into the chest of the other. They continued rolling around until they both finally toppled over the edge.

Before he could fall down into the tremulous water fall below, Strider caught onto the ledge, unfortunately the orc also had latched onto something relatively solid, Strider’s leg. Strider looked down at the orc as it began it’s slow climb up it’s body.

*I have to let go.* Strider thought to himself. *I can’t let this thing live, if I could just kick it off me… damn…I’m sorry Arwen…Frodo…Legolas…Gandalf…Boromir…Sam…Merry…Pippin…Harry…..*

He released his hold on the cliff, and fell into the open air.

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Harry continued riding on Will-O-Wisp and cutting through the Warg-Riders as he went. If he hadn’t had the opal, he’d of been dead a while back. Harry looked around, trying to find the three people he considered his closest friends in this world….though he didn’t know nearly as much about them and vice versa as he, Hermione and Ron did.

Legolas was removing spent arrows from the bodies of different orcs and wargs he had slain, and Gimli was being assisted in getting the bodies of his enemies off himself. But Strider, he couldn’t seem to locate.

*Boy! look over to the cliff’s edge!* said the voice from the sword.
How come you didn’t talk to me earlier? said Harry.

Never mind that! Get over to the cliff! said the voice.

Harry looked over to the cliff and saw something that halted the breath right in his lungs. He could see the fingers of someone gripping the dirt in an act of desperation. Harry hurried over to whoever it was that was gripping to life so frantically and the breath that was left over in his lungs immediately escaped into a scream when he looked over the edge to see who it was.

“STRIDER!” shouted Harry.

Strider, as he released his grip, looked up and saw Harry’s shocked eyes. He knew that from that moment on, if the rocks didn’t kill him, those eyes would.

Harry reached down and caught Strider’s wrist and tried to pull him back to safety, but there were two bodies he was trying to pull up, and he didn’t have the upper body strength to do it.

“Harry, just let me go! With this orc, I’m too heavy!” shouted Strider.

“Don’t let go, boy, or you’ll never see your friend again!” screeched the orc at Strider’s waist.

“I-I’m not letting go!” shouted Harry as he tried to bring his friend up back up to himself.

Boy, let him go! said the sword.

“NO!” shouted Harry out loud. “I’m not letting go!”

“Harry, you have to, it’ll be okay!” said Strider trying to urge Harry to let him go, before the orc crawled up and killed his young charge.

“I-I can’t!” said Harry gritting his teeth and trying as hard as he could to pull Strider to safety. He could feel his body slowly going towards the edge of the cliff. There was going to be nothing to stop him from also falling off the cliff and joining Strider and this orc in the afterlife.

Hang on, the diamond! I could use the… thought Harry.

NOW YOU THINK ABOUT THAT? scolded the sword harshly.

The trouble was, with both of Harry’s hands trying to hold onto Strider’s wrists, he couldn’t reach into the pouch and take out the stone. He could feel himself getting closer and closer to either letting the man go, or falling with them.

Suddenly, he could feel something pulling on the back of his tunic, dragging him to safety. He looked back, prepared to offer gratification to the soldier that finally came by to help them. Instead of a horseman, it was a horse. Will-O-Wisp had Harry’s tunic in her teeth and was pulling him back away from the edge.

The orc saw his chance at freedom and latched onto the side of the cliff, and began it’s steady climb.

“You’ll soon wish you just dropped us…” sneered the orc as he began to climb, but his clawed hands never reached the level ground. Strider saw him ascending, his cruel eyes on Harry, he swung his foot back and knocked the orc clean off the face of the cliff and sent him screaming down towards the rocky river.

With Will-O-Wisp’s help, Harry pulled Aragorn to the safety of the level ground. Once he was
safe, Harry fell back into the grass and gasped for air. He didn’t realize how heavy Strider was… and a searing pain began to creep through his body.

Strider sat upon the ground next to the boy, without warning, he brought the boy up into his arms and held him close to his chest.

“I told you to let me fall.” said Strider in a whisper. “You could have fallen with me.”

“I said I couldn’t, and I meant it.” said Harry his eyes closed, he was completely exhausted, and being held like this…by someone who really cared…was nice.

Strider shook his head, but he didn’t let go of his young charge. This boy should have let go, he should have trusted him to survive the fall, he’s taken dives like that before and in rivers worse off than that one far below.

“I could have survived the fall, you wouldn’t have.” said Strider.

“I didn’t know that, and I couldn’t lose another friend.” said Harry softly as he continued to rest.

Strider cringed, *Curse that dark lord of his, Harry doesn’t even trust those who have more experience than him…*

“Lads! Are you alright?” shouted Gimli’s voice as he and Legolas came over to the pair of them.

“We’re fine, but Harry’s exhausted.” said Strider

“That’s not all he is, look, he’s been wounded.” said Legolas pointing down to the slash in Harry’s tunic. Both he and Gimli fell to Harry’s side.

Strider turned Harry over slightly and almost released a gasp, the blade of the orc had connected. And the skin around the wound, it had turned a strange greenish color, had the tip of the blade that cut him been poisoned?

“We need to get to Helms Deep.” said Strider picking up Harry, who hadn’t woken up. He made his way to find his horse, but Will-O-Wisp galloped in front of him and laid down on the grass, enabling Strider to just step over her and climb on her back easier.

“Thank you.” said Strider as he sat upon her back and took a hold of her mane, with his other hand, he wrapped his arm around Harry’s waist, holding him tight. “Let’s get to Helms Deep.”

He turned Will-O-Wisp and followed the rest of the horsemen onwards to Helms Deep. Legolas and Gimli brought up the rear, with Aragorn’s horse in tow.

Sirius was dozing quietly in his chair as Hagrid made to change the sheets in Harry’s bed, they had both agreed that Hagrid was the best at that job. Sirius tended to make the bed lumpy and changing the bedding the next time was next to impossible. Hagrid would hold Harry in one arm and arrange the bedding with his other.

Hagrid lifted Harry carefully in his arms and arranged the bedding, but something caught his eye. *Bloodstains.*

“Sirius!” said Hagrid harshly.

Sirius jolted away. “Wassamatter?”
“Harry’s hurt somewhere, I don’ know where.” said Hagrid lowering Harry back on the bed for Sirius to examine him.

Sirius lifted the shirt and saw the slash on Harry’s side, it had a greenish tint to the skin on either side.

“Is he…poisoned?” said Hagrid looking at the wound intently.

“Looks like it, I’d better get Remus…” said Sirius.

“Better get Snape too, maybe he’s got an antidote fer this.” said Hagrid covering Harry up carefully.

“I’d rather lick a boot than ask Snape for help.” said Sirius darkly.

“It’s fer Harry.” said Hagrid gently.

Sirius stared at Hagrid then lowered his gaze to the fallen form of his godson.

“Shit…alright…I’ll get him.” said Sirius deafeatedly.

Sirius left the room to find the two men that could help. Hagrid took a cloth out of a bowl of chilled water and dabbed Harry’s face with it.

“Dontcha worry Harry, Sirius is gonna get you help, and you’ll be back teh normal…well, normal fer yeh right now.” said Hagrid reassuringly to the youth that could not possibly hear him.
The Final Gift From An Old Friend

Snape was busy resting in his office at Hogwarts, he had spent the entire night keeping an eye on Bella and her tyrannical reign as the Dark Lord’s substitute. She had successfully wiped out almost a third of the Death Eaters that had joined the ranks in service to the Dark Lord in the past six months.

It was only thanks to his dueling skills that saved him from being attacked by Bella. She had decided, in her madness that Severus had betrayed them and surrendered the Dark Lord to Dumbledore. Though it was true he was a double agent, he had no hand in his disappearance. However, facts never stopped Bella from dealing out her own personal, twisted version of justice.

Snape lounged in front of the fire, a book dangling from his hand and a cool towel on his forehead, covering a throbbing lump caused by a flung statuette. He didn’t notice the Headmaster entering his room.

“Severus?” said Dumbledore softly.

“Go away old man.” moaned Snape. “I’ve just got back.”

“I’m sorry, but we need you.” said Dumbledore placing on his shoulder.

“Someone had better be dying.” snarled Snape quietly.

“Does someone having been poisoned count?” said Dumbledore calmly.

Snape’s eye flashed open. “Fine, who is it?”

“Harry.” said Dumbledore.

“How in blazes did the Potter brat get poisoned? Did Hagrid cook again, or worse still the mutt?” said Snape with a sneer.

“We don’t know, but please Severus, every minute could be vital.” said Dumbledore now speaking earnestly.

Snape groaned and stood up, he strode swiftly over to where he kept his potion vials. He picked a bag off the ground and filled it with several different bottles, creams and oils. “How did you get word that Potter was poisoned?”

“Sirius contacted me, though, amazingly I know, he asked for you.” said Dumbledore.

Snape turned and stared. “The mutt actually asked for me?”

“For Harry, it appears that Sirius will do anything.” said Dumbledore with a faint smile.

Snape said nothing. “I’ll go straight to Headquarters, you don’t need to monitor me.”

“I want to give you this, in case that none of your potions work.” said Dumbledore holding out a golden phial.

“What’s that? Phoenix tears?” asked Snape.

“Alas, Fawkes had an unexpected Burning Day, I was unable to ask him for some tears.” said
“So what is that.” repeated Snape.

“The last of Elixir of Life.” said Dumbledore.

Snape was floored. There was still some of that wonderful liquid left?

“Nicholas gave it to me before he passed away, a parting gift of sorts.” said Dumbledore caressing the phial tenderly with his thumb. “Use it, if you have no other cure.”

“To think, you’re that fond of the boy, to give him this.” said Snape with a soft sneer.

“It will not be the first time he’s had the Elixir of Life. He had great need of it in his first year.” said Dumbledore softly. “Take care of him Severus…if…let me know…”

He left without saying another word. Snape watched him leave, he shook his head and cursed the stupidity and foolishness of old men.

Strider held Harry close as they rode swiftly to Helms Deep. He had still not opened his eyes, but Strider could tell that he had yet to leave this earthly plane. Harry’s breathing was short but at the very least it was there.

They arrived at Helms Deep, and continued to ride all the way to the main hold of the ancient Keep. When Will-O-Wisp finally stopped, Strider climbed down and threw Harry over his shoulder. The King had arrived ahead of them, he hadn’t noticed that the men in the Fellowship had someone in their party that was injured, they were adults, they could handle themselves, but that changed when he saw who they brought it.

“Is he alright?” said the King striding forward. He didn’t realize the lad had been hurt, or he would have brought him back with him.

“He’s been wounded…” said Strider looking around to where he could put Harry down.

“Put him in my chambers.” said the King leading them to a room where a large bed sat; it had many woolen blankets on it, with animal pelts laid upon that. They stripped Harry and laid him gently in the bed, Aragorn inspected the wound carefully. It was indeed poisoned, and very badly at that, he needed some herbs…but he would need more time.

“Harry…Harry, I need you to wake up..” urged Strider earnestly.

Harry moaned softly.

Strider reached for the lad’s pouch and pulled out the opal. “I need to you to use this, I need you to keep awake and slow down time for me.” said Strider placing the stone in his young charge’s hand and clasped it close for him. “Can you stay awake for me?”

Harry moaned again, but a small bubble of glowing light surrounded the injured youth and the bed he laid upon.

“I’ll be back Harry, I promise, just keep using that stone till I get back.” said Aragorn, reaching into the bubble to ruffle the youth’s hair. He turned on his knees and hurried out of the room.

“Watch him, I’ll be back.”
Legolas and Gimli nodded and went to stand guard beside the bed.

King Theoden looked at the pair of them, “Is the lad going to be alright?”

“We hope so.” said Gimli looking at the boy.

“What is this magic?” said King Theoden. But when Legolas and Gimli said nothing, he knew what it was that was causing this scene. It was those stones again, but this lad…he looked in a bad way, would his stone help?

“Where did Lord Aragorn go?” asked Eowyn as she came in, unaware of the poisoned young man.

“He went to gather medicinal herbs, to help young Harry.” said King Theoden.

“Is he alright?” asked Eowyn.

“We hope he will be.” said Theoden.

They sat around the bed in silence for what felt like hours. Legolas noticed that Harry’s hands were clenched tightly around the stone, and beads of sweat were beginning to form on his brow. Legolas brought a cooling rag to the green-eyed boy’s brow, giving him some comfort.

“He’s losing.” said Gimli quietly.

“There must be something we can do…” said Eowyn worriedly. Then Gamling and Hama came into the room.

“Has he returned yet?” asked Theoden.

“No sign of him, my lord.” said the guard somberly.

The King looked down at the young man, his breathing was slowly becoming labored.

“What does that stone do, what power does that one have?” asked the King softly.

Gimli and Legolas looked swiftly at the ruler of Rohan, So Harry had told him.

“According to Aragorn and Harry, it slows time down.” said Gimli.

“So against poison, it is the best thing to use.” said King Theoden. “But alas, it seems it is not doing enough.”

They could do nothing to ease the boy’s suffering, they cursed each minute that passed without Aragorn there. Harry’s hand clenched even tighter on the stone, and now he was gasping for air.

“Lord Aragorn has arrived!” shouted a guard sticking his head in the door to alert the watchers.

Within moments, Aragorn had returned, with a large pack of herbs. He rushed over to bed and began to administer the herbs.

“What took you so long?” asked Gimli.

“I saw the army of Saruman…” said Strider.

“And…?” said King Theoden.
“Tens of thousands,” said Aragorn. “He’ll strike us with everything he has.”

“Eomer is still days away…” said the King thoughtfully. “How will we be able to withstand this assault?”

“If we had the lad and Gandalf, it might be easier,” said Gimli.

“Let’s hope we may be able to call on Harry…in the future,” said Strider. He was unsure if he had made it back in time, he shouldn’t have followed his Ranger instincts and investigate the rancid scent in the air. Harry was not strong enough to bounce back from this poison as rapidly as Legolas and Gimli would. This healing process would take time, and no one had any to spare.

Sirius mopped his Godson’s forehead in their room at Grimmauld Place. Harry was slowly getting worse, but he was amazed that the poison, whatever it was, wasn’t taking effect as fast as he thought.

“What the hell is taking him so long?” asked Sirius through gritted teeth.

“Making sure I don’t forget something crucial,” said a voice from behind the escaped prisoner.

Sirius turned and saw one of his greatest enemies, Snievellus—no…he came when he, Sirius, had asked….maybe…he wasn’t all bad.

“What did you do to him now, mutt?” said Snape coolly.

*Forget that.*

“I didn’t do anything, he just got it,” spat Sirius.

“’E really did just get it on his own,” said Hagrid.

Snape sent a frown to the pair of them. “So much for hoping it was your own stupidity that got him poisoned. It will take me some time to figure out what the poison is and heal it,” drawled Snape. “Kindly leave so I may get to work.”

“I’m not leaving him!” said Sirius hotly.

“I work better without some nursemaid standing at my elbow,” drawled Snape. “Now get out.”

Sirius made to kick Snape out, but Hagrid grabbed him. “It’s fer Harry.”

Sirius looked over to the panting figure in bed, “Alright, I’ll be down in the kitchen.”

“Be sure to eat something while you’re down there, the alternative is brewing is you a nutrient potion,” said Snape.

*I’d throw that up on purpose.* said Sirius viciously.

Snape inspected the boy intently, the apparent blade wound meant little to nothing to him at the time, he had more pressing things to deal with. He inspected the skin around the wound, it’s greenish tint told him very little as did the boy’s general symptoms. He looked deep into the wound, he saw a black ooze of some sort clinging to the side of the slash mark. Snape gently retrieved the ooze and placed it in a phial. He waved his wand, performing a complex examination spell, once he had done so, he regretted it.

Harry’s body heaved and his mouth opened in a silent scream. Severus had forgotten the one rule,
no magic in Harry’s room. For some reason, any magic that came near him from a wand, his entire body rejected it and caused the boy great pain.

Hopefully no one downstairs would find out, Hagrid’s wrath alone was enough to wish for a speedy death. Snape poured a pain relieving potion down the boy’s throat and once the pain finally ended he went back to inspecting the ooze.

According to the spell, the ooze was the poison that plagued the boy’s, but the cure…was unknown to this world. Snape reached into the pocket that held golden phial and looked at it. Should he use it on the ‘Golden Boy’? If he could keep it for himself, than he could study it, and make a stone for himself.

He made to put the phial back in his pocket, but the Potter boy made a labored gasp. Snape looked down and saw that now the boy’s face was twisted in pain. His eyes screwed up, doing his best to endure the poison’s attack on his body.

Without another thought, he poured the phial’s contents down Harry’s throat. Almost immediately, the boy’s breathing eased and the greenish tint of the wound slowly began to disappear.

He couldn’t believe that he had given up such a precious item, to the spawn of James. But then again, he was half of Lily’s too…he’ll have to think of it that way, thinking of Potter would only make him feel the need to cause the boy to vomit the elixir back up.

He took Sirius’ seat beside the bed, and watched Potter, he looked so…small despite his continuously growing height…and from what he heard on the radio weeks ago, he cursed himself for not seeing it.

“Why didn’t you say anything? If Minerva had known, she would have told the entire faculty, to help you…did your friends even know?” asked Snape quietly.

But the boy didn’t respond, he remained as silent as ever.

Aragorn worked feverishly to try and heal his young friend, but none of his herbs were having any effect, what sort of poison was this? But then…the greenish tint to the wound slowly faded away. Harry breathing even became easier.

“You did it Aragorn!” said Legolas in a hushed voice.

Aragorn was unsure, his herbs weren’t working a moment ago, it’s unlikely they would miraculously heal him so quickly.

“He’s still very weak, he may not be up by the time the battle starts.” said Aragorn knowledgably. “He’ll need someone to guard him.”

“I’ll have someone posted.” said King Theoden.

“Thank you, your majesty.” said Aragorn.

King Theoden looked down at the youth. He touched the turquoise stone on his chest, he took the stone off his chest with tremendous force and placed the stone in the boy’s hand.

“ Asking you to stay and help nearly killed you, it wasn’t your fight. Please accept this, as an apology.” he said quietly.

Harry only groaned in his sleep, and instinctively curled his fingers around the second stone in his
hand.

“I will have some of my best men guarding him.” said Theoden.

“I think, with a battle on, the best should be kept outside, we’ll take who we can get.” said Strider. “Your chambers are kept to the back of the Deep, the enemy shouldn’t be able to get here all that easily.”

Legolas looked outside the window, he had ill feelings towards the coming battle. Tens of thousands against so few? This was no battle.

This was to be a slaughter.
Panic swept through Helms Deep as news of the oncoming army of Saruman reached them all. The men lined up to receive swords, bows and armor to help defend the Keep against the opposing army. The women grabbed their children and headed quickly down to the safety of the caves beneath Helms Deep to keep safe. As the people of Helms Deep prepared themselves for the oncoming attack, Harry was still doing his absolute best to recover from the poison and that was sleeping.

While the people gathered supplies to take down into the caves with the women and children, their minds twisted in horror and fear...

Harry slept.

While the blacksmiths and sword smiths made weapons and armor at a staggering pace in order to prepare for the battle, to help ensure safety for their neighbors…

Harry slept.

While guards of Rohan chose some of the older children to aid in the fighting, out of desperation for extra arms in the aid to defend the walls.…

Harry slept.

Harry hadn’t woken up since he had collapsed back at the site where the Warg-riders assaulted them. His wound had begun to heal, and was healing rapidly, but the poison had done quite a lot of internal damage that would need plenty of rest in order to heal. Even the guards knew that he was still recovering, and seeing as how they didn’t want to incur the wrath of the King of Rohan or future King of Gondor, an Elven Prince or strong armed dwarf or even the powerful Gandalf, they left him alone.

Legolas, Gimli and Aragorn both left Harry to the capable but temporary hands of Eowyn for the time being in order to prepare for the oncoming battle. They wandered down amongst the people, Strider tried offering the men and youths words of encouragement, giving them hope. Legolas did not share his optimism, but thankfully he only spoke in elvish when he verbalized his feelings. Though Strider didn’t quite appreciate Legolas’ blunt words.

“Then I will die as one of them!” shouted Strider at Legolas.

Legolas looked taken aback for a second, but he dragged Strider away from the frightened eyes and the shocked faces. If Strider wanted to die a hero’s death, then Legolas would stand beside him and take out as many Uruk-hais as he could as well, but there was something a bit more important to worry about. “We should get Harry out of here at least, Gimli and I will stay, you are the fastest rider.” It wasn’t just the fact that the green eyed youth was dear to all three of them, but if those stones fell into the enemies’ hands…

“Harry is not strong enough to ride just yet, the trip alone would kill him.” said Strider. “He may not be strong enough in time.” He was indeed worried about Harry, he was grateful to whichever god looked out for him and cure him, but he wished he was strong enough to whisk away back to Lothlorien, if he were, Harry wouldn’t be lying in the King’s bed.

“And you cannot use the stones? The stone that transforms him into any creature?” asked Gimli at his elbow.
“No…they won’t work for me, I can only see them.” stated Strider gloomily. “If I could use the stones, I would have turned into the Lothlorien eagle and taken him back there.”

Just to make sure the boy was fine, they walked up to the King’s chamber and stood around the bed, looking down at the young man sleeping peacefully on the bed before them. Harry was lying on his side underneath the many blankets with his head propped up on the duck down filled pillow. He no longer had the fevered look on his face, but now he simply looked as if he had a rough day and had turned in early.

Suddenly a loud horn called out amongst darkness, the three colleagues hurried out of the King’s room and onto his private balcony. They could see a long thin line of lights approaching Helms Deep’s gates.

“Surely the fun can’t be starting so soon!” said Gimli with a grim smile. He couldn’t wait to best the elf in battle.

“That was an Elvish horn.” said Legolas, his eyes scanning the dark ground trying to locate the blower of the horn. A welcoming sight met everyone’s gaze.

It was a large battalion of elves, armed with long elegant bows with sharp swords on their hips for reserve. In the front, was Haldir himself. They were allowed in the gate with much enthusiasm, though it was not vocalized. The elves themselves instill much awe into the men that no one spoke until they finally stopped their march in front of the King of Rohan.

“We’d best go down and greet them…” said Strider as they hurried down to where the elves stood at attention, leaving Harry to rest in peace. They ran as fast as they could down to where the King was meeting with the lead Elf, who happened to be Haldir himself.

“Lord Elrond, Celeborn and Lady Galadriel send their regards and aid, we are proud to fight alongside men once again.” said Haldir.

Aragorn came rushing down the stairs and embraced Haldir. “It is much welcomed.” he said with much emotion. The King of Rohan looked at the two of them in surprise.

“In-Indeed, your aid is much appreciated, we are honored.” said King Theoden graciously.

“Where is Harry?” asked Haldir looking around and not seeing his young friend.

Another person affected by the boy, it seems. thought King Theoden with a smile

Strider, Gimli and Legolas shared a pained look. How should they break this to the elf, without him and the Lord and Lady of the Golden Wood exacting their revenge on them?

Haldir looked quickly to Aragorn. His uneasy look made him uneasy.

“What is wrong?” asked Haldir quickly. If anything happened to the lad…

“I’ll take you to him.” said Strider softly.

Haldir instructed his warriors to take their positions while he went to go see the boy. The warriors could understand, the boy was always at Lord Celeborn’s side or Haldir’s. Even they took a shine to the lad when he was taking his archery lessons in front of them. They almost laughed at his youthful incompetence at the skill.

By the time they reached the King’s room, they had told Haldir all of their adventures since they
left Lothlorien. When they told about Harry being poisoned, Haldir strode quickly over to the bed where Harry was still resting.

He looked intently at Harry’s face, his eyes held a twinge of worry. Harry moaned and opened his eyes slowly. “Ha-Haldir?” he yawned hugely.

Haldir shushed him softly. “Relax child, are you alright?”

“I…I don’t know…I’m tired…and cold…and my body hurts…” whispered Harry honestly, if Haldir was anything like Madam Pomfrey, lying to him about if he wasn’t well, would only keep him in bed longer.

Haldir and Aragorn brought the layer of pelts and woolen blankets higher up to Harry’s chest.

“Why do I feel this way?” asked Harry. “And where am I?”

“You’re in the King’s chambers at Helms Deep, and you’ve been poisoned.” said Gimli stoking the fire that was crackling merrily beside the bed. “But Aragorn here fixed yeh up.”

“ Poisoned? By what?” asked Harry.

“By an orc blade.” said Strider smoothing Harry’s hair back. “You were cut during the battle.”

“I don’t remember….” said Harry.

“You’ve had a bad few days, you’ve been very ill.” said Legolas softly. “We almost were beginning to fear the worst.”

“Thankfully it never came to that.” said Haldir.

“What..What are you doing here?” asked Harry quietly. He was getting more tired by the minute.

“There is a battle to be had here, child, I’m here to help.” said Haldir.

“I’ll help…” said Harry struggling to sit up.

“You’ll help by resting.” said Gimli pushing Harry pack down on the pillows. “If we saw you out and about, we’d be worried about you and not fight, best keep you safe in here.”

Harry smiled at all of them as they stood around the bed and closed his eyes again, he was so tired and the bed was so soft. He allowed his body to fall back into the deep sleep that had swallowed him before. Unaware of the battle that was coming, and the fear that seeped through every nook and cranny of Helms Deep.

“I’d hate to hear what he would say if he knew they were picking children to fight as well.” said Gimli.

“Let’s not tell him, he has enough on his plate.” said Legolas.

“What if he decides to leave the room to join the fighting?” asked Haldir. “I can see him doing it.”

“ We have that covered. The King offered some guards to take care of Harry while the battle ensued.” said Aragorn. “That way, no one gets in to harm him and he won’t leave to join the fighting.

“I will stay here, send the men to the ramparts, I will be more than enough.” said Haldir.
“We could use you Haldir.” said Legolas.

“If I abandon him in this state, and if Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel hear of this...I will never be able to set foot in the Golden Wood again.” said Haldir with a faint smile. “I will stay with him. Besides, he will listen to me and remain in bed.”

Aragorn sighed, but he had a faint smile. “I’m glad the best warrior is protecting him. If things do go astray, we’ll have to hold out in the front room.” he said pointing towards the door they had gone through. “You should be able to watch the battle from that window.”

Haldir looked over to where Aragorn was pointing, it was a window, beside a locked door, a door that no doubt made way to a small balcony. Thankfully the balcony was high above the rest of the Keep, out of reach of even the strongest foe’s arm to throw a grappling hook. If he had to, he could easily shoot down any foe he had to from this lofty perch.

Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli left to secure good positions to defend the Keep, while Haldir pulled a wooden chair up to Harry’s bedside. “Do not worry lad, you won’t be harmed, not while I am here.”

Voldemort couldn’t remember the last time he had had this much fun. There wasn’t a piece of armor or pillar in the fortress that didn’t have gashes and stab marks upon their stony surfaces. The paintings on the weather-worn walls were slashed and sliced to ribbons. He had now taken to having a slew of weapons float behind him. At random times he would send them swooshing through the air and impaling itself into the wall.

If he wasn’t mad before, the power this stone’s power engulfed him in a furious whirl of madness. Before he had come to Middle Earth, he had a calm, cruel and vicious gleam in his red eyes, now it only harbored a blaze of intense mania that seemed endless. His mouth only held the most contemptible sneer or smirk, now it was twisted in a fierce and sinister grin.

His grand ideas and plans were not replaced with only one thought and one thought only.

_Cut...slice...tear...rip...kill...Harry Potter..._

He had planned to go to Mordor and join up with Saruon. But now he was filled with power thanks to that jewel, and he felt the desire to meet Potter on the field of battle, and tear him apart and relish the screams of his conquered foe.

Anya was still down in the darkest dungeon that was left in the fortress, and she noticed the change coming over the villain. He had taken to coming down and visiting her every once in a while, interrogating her for anything that was related to Harry, or just for fun. But this time he was dragging behind him a suit of armor. He threw the suit into the corner and with a vicious smile he sneered over to Anya, all the while, his weapons hovering behind him menacingly.

“Want to see what’s going to happen to your precious hero?” He laughed maniacally, then he gestured with his hand and the swords flew towards the suit of armor and buried themselves deep into the steel armor’s chest.

“And just think,” he cackled gleefully, “he might _not_ be wearing any protective armor.”

“You’re insane!” screamed Anya.

“Oh this is only the beginning...I won’t just kill him...” said Voldemort still cackling, he brought
his hands together as if he were praying, and then pulled them apart, like Noah parting the waters, bits of metal flew everywhere. “I’ll mutilate him.”

Anya looked at him fearfully.

“I think it’s about time, we think about heading south.” he added gleefully.

Strider, Gimli, and Legolas stood upon the walls of Helm’s Deep waiting for the battle to begin, or at least for the enemy to approach the walls. They were still a good half hour’s march away from where they stood. They could just make out the torches and thunderous sound of their stomping feet.

Strider was giving last minute orders to the elves as they stood on the front lines of the walls and some were down on ground, prepared to fight any enemy that made it’s way into the Keep. Suddenly the skies seemed to open up and pour water down upon, making the night seem more foreboding than the oncoming battle could produce.

The horrible Uruk-hais were getting closer and closer by the minute. Unfortunately, Gimli couldn’t see due to a large block of stone in front of his head and he wasn’t all that happy about it.

“You could have picked a better spot.” muttered Gimli to Legolas who was trying hard not to smirk too visibly. Taunting between the two of them just seemed to escalate as the battle drew closer, both of them wished Harry could see them now. He had been trying for months for the two of them to get along better, for him…they were going to give it their best shot, and hopefully it wouldn’t be their last.

“Never thought I’d be fighting alongside an Elf.” grumbled Gimli.

“Then how about a friend?” said Legolas.

Gimli looked up at the elf with new eyes. “Aye, that I can.”

Finally the Uruk-hais arrived at the gates of Helms Deep, pounding the ground menacingly, taunting the men and trying to cause them to fly into a panic. But it was not working on the seasoned warriors. The children were fidgeting nervously, but the men with them calmed them, reassuring them that they would be fine.

From up in the King’s room, Haldir looked out the window and saw the newly arrived army. Their numbers were vast…but the men and elves had heart on their side, and the drive to succeed. Monsters made from foul hands could not compare…hopefully that ideal held true.

Harry groaned from his bed.

“What is wrong lad?” asked Haldir.

“Whassa noise? asked Harry thickly.

“That would be the opposing army.” said Haldir softly. “Don’t worry, we have enough men to take on the White Wizard’s army.” He didn’t want to lie to the lad, but if it kept him in bed, and allowed him to rest than it was for the best.
Back down on the wall, Gimli and Legolas were standing at attention, ready and waiting for the creatures to strike. But the creatures were continuing their stomping and moaning. The children on the highest tower were getting nervous, were they going to last the battle?

“What’s happening now?” shouted Gimli.

“Shall I describe it to you?” said Legolas smoothly.

Gimli looked up.

“Or would you like me to find you a box?” said Legolas looking down at the dwarf.

Gimli laughed.
The battle raged on and on for what seemed like hours, the Uruk-Hai's smashed against the wall of Helms Deep like waves crashing upon the shore. Though the numbers of Saruman's army were great, the strength and resistance of the Men of Rohan were greater, and it was certainly showing, even to the watchful eyes of the elf standing in the King's chambers.

Haldir looked out the window of the King's room, never had he seen such a battle as this was. He watched as the numerous Uruk-hais began to scale the walls and assault his elves as well as the men of Rohan. They were holding their own, but it wouldn’t’ be much longer before their strength would begin to fail.

He picked up his bow and several quivers, full of arrows, and through a crack in the window, placed an arrow on his bow and pulled back. He picked a target, far below him an Uruk-hai that was coming up behind a younger unseasoned soldier. He let his arrow fly and with it’s silent, deadly speed, it impaled itself straight through the creature’s exposed skull.

This was not how he normally fought, preferring to fight head on, but this way...it was oddly satisfying. He wasn’t behind trees or up in the canopy of the trees, he was in a building, and they could not pinpoint his location. He had no fear of them locating them.

He prepared another arrow when Harry gave a groan.

“Was goin’ on?” asked Harry as he rubbed his eyes.

“Go back to sleep child, we’re doing just fine.” said Haldir.

Whether Harry wanted to stay awake or not, Haldir never knew, Harry had passed out once again and buried himself beneath the covers.

That’s right lad, just relax, I’ll take care of you. thought Haldir as he reloaded his arrow.

Below on the ramparts, Strider, Gimli and Legolas sliced, shot and cleaved through their enemies without hesitation or taking mercy upon them. With every swipe of Aragorn’s sword, another five would show up to replace the one that had fallen, if this kept up all night long, Aragorn’s strength would begin to fade.

Good thing Harry isn’t down here, I don’t want to even think about what would have happened. thought Strider as he brought his sword through the thick, muscled neck of a Uruk-hai. He could almost picture it in his mind’s eye, despite the use of the stones, he could see his young friend’s body lying in the cold wet mud at the base of the wall, and if worse had happened, the Uruk-hai ripping apart his body to feed on it raw.

Legolas whirled his blades around him as if he were doing a primal dance. With each stroke his long graceful arms made, spelled death for the Uruk-hai’s forces. He relished the opportunity to fight alongside his kin of Lothlorien. The Lothlorien elves were legendary for being the strongest elvish fighters in Middle Earth. That and the little wager that Gimli and he had, the dwarf egotistically bragged that he could fell more Uruk-hais than he could. Well, he’d just have to show
He was also grateful that the green eyed youth would not be joining them on the battle field, but he held his hope in check. This battle would not be easily one, and perhaps they would only be prolonging their death, but that wouldn't stop him from fighting to the end.

Gimli stood upon the wall, swinging his great double bladed axe left and right. The Uruk-hais didn’t seem to realize that it was futile to climb up those two particular ladders with him standing there, keeping guard. Once they would reach the last five or six pegs on the ladder, they would draw their last breath and then fall down to the ground dead, their head’s or the necks sliced open with vicious precision.

They didn’t even pay attention to what he was saying as they climbed, it wasn’t a battle cry, or even a taunt to them. He was counting. With each Uruk-hai that fell to it’s death, he added another number to his continuous tally.

He and Legolas both agreed to the game of seeing who could slay the most enemies before the battle was over, but they had an underlying motive for their attacking with gusto. They needed to keep these, these things away from the room where Harry slept.

If these things were to get to him, they wouldn’t make it in time, Haldir was a strong warrior, Lothlorien’s best, but he wouldn’t be able to hold back an army of Uruk-hai by himself. And if they accidentally were to get a hold of those stones…too bad they couldn’t use them…they’d come in handy right about now.

Snape sat deep in thought as the rest of the Death Eaters held an Emergency meeting. They had gathered together in the middle of a dark forest, hiding from Bellatrix’s murderous rage. They had placed protective charms around the edge of the glade they stood in, to warn them if someone was coming, and if it was Bella, to flee for their lives.

“We need a plan, if we keep doing what she’s ordering us to do, the Ministry and that damned Order are going to find us.” said one Death Eater desperately.

“And if they don’t find us, you can bet that blasted Order will.” said Lucius darkly.

"The Order already has some notion of where we are." said Snape slowly.

"Can't you tell them to go elsewhere?" asked a Death Eater quickly.

"It would look suspicious if I offered our location in a completely different area.” drawled Snape. He then looked over to Lucius “Cannot your wife talk sense to Bellatrix?”

“You are kidding, I’ve had to put wife my in a safe house, Bella’s taken to beating her up at every possible chance, that and slapping Draco about.” said Lucius carefully. “No…she holds resentment towards Narcissia…she still retains her beauty, whereas…”

“Bella, not so much.” said a young Death Eater quietly.

An older Death Eater instinctively smacked the back of the young Death Eater's head.

They stood around in silence, no one saying anything, none of them had ideas how to get rid of Bellatrix, or even an idea on how to calm her down. Problem was, if they didn’t come up with
something, they’d either be dead, or in custody and kissed. Taking one look at the ones that had
been forcibly released from Azkaban, they’d rather kill themselves than go there.

“Could we… get rid of her?” said a Death Eater quietly.

“Just like the dunderheads I teach at school… that’s what we’re trying to come up with!” spat
Snape.

Macnair looked up from the log he was sitting on. “Severus… you don’t happen to have any…
poisons with no known antidote… do you?”

“At a school?” said Snape with a raised eyebrow. “Where there are brats that eat things first and
find out what it was afterward?”

Lucius and Snape sent quick looks over to Crabbe and Goyle.

Snape leaned against the tree he was standing against, thinking hard. There was nothing really that
he had, those poisons were strictly Knockturn Alley merchandise. There was a Auror that
monitored that row of Dark Art shops, at all times and asking for the wrong thing could get one
questioned by Madam Bones herself.

Thinking back… there was one thing that could be used, and it was in the school. “There is one
poison… and one poison only at that school that is like that. The antidote… is impossible to get,
especially for Bella or anyone with a Dark Mark.” drawled Snape.

“What poison is that?” asked Nott.

“Basilisk.” said Snape simply.

“That’s... there was a basilisk at school?” said the youngest Death Eater in shock.

“There used to be, Potter killed it in his second year… with a sword.” said Snape.

“What the…? A BASILISK?” said another Death Eater in deeper shock.

“Second year?” said another one.

“With a sword?” said Macnair slowly.

“And the Dark Lord said he was weak?” said another Death Eater looking frightened.

“W-Well, basilisk poison will do… when can you have it?” asked Lucius.

“Never.” said Snape plainly.

“What?” said the Death Eaters in confusion.

“I need a parslemouth in order to get down there, and only two wizards are known to speak
parseltongue in this day and age.” said Snape. “Potter and the Dark Lord.”

Silence ensued the glade.

“But both the Dark Lord and Potter are missing!” said Avery. “How are we supposed to get
down there?”

“We’re not, we don’t have the ability to do so.” said Snape, “We’ll have to settle for some other
poison, unless one of you want to go and find a basilisk?"

No one volunteered, though Snape would have been shocked if any one of these cold blooded cowards offered their lives for the good of the rest of them. Silence rang through them all once again, they were hoping Snape had another potion that would be just as lethal and just as hard to come up with an antidote for. But he didn't say another word.

“Can we knock her out with Draught of Living Death, and then bury her alive?” asked Rookwood.

“She’ll be able to tell something’s wrong when she starts feeling sleepy, do you want to be around when that happens?” said Lucius. “She hasn’t sleep more than twenty minutes since she was put in prison.”

Silence once again ensued.

Snape sat deep in thought, he could hardly believe it, they needed Potter’s help. There would be no way on earth that the Dark Lord would be willing to let them down into the chamber, and his fury at finding they used basilisk venom against him and his chief lieutenant would only mean each of their deaths.

But really, what other option would they have?

Harry opened his eyes slowly, he kept hearing shouting and screaming coming from somewhere and it was now getting impossible to sleep. He sat up on the bed, and looked around the room slowly, the light that illuminated the room came only from the fireplace. It’s rich light and warmth seeped through him, as if it were healing him all on its own. He looked around, taking in the rich decor of the room, but stopping at the sight of Haldir standing beside a window and firing arrow after arrow out of the window and down onto some unseen target.

He swung his feet off the side of the bed, and stood up. He quickly noticed he was naked once again.

This is becoming habit-forming apparently. thought Harry with a smirk. He took a bit of fur off the bed and wrapped it around himself. He slowly padded his way over to the window, to see what Haldir was shooting at.

“What’s going on?” asked Harry softly before he reached the window.

“You should be resting.” said Haldir without looking at him and firing his arrow.

“Can’t sleep with all the noise, what…what are those things…what’s going on?” asked Harry noticing the large army far below him.

“Battle…we’re winning.” said Haldir with a satisfied smile as he placed another arrow in position. “Which…is a miracle, perhaps you’re good luck, child.”

Harry blushed. “What’s those two doing?” asked Harry looking down at the sea of Uruk-hai. “They’re carrying something, something…”

Indeed they were, they were lugging something large and black towards the far wall. Anything they were doing, they had to be stopped, it didn't matter if they were moving dead comrades, they weren't to be trusted.

He hurried over to the bed, and frantically searched for the stones. He found the one he was looking for and ran back to the window, flinging open the door to the balcony and despite Haldir's
shouting, made to the very edge of the railing. Forgetting the blanket wrapped around his middle he found the two Uruk-hais he had noticed and clenched the amethyst stone tightly in his hand and raised his fist.

*CRA-CRACK!*

Lightning slashed through the sky and struck the pair of Uruk-hai and the object cradled in both of their arms.

*BOOM!*

An explosion blossomed furiously down amongst the Uruk-hai, the entire Keep shook, the people on the wall of Helms Deep staggered, but the wall remained, bits of stone and mortar fell and a large dent appeared in the aftermath, but the wall remained standing. A large crater appeared at the base of the wall, quickly pooling up with rainwater and the blood of the Uruk-hais.

Strider looked down at the stunned Uruk-hais that were getting to their feet slowly and then looked up at the widow where Haldir was firing his arrows. He saw Haldir looking down at the crater himself, with a look of awe and shock on his face. Harry was standing beside him, a stunned look on his face, but then it turned to cold fury. A snarl playing on his lips…

This was not the innocent child *he* knew.

Harry was *pissed*. That was a *bomb*. That wasn’t supposed to be here! Judging from everything he’s seen so far, they aren’t even supposed to have gun powder! This place was all swords and arrows and axes and stuff like that! Bombs weren’t supposed to be a factor! Well, if that wizard wanted to bring guns and such into a medieval war, then he’d oblige with some fireworks of his own.

He clenched the amethyst stone and thought clearly of what he wanted. Just as he wished, the sky was a fire with bolts of lightning that came raining down upon the foes of Rohan and striking each marauding batch of Uruk-hai that stood beneath the wall. The people on the wall of Helms Deep, thinking this was fierce storm, too fierce to even think of braving it, left the wall and went down closer to the ground.

Harry turned away from the window and went to put his clothes on.

“Child…” said Haldir, staring at the terrible beauty this green eyed lad had summoned. “Child… this…this…”

“I’m not done yet.” said Harry darkly as lightning flashed across the sky to prey upon several more Uruk-hais. He went back to the balcony and stood firmly on the marble stone. He clenched his fist again, this time there were two stones in his hand.

Suddenly, a strong gust of wind picked up and began to swirl, picking up stray swords and spears and arrows. They flew above the ground, in a quick circular motion, dust flew in with it, and large rocks.

*A tornado.*

Soon, the whirling mass of dust, swords, spears and arrows began to pick up Uruk-hais and fling them around in its vortex. The warriors of Helms Deep only escaped by Harry keeping the tornado
Lightning continued to crash down around the Uruk-hai that managed to escape the tornado for a short while, but their bodies were scooped up anyway. The King of Rohan didn’t know what to make of it. He watched his enemies fly into the air and be impaled by the flying weapons and or bludgeoned to death with the large stones also in there with them. it was as if some godly force was angry at the audacity of the White Wizard to create some new life in Middle Earth.

Haldir watch in slight horror at the power this youth had over those stones, he had them only for a short time, yet he could come up with power like this! The battle that should have raged for at least two days, was over in a matter a few hours, and with Harry taking part, it was over in a few minutes. There was not an Uruk-hai left standing, alive or otherwise.

Harry took notice of the lack of living enemies as well, and lowered his arms, and stopped clenching his fists on both of the stones. He then threw what looked like a punch into the open air, and a load of rock came crashing down, burying the fallen Uruk-hai. This action turned the once wavy plain that laid before the wall of Helm’s Deep into one long flat plain completely smooth for about a few hundred meters away. Burying the foul creatures, forever more.

“There we go.” said Harry dully turning back towards the bed. “I’m going back to bed, I’ve got a headache.” He also felt drained…like he was prepared to sleep for three days straight.

Haldir looked at the boy with shock mixed with fear. Was the boy alright? Had the stress of the poison and seeing that strange blast gotten to him? Should he take him back to Lothlorien and let Galadriel and Celeborn heal him?

“Lad?” said Haldir.

“I’m fine, just a bit tired.” said Harry rubbing his head. His head and heart had been aching on and off since…then it came back to him. He never told Aragorn, or anyone else the feeling he had back in Edoras. He wanted to go and find Aragorn and tell him, but…his head just hurt so much as well as his heart and the rest of his body. Maybe a bit more rest and then he’d be as right as rain again.

Haldir helped the youth back into bed gingerly, and replaced the covers. He didn’t know quite what to do. The lad had just demonstrated the power, the staggering power of King Meandenbor himself. A child…to control, to wield the power of nature…the idea of that was just mind boggling and absurd. Did this boy have this much natural instinct to use the stones in this fashion, or did he have someone guiding him that he couldn’t see.

Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed in the corner, Harry’s sword, Velairion, glowed silently. That sword was of elvish make, and if it were glowing…he looked to Harry, but already he was fast asleep. He picked up his bow and prepared to fire.

The door opened swiftly and a great ugly brute of an Uruk-hai came in through the door. He gave a grunt and charged, but stopped suddenly. Two arrows, one through the middle of his head, one through his neck, an axe embedded in his side, and a sword impaled through his chest halted him in his tracks. The two hand weapons pulled away and he fell to the floor with a crash.

Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas appeared in the doorway.

“One slipped through, you three are losing your touch.” said Haldir putting his bow away.

“Must have lost him in the confusion.” said Gimli kicking the Uruk-hai hard in the side.

“Is Harry alright?” asked Strider.
Legolas hurried over to the bed and brushed the hair out of the youth’s eyes. “He’s asleep.” he said.

“He could sleep through anything.” said Gimli with a fond tone.

“To think, he could conjure that much power….if only Gandalf could have seen.” said Strider shaking his head.

“I’m sure that the people Gondor had seen the raging fury , all the way from Minas Tirith.” said Haldir with a forced laugh. He then looked down at the sleeping figure. “Celeborn should talk to him.”

“He won’t go back to Lothlorien, he won’t be able to drag himself back to us.” said Legolas with a faint smile.

“Then there is only one alternative.” said Haldir. He placed his bow behind his back and left the room.

“Where’s he going?” asked Gimli.

“He cannot be serious.” said Legolas, his eyes wide. “He hasn’t left…in over an age!”

“What, what is it?” pressured Gimli.

“I think, Gimli, Lord Celeborn will finally travel away from the Golden Wood.” said Aragorn.

“And if he leaves the Golden Wood….” said Legolas, his voice filling even more with awe. “Then Lord Glorfindel will ride with him, most likely, along with a large guard of elves to protect the Lord of Lothlorein.”

“Should we warn Theoden?” asked Gimli, despite his dislike of elves, even he knew the importance of this Glorfindel. “He’ll want to prepare a feast if that happens.”

“A feast is easily made, but should we warn Harry that Lord Celeborn is coming?” said Strider. “A part of me wants to not tell him, to see his reaction.”

“Let’s not, just for fun.” said the elf and the dwarf together, mischievous smiles stretched across their faces.
The next day dawned, despite the night’s terrors, loss of life and bizarre happenings, the morning was still as glorious as ever. The new ground outside the wall of Helms Deep seemed to relish its new life as topsoil and began to flourish with grass and flower buds. Before Harry had gone to sleep, he made an unconscious wish, a wish the youth hadn’t even realized that he had conjured it in his mind: *Make some good come of this.*

And some good did come of this….the smooth slab of rock from the side of the mountain cliff, became rich with flora, an array of colors danced about the new field and the sweet sensual aroma over came even the sickly sweet stench of death that had hung in the air from the night before.

Even as Haldir rode out late in the evening as all the warriors made for some fitful sleep and to tend to their wounds and the dead, he could only marvel at the power of the jewels that caused the greener of the world to heed his call. This power seemed to grant his wish, a benign and generous jewel.

The men had neglected to bring the women and children out of the caves once the battle was over, taking the time to rest briefly and prepare the fallen warriors for their burials. They hoped the women wouldn’t have harsh words for them, when they released them from the caves.

When the doors were finally opened, the women and the younger children of Helms Deep crept cautiously up from the safety of the caves below. Never had a battle been over with so soon in the history of Rohan. Had the men surrendered due to the massive threat that had come to slay them? They couldn't have won the battle so soon.

When they exited the doors, the men were still there, and no fearsome creatures met them. The guards that swore an oath that no one would pass them while they still lived, were still standing beside the door. *Alive and apparently well.*

It also appeared that no enemy managed to even find their way down to the door to the caves. There were no scars or signs of a scuffle on the walls that were not there beforehand. The women looked at the guards with a mixture of slight worry and amazingly, relief.

“Did the enemy fail to show their cowardly faces?” asked Eowyn to the guard.

“No my lady, they came, and they fell.” said the guard.

“What? How?” asked Eowyn in awe. “There was to be over ten thousand Uruk-Hais coming, how is the battle over?”

“It was the youth, the youth with Lord Aragorn. He wields great power….power I had never seen before.” said the guard gripping his spear tightly.

“What had happened?” asked a younger girl standing beside Lady Eowyn.

“Storms, he summoned fierce storms. Great bolts of lightning came down and smote the enemy as if they were nothing but ants in the dirt. And then, believe it or not my lady, a mass of swirling wind picked up whatever was left and they were impaled on their own weapons. “ said the guard, his hands beginning to shake. “This was no battle, it was as if it were a trap for *them.*”

Lady Eowyn and the younger girls looked at the guard with shocked looks on their faces, and a few of the girls had excitement shimmering in their eyes.
The women and children walked swiftly out to find their fathers, husbands and sons, to reassure themselves that they were alright. Most of the mothers were relieved, their young sons were unharmed and in relative good spirits. They were eagerly talking about the storms of the night before and watching two figures healing the few warriors that were injured.

There was a large crowd surrounding the wounded lying on the ground. Some were seriously in need of healing, but others, cuts, abrasions and minor bleeding and breaks were all that had cursed the warriors, both men and elves.

Eowyn and a few younger girls pushed their way gently through the crowd and saw what had transfixed the gaze of the children and a few of the men standing around. Aragorn and Harry were both administering to the unfortunate soldiers that were delivered hefty blows by the enemy. Aragorn was wrapping the lighter wounds of some of the elves and men, while Harry dealt with the more serious cases. It wasn’t because he was more skilled in healing than Aragorn was, he didn’t have a glimmer of the expertise the Ranger did, but it was the stone that he held caused the more seriously injured warriors to come to him.

Harry had divulged that the turquoise stone had the ability to heal, but Aragorn said that if Harry was going to use the stones, then he should use it on the more mortally wounded soldiers. Harry found this stone to be a bit more energy consuming than any other. With each massive wound that he healed, it felt as if his energy were being siphoned out of his body.

There were some that were too far gone and Strider had to pull Harry away from them to work on some of the others that could be saved.

The crowd only saw the lad what seemed to be holding a handful of light and as he touched the gravely wounded warriors with the light, they were miraculously healed. They were unaware of the stones that he was using, for they could not see them.

Harry touched each fallen soldier with the turquoise stone, he could feel himself growing more and more exhausted with each passing wound that needed immediate attention and healing on a much larger scale than what Aragorn could do. Harry handled only the almost mortal wounds, the other wounds were handled with Aragorn’s masterful care. Unlike all the other stones, this gem used up all his strength.

“Harry, don’t over exert yourself.” said Aragorn from behind him. “If you’re getting worn, take a rest.” He noticed that his charge was looking worn and weary from continuous use of the stone. This stone, though wondrous and a gift of mercy, it wore the youth down quite easily. Far too easily.

“I’m almost done here, he was the last one.” said Harry as he stood up and arched his back, crackling it slightly.

“If you’re done, go and rest, I can finish up here.” said Aragorn tending to an elf’s broken arm. He was amazed at the power of the new stone the boy had acquired from the king. True they had lost some valiant warriors, but their losses were not nearly as great as that of Saruman’s. Saruman’s army loss all of their pathetic lives, but the men of Rohan, and the elves of Lothlorien were spared from too many casualties. But the cost was now becoming too great, what good was healing wounds, if the healer were to become too weak to perform his arts?

“Go lay down upon that straw pile, least until I’m done here.” said Strider. “The King’s resting in his own chambers, so you’ve been…”

“Kicked out…I know, I’ll take resting anywhere right now.” said Harry with a smile. He walked
over to the large haystack that stood beside the horse stable and collapsed heavily into it, he was soon covered with straw that had flown up as he fell down.

Strider could barely suppress a smile. That youth was so quick to please everyone around him….remarkable for a young man to be. Once he had finished tending to the broken bone, he made to grab a blanket toss it over the boy, but…a few people had beaten him to the quick. Several young girls were sitting around the lad, tucking the blanket in and whispering softly, so as to not disturb the sleeping young man.

“Oh, dear…” said Strider with a suppressed smile. “I fear this won’t end well.”

Haldir, on Strider’s borrowed horse, rode as swiftly as he could back to Lothlorien, whispering ancient elvish words that sped the horse along faster than any master had it go before. He had to go speak to Lord Celeborn, the boy…the power he wielded, was the power becoming too much for him?

What the boy did not see, was that the boy’s hair was beginning to fade. It was once a lustrous black as dark as the night sky, but now, his hair was slowly turning paler and paler. The boy’s skin was also becoming to tight to his bones. The weight and muscle he had carried with him, was quickly fading fast. And it was all down to that new stone the boy had said he had found.

The boy needed the rest of Lothlorien, or at least the gentle hand and soothing words of Lord Celeborn. He smiled as the swift horse bore him into the Golden Wood, the woods held a new feeling, once of forgotten times, Lord Glorfindel was back in the Wood.

The Order gathered in the kitchen of Grimmauld Place, both Hagrid and Sirius sat in on the meeting, while the children sat and watched over Harry for the short time period they would be gone. Dumbledore had to coax the both of them gently to come down and join the meeting.

Snape was speaking softly of the newest development with the Death Eaters and their lack of a real leader that had some sanity.

“Bella has killed someone almost every day, whether they be friend or foe. She’s taken to killing the first person that offered a notion that hadn’t originated from her. She’s completely lost her mind.” said Snape slowly.

“She’s that attached to You-Know-Who?” asked Mrs. Weasley worriedly.

“No…it isn’t her loyalty that has made her this way, it was the power that went with him leaving. She was his favorite torturer, but his second in command was always Lucius. He had the plans…not as efficient as the Dark Lord, but his plans were…adequate.” said Snape.

“So…she’s going insane?” said Sirius.

“To put it in the most simplest terms.” said Snape with a sneer. “Yes.”

Dumbledore only folded his hands over his lap…Bella’s questionable sanity wasn’t anything new.
Why did Severus call this emergency meeting?

“What is so urgent that you called us here then?” asked Bill. “Bella going mad isn’t that new.”

“It is urgent to call you here, because there is a plot to kill Bellatrix Lestrange.” said Snape.

“By who?” asked Hagrid as he drank from his goblet deeply.

“By her fellow Death Eaters.” said Snape.

Members of the Order were sprayed with the wine that Hagrid had been drinking.

“Say what?’ said Remus wiping his face with his handkerchief. “Her comrades want to kill her?”

“To save their own skins.” said Snape.

“How would they go about this?” asked Mr. Wealsey.

“They’re leaning towards poison.” said Snape. “Though the only suitable poison is that of a basilisk.”

“Good luck wi’ that.” said Hagrid wiping his mouth on his sleeve. “They ain’t the friendliest creatures.”

“There aren’t any around to be found nearby anyway.” said Remus. “Is there?”

“The nearest one, would have been in Hogwarts, but the place where the basilisk lies, is where I cannot go…not without Potter’s help.” said Snape.

“Ho-Hogwarts?” said Remus in a frightened whisper.

“Why would you need Harry’s help to find a basilisk, he doesn’t even know where one is.” said Sirius worriedly.

“Uh…” said Hagrid shiftily.

“Well…” said Mr. Weasley.

The next hour was thick with silence as Dumbledore told the people there about the year of the Heir of Slytherin and the monster within the Chamber of Secrets. Sirius and Remus in particular turned paler and paler. Remus hadn’t heard of what had happened the year prior to him teaching.

“My god, what the hell was he doing down there?” moaned Sirius as he buried his face in his hands.

“Trying to play hero.” sneered Snape.

“Well, thank Merlin he went down, I would have lost my daughter!” said Mrs. Weasley her eyes dripping with tears.

“So what are you going to do?” asked Dumbledore. “How will you attempt this? Not that I condone murder, but…”

“You could always transfigure someone into a snake, have them open the door and then go down.” said Remus.
“That is an idea.” muttered Snape.

Dumbledore thought quietly to himself, it had been so long since Harry had been taken ill with unwaking sleep. How can he help him? He didn’t want to just sit there and let the boy lie in his hopefully undisturbed state. Sirius had reported that whereas Harry was once gaining weight and getting taller with longer hair and more pronounced muscles, he was losing the weight and looking sickly. He had ill feelings and King Meandenbor had not been to see him lately…which made him feel uneasy.

King Meandenbor would stop in from time to time as of late and talk to him, reassure him that the boy was fine, but lately…he hadn’t been around.

Something was wrong.

Harry stretched his thin frame, and yawned largely. He blinked his eyes open and saw a barrage of girls standing over him and smiling wide. He sat up quickly and jumped up off the haystack he had been sleeping on.

They stood up right behind and crowded around him, holding onto his arms.

“Uh…can I help you?” said Harry trying to wrench his arms away from them; he wasn’t too sure what they were playing at. But he recognized the glint in their eyes; they were looking at him the same way that the girls at Hogwarts looked at Cedric and Viktor last year.

They began to beg him to tell them how he defeated the whole army and his travels along the way. Some ran and grabbed a hold of fruit and vegetables and tried bribing him with food to look at them, and others grabbed jugs of wine.

“Uh…listen…I…uh…” said Harry trying to back away from all of them. They were getting a bit too close and too clingy for his liking. The moment they took a step towards him, he fled to the wall, with the girls giggling close behind.

“I told you this would happen.” said Strider in a whisper to Legolas and Gimli.

“So much for bravery.” said Gimli with a chuckle.

“Have you seen some of those young girls?” said Legolas chuckling along with him.

“We should really help him.” said Strider.

“In a moment…” said Gimli chuckling as Harry wrenched his foot out of a young girl's grasp.

“Let him be, he came between us to find out who killed the most.” said Legolas.

“I still would have won.” said Gimli smugly.

“We shall never know, shall we? How is the boy so energetic so quickly after rising?” asked Legolas as Harry clambered up the side of a stable.

“I can only hope his strength holds out.” said Strider watching with an amused smile.

King Theoden then walked up behind the three comrades, and watched the boy along with them.
“The young women seem to be taken with the lad.” said King with a smile. “It is no surprise, they do favor heroes.”

“Why are they so excited?” asked Gimli.

“It's not often a hero is so close to their age, and a few of them are getting to the age that they are to be married.” said Theoden.

“It is thanks to him we suffered so little damage, but I fear that somewhere along the line, he will fall to greater wounds than even I may be able to heal.” said Strider somberly. “I don’t want to lose him; I wish he could return to Lothlorien, he would be safe there.”

“Haldir should return any day, he will bring Lord Celeborn and Lord Glorfindel with him and perhaps they will convince him to return to the safety of the wood.”

“Perhaps we should tell him he could escape our daughters’ clutches by leaving for the Elven realm.” said the chief guard with a laugh.
For the next few days, Harry hid in what would have been recognized as fear from the girls that stalked his every move. For some reason, they wouldn’t leave him alone, and if that wasn’t bad enough, the boys his age wouldn’t leave him alone either.

The boys were more than slightly steamed, they were already competing against each other for the a few of the girls in the pack trailing the lighting scarred youth, and now they had to compete another young man with more power in his finger than they all had in their bodies put together.

How were they supposed to compete with a man who could disarm a man like what he did back in Edoras and who could conjure up storms like he did to thwart the Uruk-Hais? The only slight comfort they had was that the man didn’t seem all that eager to accept the adoration of the ladies. What sort of male was he? He should be reveling in the attention he was getting…was he too high and mighty for the girls of their country? How dare he?

They would have to defend their ladies’ honor…kicking this stranger out of Rohan seemed adequate enough.

Harry sighed heavily. He was hiding in a large haystack besides the stable, hoping with all his might that the girls that seemed to dog his every step and the boys that seemed to leap out of nowhere and proceed to chase him towards the gates of the keep wouldn’t find him. Both groups had been sent scattering with a wave of Gandalf’s staff or the stern words of their parents or the King.

It was starting to get hot under all that hay and straw, but he would rather deal with the heat from his surroundings than taking it from the people chasing him about. Suddenly, he felt something pulling on the back of his head.

“Ow…what the…Will-O-Wisp! What are you doing? I’m hiding here!” whispered Harry roughly.

“Ah, there you are.” said a voice from behind him.

Will-O-Wisp tugged him further out of the hay and Harry looked up, seeing Lord Celeborn standing above him, in robes of light red and gold with a smile on his face.

“What are you doing here?” asked Harry standing up quickly, all the while trying to tug his hair out of his horse’s mouth. “And how did you find me?”

“Gandalf told us that your horse would be able to find you, and I was asked to come here.” said Lord Celeborn.

“What for?” Harry asked. “Not that I’m not happy to see you.”

“I was told that visiting you would help you.” said Lord Celeborn with a smile. “I also brought someone to meet you.”

He stepped out of the way and another elf stood behind him. He was just as tall as Lord Celeborn, but his hair was even more golden and his face looked even gentler.

“This is Glorfindel, Glorfindel, this is the lad I’ve told you about.” said Lord Celeborn with a smile.
“Come walk with us lad, it’s cooler out here.” said Glorfindel extracting a stray piece of hay out of Harry’s hair.

“Um, I’m trying to…” said Harry pointing towards the close knit group of girls heading their way.

“Fear not, I think their mothers will be come to gather them up soon.” said Glorfindel with a smile.

“Come walk with us.”

Harry released the last of his hair out of the mouth of his mount and walked alongside them.

“How on in the name of the Valar did you defeat the enemy, lad?” asked Lord Celeborn as they walked together outside of Helms Deep, amongst the newly sprung flowers.

“It wasn’t just me.” said Harry softly.

“From what I hear, you were a large part of it.” said Lord Celeborn with a smile. “The storm and swirling wind and all.”

Harry turned pink.

Glorfindel laid his cape down on the ground, then sat himself upon the edge of it, motioning Harry and Celeborn to join him. Harry sat down on the silken cloak slowly, Lord Celeborn sitting beside him.

“Now, with prying eyes and ears away, let’s talk about these jewels of yours.” said Glorfindel.

Harry looked over to Celeborn quickly.

“You can trust him.” said Celeborn gently.

Harry took a deep breath and looked at Glorfindel warily. He was told time and time again not to reveal the nature of the stones to anyone. Though he had told King Theoden of the stones, he wasn’t sure if he should tell anyone else…but if Lord Celeborn trusted him, how bad could it go?

Harry reached behind him and took out the pouch with the stones. He made to open it, but Glorfindel placed a hand on top of his.

“This is what we want to talk to you about.” said Glorfindel softly.

“Huh?” asked Harry.

“It’s your quick turn to these jewels that concerns us.” said Lord Celeborn.

“But…the other night…” said Harry.

“We are not saying you should have sacrificed the men of Rohan…we are only saying you need rely on your personal strengths, not the magical strength of these stones.” said Glorfindel.

“When was the last time you practiced your archery, or your sword skills?” asked Lord Celeborn.

“A few days ago.” said Harry quickly though the words didn't hold any confidence.

“Without using that opal of yours.” said Celeborn with a smile.

“Uh…” said Harry.
“I think, by that response, we have received our answer.” said Glorfindel with a smile.

Harry turned pink again.

“I will ask Strider to take up the lessons again, if he has the time, and I will oversee your archery lessons once more.” said Lord Celeborn.

*Listen to them lad.* said that voice coming from the sword on Harry’s hip.

“Long time no hear.” thought Harry with a smile.

“So…lad…will you strengthen yourself, or rely on magic completely.” said Glorfindel.

*It would not hurt to perfect your skills without the aid of those stones.*” said the voice.

Harry cringed slightly. Had he really disregarded everything else in favor of these stones of apparently endless power. Perhaps taking up the sword again was the best thing right now, especially if they were hoping to bring back Saruman from his tower as prisoner.

“There is another option…” said Lord Celeborn, a hopeful tone in his voice. “You do not need to fight.”

Harry looked down. *No, he can’t be offering that again. It took me all night to decide to go with Strider and them!*

Lord Celeborn noticed how uncomfortable the boy was and decided quickly to change the subject. “Was the attention you were receiving so great that you needed to hide in that haystack?”

Harry turned even redder. “I…they won’t stop following me.”

Glorfindel and Celeborn shared a smile.

“You have to accept that by doing what you did during the battle, you will revered by many, and even infuriate a few.” said Glorfindel.

Harry shifted uneasily.

“Fear not, soon they will calm themselves and you will be left alone.” said Glorfindel.

Lord Celeborn took ahold of a wildflower waving slightly in the breeze and plucked it gently. “It has been a long time since this meadow has offered any blooms.”

“Yeah, it just sort of happened.” said Harry with a smile.

Lord Celeborn just shook his head. He looked up and saw Gandalf, Gimli, Legolas and Strider come walking over to them swiftly.

“Hail Celeborn and Glorfindel, I wasn’t aware you were both here.” said Gandalf with a smile.

“We had just arrived.” said Glorfindel. “We were having a talk with the King’s chosen one.”

Celeborn turned his head quickly, withholding a groan. Harry looked downcast, his eyes dark.

“Let’s not…discuss that…” said Celeborn quietly.

“Oh…sorry.” said Glorfindel quickly.
“So…what’s on the agenda today?” asked Harry hoping to deter the conversation away from the throne.

“Agenda?” said Gimli.

“Plans…what’s the plans for today.” said Harry.

“We are riding to Isengard, to speak with Saruman.” said Legolas. “And then to go and find Merry and Pippin.”

“Can I go with?” asked Harry eagerly.

Everyone else looked uncertain.

“I don’t believe that will be advisable. Saruman is on the side of Sauron, he will want those stones.” said Gandalf gently. “And though he has been defeated, he is still a force to be reckoned with.”

“He won’t know anything about them if I don’t show them to him, will it?” said Harry earnestly. “I’ll just be another rider!”

Lord Celeborn and Lord Glorfindel exchanged worried looks.

“I’ll be careful! I won’t ride in the front, I’ll ride in the middle so he won’t see me.” said Harry trying to convince them to let him go with. He’d rather ride with them than stay behind and keep running away from the girls.

They looked around at each other slowly.

“Alright, but you have to promise to be careful.” said Strider firmly.

“I promise!” said Harry.

Snape stood beside the gates of Hogwarts, he had regrettably agreed to letting in a Death Eater (With permission from Dumbledore) to go down and get a fang from the carcass of the basilisk. He wished he hadn’t mentioned that Potter had defeated a basilisk in the school. If this foolish mission ended with the injury, kidnapping or death of a student of any house, he’d never forgive himself.

He may not be fond of most of the dunderheads in this school, but it was his duty to take care of the students, and make sure no real harm befell them and a Death Eater would cause real harm.

He had sent Filch off on his rounds back at the castle, thankfully he didn’t have to worry about Hagrid coming out and seeing him with the enemy…in his fury, Snape didn’t think he’d survive ten seconds, even with magic.

He looked outside the gate and saw a dark figure approaching him.

“Severus, it’s me.” said the voice huskily.

“Cast your Patronus.” said Snape sternly.

“But…that’ll alert them to our presence.” said the voice in a confused tone.
“Fool, how am I to know if you are really you, cast a Patronus!” snapped Snape.

The man behind the gate grumbled and casted the charm, out of the end of the person’s wand came a large frilled lizard.

“Alright Carmichael. You will appreciate how I had to make sure.” said Snape smoothly. “I would rather not have Bella learn of this.”

“Me either.” said Carmicheal quickly.

Snape led him up to the castle and before they set foot in the doors, he cast a Dissillusion charm on his companion for safety reasons.

“Do not cast any spells, do not speak and do not attract attention by crashing into anything. Be silent and stay behind me.” said Snape.

“Is Potter here? We could take…” said Carmicheal eagerly.

“Potter is not here, and we have more pressing matters, now get a move on.” said Snape shortly.

He led the way to the bathroom that Weasley had told him where the Chamber of Secrets was hidden. He had interrogated the boy for over four hours to find out everything he could about the layout of the Chamber, though…he soon discovered the boy hadn’t been with Potter the entire time and could only give him half of the layout.

They entered the girl’s restroom stealthily and inspected the taps, until they found the one tap with the etching of a snake on the side of its metal finish.

“Never been in a girl's loo before...bit nicer than ours...” said Carmichael looking around

Snape rolled his eyes as he inspected the taps.

“Here we are.” said Snape quietly.

“How do we open it?” asked Carmichael nervously.

“Like this.” said Snape. He waved his wand and instantly the Death Eater was turned into a harmless garter snake. “Now you open the chamber.”

The snake looked up at Snape but made a slight hissing noise, the chamber made itself open. He turned the Death Eater back into his rightful form.

“You first.” said Snape shoving the man down the chute. Before the man could resist or refuse he fell down the dark hole. A slight jolt in the back of his head came unbidden to him, Potter and Weasley went down this pit willingly? He sat down on the edge of the chute and fell silently through.

He came to the bottom softly, casting a slowing charm on himself. When he saw the man sprawled on the skeletal remains of long time gone vermin and fish he could hardly suppress a sneer.

“What were you good at during school?” said Snape with a smirk.

“Herbology.” said Carmichael hotly getting to his feet.

“That will do us no good here, what made you come?” said Snape walking ahead of the man, not waiting for him to get back on his feet.
“Drew the short straw.” said Carmichael.

“Lucky me.” said Snape rolling his eyes.

They walked quickly onward, but stopped when a staggering sight met their eyes. It was the giant snakeskin that Weasley warned him about. This beast was *that* big, and they still continued on? Draco would have huddled in the corner and began to have a panic attack if he had seen the discarded skin of this creature, thinking it was real.

“Holy…” said Carmichael in a whisper. “We got to fight something this big?”

“Idiot, the basilisk is dead.” said Snape sharply. “It’s been dead for over three years.”

“Just grab a fang and let’s get out of here.” said Carmichael nervously.

Snape groaned. “When a snake shed’s its skin, it doesn’t get rid of its fangs as well. We will need to go to the actual carcass to get what we need.”

They continued further on, until they reached the end of the tunnel, where a large snake decorated door blocked their way.

“Can we transfigure you?” asked Carmichael eagerly.

“I’d rather not be stuck as a snake my entire life.” said Snape lifted his wand once again.

“I’d turn you back!” said Carmichael quickly.

“You couldn’t even slow yourself down on the way here, don’t blame me if I have no confidence in your abilities.” drawled Snape as he transfigured the Death Eater once again into a serpent.

The Death Eater once again opened the door for them and looked up to Snape as he stepped through the door with held onto the serpent.

“I’ll change you back when I get down on the ground, there is not enough room on this ledge for the both of us.” He looked down at the dust beside the door and saw two pairs of footprints. The smaller one was the Weasley girl when she was younger. The other had to be Potter’s.

He wanted to reach down and marvel at the footprint that was still perfectly preserved in the dust, but he couldn’t do that, not with his hapless comrade with him. He climbed down the small ladder that was there and when he touched bottom, he turned the Death Eater back to normal.

“We sure the thing is dead?” asked Carmichael timidly.

“Potter came out alive, he wouldn’t have done so if it wasn’t.” said Snape calmly.

They continued down to the end of the chamber, where they marveled at the large statue of Salazar Slytherin, but stood in horror at the size of the skeletal remains of the basilisk.

“Potter…defeated this? In his *second* year?” said Carmichael, prepared to faint at any moment.

“That’s right, now let’s get this *pleasant* evening over with and get the fang.” said Snape walking slowly towards the carcass and taking his wand out once more.

“Just think…we’ll be rid of her!” said Carmichael eagerly, “And if there is any left, we can take care of Potter as well!”
“He had already been poisoned and healed from the bite of this creature, he will be immune against it.” said Snape in a bored voice. “If you want to poison him with basilisk venom, you’ll have to find another basilisk.”

Carmichael flinched. “Uh..we’ll find another way.”

“That’s what I thought.” said Snape with a sneer.

Once they had taken the fang, Snape took a stone off the floor and waved his wand over it.

“Taking a Portkey should be quicker than going back the way we came.” said Snape. “I would rather cut this visit of yours off.”

“Thanks, I didn’t want to be turned into a snake again.” said Carmichael with a sigh of relief.

“Here’s the fang, take it back to Lucius, he’ll take care of hiding it for now.” said Snape.

“Aren’t you coming?” asked Carmichael curiously.

“I have papers to grade, and I can apparate on school grounds, being a teacher.” Snape explained. “Now go.” he said shoving the man towards the rock.

The moment the man was gone, a burst of flames appeared at one end of the Chamber of Secrets, a brilliant gold and red phoenix flew up to him and burst into flames, causing Snape and he to disappear completely.

The phoenix deposited him in Dumbledore’s office, with the old man sitting on the other side of the desk calmly sipping a cup of tea.

“How did it go?” asked Dumbledore. “Did you get what you needed to get?”

“The person they paired me with was an idiot.” said Snape in a bored voice.
Harry rode alongside Haldir as they rode swiftly off to Isengard. Lord Celeborn and Lord Glorfindel had opted to stay behind, they had a long journey and wished to rest for a while and also to not draw attention to themselves by going to Isengard. They tried one last time to convince Harry to stay behind with them, but Harry was adament, he wanted to go to see the reclusive White Wizard of Isengard.

"What was he like, before he switched teams?" asked Harry as they rode to the vanquished White Wizard's home.

"Teams?" asked Haldir.

"Uh..before he joined Saruon." said Harry quickly.

"He was a powerful wizard, and a valuable counsel for many a leader in Middle Earth. He's headed the order of Wizards since the beginning, and he was a born leader." said Haldir.

"What did King Meandenbor think of him?" asked Harry.

Haldir looked at Harry in shock. It wasn't often that Harry would bring up the King lately, preferring to avoid that topic.

"If I remember correctly, he was not overly fond of Saruman like he was of Gandalf and Radagast. He preferred their company to their superior, and I believe Saruman might have been jealous because of it." said Haldir.

"Jealous?" asked Harry.

"Meandenbor was the absolute power in this world, no one knew where he came from, but his power could not be denied. He would try and get into King Meandenbor's confidences, but he wouldn't be allowed to learn any more of him than what he was given. Gandalf and Radagast would learn all that King Meandenbor had known, all his magic, all his history, but not the White Wizard. He was not impressed, most would go to him and bear their souls to him, but not the most powerful man Middle Earth had ever seen." said Haldir.

"Which is why Lord Celeborn and Glorfindel are so set on you not using the stones too much. Word will spread, and then there will be no force in Middle Earth to protect you and the stones." said Haldir looking over to Harry. "Now that people have seen, it will only become harder."

"I understand." said Harry. "I'm willing to do what I have to."

"How far will that be? You won't take the crown, is that your limit?" asked Haldir.

Harry looked down. He was still refusing the take the throne, he didn't want it and he was still holding out for not having to take it.

The small army rode onward, getting closer and closer to the giant tower that stood out amongst the clouds and the ridge of hills. Strider fell back in the ranks quickly and rode beside Harry and Haldir.
"Stay back with Haldir if a battle ensues, don't use the stones so close to him." said Aragorn softly.

"Alright." said Harry solemnly.

"And if it goes wrong, if there is an ambush...get him out of here." said Aragorn quietly to Haldir.

They galloped ever closer to the tower of Isengard until an amazing scene met their eyes.

From what he had heard of Isengard, Harry expected a large park, trees lining the roads to the tower, but this...was a war zone turned into a swamp. From the tall hill they stood on, they could just make out the deep chasms that were under all the water and darkened star shape that made up the roads and paths that used to be.

The other thing that attracted his attention and made his jaw drop, was the large trees walking around. They were lugging the large pieces of wood around, setting them aside and throwing rocks and earth down into the holes to fill them up.

“It seems that the battle here was over before we even left Helms Deep.” said King Theoden.

Gimli grudgingly put his axe away.

They continued riding down the road, keeping an eye out for any stray orcs or Uruk-hais lurking around, waiting for the best moment to ambush any unsuspecting traveling. However it wasn’t the enemy that was waiting for them at the newly crushed gates of Isengard, but two hobbits.

Harry could see Merry and Pippin blowing smoke rings on the rocks that look as if they had been tossed there, drinking wine and chewing on bits of white meat. He had been worrying and fretting over them for how long...and here they were having a good time, as if they were on a picnic. He was going to let them have it if they ever let him catch them.

“Welcome my lords!” said Merry standing up and throwing his arms out wide. “To Isengard.”

Harry could hardly believe what he was seeing, they were fine...they were absolutely fine...he was going to kill them.

Apparently not before Gimli took after them, he shouted at them from his and Legolas’ horse and berated them for leading them on a several day journey.

Aragorn looked up at the hobbits and shook his head. So innocent...sort of like someone else I know. He looked back and saw Harry scowling up at the two hobbits and just about laughed out loud. I hope our other two hobbits are doing just as well.

They traveled inside the gates of Isengard with the two hobbits riding along with them, and cantered up to the giant tree herder Treebeard. He was shoving a few pieces of timber onto a large pile beside the great tower.

“Gandalf.” said Treebeard in a wheezy voice.

“Treebeard, how are you?” asked Gandalf with a smile, as if he knew exactly what had happened and what was currently going on with the once green land of Isengard.

“We are washing away the filth of Isengard, but Gandalf, there is a wizard to manage here.” said Treebeard.

As the rear of the troupe entered Isengard, Harry noticed two different things, he could hear the
same familiar music that led him to each stone he had gathered so far. The other thing Harry could feel was a pulsing coming from the pouch on his hip again. He opened his pouch and the emerald was once again getting excited just like it had in Fangorn. Then he took out the compass that had been quietly collecting dust in his pack, it was pointing straight at the giant talking tree. Harry looked up at Treebeard, only way to find out…

“I know I promised…but…” said Harry. He stepped down off his horse and walked up to beside Gandalf.

“Harry!” hissed Haldir.

Gandalf looked down; a look of shock on his face, then a look that told him to climb back on his horse and get in the back. But Harry ignored him.

“Uh…Treebeard sir…?” asked Harry up to the giant treeherder.

“Harry, what are you doing?” whispered Aragorn looking around expecting someone to come and snatch up the youth.

“I just want to ask him something.” said Harry quietly.

The pulsing and the melody of the hidden stone grew louder as he approached Treebeard.

Treebeard felt something stir within him as the boy that jumped off his horse came closer, something that made him think of old times, green and lush forests and the Entwives living with them once again.

This boy…could he be the reason he was feeling something that he hadn’t in so long? He bent his knees just as far as he could, and picked the boy up when he walked up to him. The boy looked a little nervous about being in his grasp, but Treebeard didn’t grip too tightly, as a show of no ill will. However, the moment he touched the boy, he found his limbs renewed with energy and life. His branches and leaves became a brighter green and he even grew an extra few feet.

He held this little human tenderly, something about him was giving him strength he had long lost, he was unsure how, but regardless, this little one was doing it.

Gandalf, Haldir, Gimli, Legolas, and Strider could hardly believe their eyes, Treebeard was growing younger as they stood there. Gandalf shook his head, for wanting to keep the stones and their powers a secret, they weren’t doing a very good job.

“Gandalf, my old friend!” said a voice coming high in the tower.

They all looked up and there Saruman, a little disheveled looking, but acting as if nothing had happened, as if he had not lost the battle of Helm’s Deep with much humiliation.

“Gandalf, Theoden, my old comrades, I have dearly missed you both. Come up, we have much to discuss.” said Saruman silkily.

“He has to be kidding, we just whupped his ass.” said Harry shortly.

“You speak strangely little one.” said Treebeard looking down at the strange human in his hand.
“Treebeard, get him away from here, we cannot let Saruman have him.” said Gandalf as quietly as he could.

“Who do you not want me to see Gandalf?” said Saruman his voice sharp. “I see the heir of Isilidur, and those blasted half-lings, what else is there I should see?”

“You’re finished, Saruman, there is nothing more you can hope to do. Your power is gone, your minions defeated, all you have is the venom of your words.” said Gandalf loudly as Treebeard walked slowly away with Harry. He was sure that he had avoided disaster with having Treebeard take Harry away, but what he hadn’t noticed was Harry climbing up Treebeard’s body and standing on his shoulder, stretching his arm out to reach something.

Harry saw something that made his heart stop completely. On two of Treebeard’s branches, there were two glinting stones, stuck in the bark of Treebeard’s head.

He had to get to them.

He was just reaching for the second on, already a stunningly beautiful sapphire in his hand. He never saw it coming….

Gandalf, Strider, King Theoden, Haldir, Merry and Pippin, Gimli and Legolas stared in horror as an arrow embedded itself in his shoulder and threw him from the side of Treebeard’s head. Treebeard couldn’t move quick enough to catch him, Harry fell right into the deep water. They jumped off their horses, and Legolas positioned an arrow and let it loose through the door where the arrow came from.

Treebeard reached down into the water and pulled the small form out of the water. As he lifted the boy out of the water, the water trickled out of his wooden hands, and left the boy behind in the giant’s hand. He was unconscious, and he wasn’t moving.

Strider hurried over to the figure and inspected him, the arrow didn’t pierce his heart but it did go through his shoulder. He began to cough up the water he had taken into his lungs in his brief stay in the water. He was still out cold but it was only because he knocked his head on the underwater ground. Blood and water began to flow through Treebeard’s fingers.

He used his knife to cut the arrowhead off the end of the arrow, and pulled the shaft out of the front of Harry’s shoulder. “He’ll be alright, he’s just unconscious.” said Strider with relief on his face. “And the wound should be able to heal.”

“Seems you all are fond of that boy, so much so that your elf friend killed Wormtail with his arrows.” said Saruman with a sneer.

Treebeard reached over into the water and pulled out a large stone and tossed it heavily into the side of the tower, to punish the wizard inside. The entire tower shook and several pieces of the tower and it’s contents fell into the water.

Aragorn turned to glare at the wizard in the shaking tower, but he stopped when he saw a glinting in Treebeard’s upper branches as he continued to face Saruman. A stone, that’s what Harry was most likely after! He climbed nimbly up the arm of the treeherder, and reached for the stone, a glinting beryl stone. He leapt down from the great height and landed beside the King of Rohan.

“He found another stone.” he said quietly to Gandalf. “That’s what made him do what he did.”
Gandalf looked down at the unconscious boy. “I wish he’d wait until it were safer, I don’t want to lose him.” He looked up to Saruman with cold fury in his eyes. “Saruman, you don’t know what you’ve done, but I’ll say this. You will never be allowed out of your tower, you will stay in your prison till the end of time!” he then led the people quickly out of Isengard, with instructions to Treebeard to oversee the wizard until other arrangements could be made.

Saruman’s manic smile left his face, and he began to cry out.

“No! Gandalf, my old friend! You cannot leave me! I… I repent! GANDALF!”

The Death Eaters found themselves back in the same clearing. Now that they had the venom, it was time to come up with the plan on how they were going to get Bella to take it.

“Maybe we can slip into her food or drink?” asked Carmichael.

“You kidding? She’s more paranoid about her food and drink than Mad-Eye Moody.” said Macnair.

“Maybe we can stab her with the fang.” said Crabbe thickly.

“You want to get close enough to her?” said Snape with a raised brow.

“Not me.” said Crabbe and Goyle together.

“So what is it we do?” asked Lucius.

“Surely you can come up with an idea, you’ve had them before.” said Snape.

Lucius thought deeply. “I’ve got it.”

Sirius and Hagrid worked feverishly to stop the bleeding in Harry’s shoulder.

“I don’t know how much more of this I can take.” said Sirius frantically. “Where the hell is Severus?”

“He’s not at school, they must have held an emergency Death Eater meeting.” said Remus coming in quickly with an armload of bandages.

“I’ll make him an emergency if he doesn’t get here!” snapped Sirius.

“Will I do, Black?” came a voice from the doorway, he turned and saw Madam Pomfrey.

“Yes, please for Merlin’s sake, can you…” said Sirius.

“Yes, for Merlin’s sake, can you…” said Madam Pomfrey as she dabbed Harry’s wound with a potion, a smile tracing her lips.

“Uh…Sirius?” asked Hagrid looking at the display case in the corner.
“Yeah?” said Sirius rubbing his tired eyes.

“Yeh know that crown thing?” asked Hagrid.

“The one in the display thing, yeah.” said Sirius.

“There’s more jewels on this thing now.” said Hagrid.

Sirius looked up, three more jewels had been added, three more than last time. A turquoise, sapphire, and a beryl were fitted in the hollow spots on the crown, now there was only four holes left to find.

“I hope to whoever is watching, that filling those means he’s able to come back.” said Sirius with a weak smile.
A few days later, Lucius had Snape take the fang and siphon the venom from it, he didn’t need the fang itself, just the venom from within. The fang would only have been cumbersome, and the plan he had in mind was one of finesse. He didn’t need anyone else getting in his way, not like his last plan. It would have gone fine if it weren’t for that damned house-elf!

But now was not the time for plotting revenge against his old servant, he special ordered fine chocolates from Switzerland…they were Bella’s favorite and she had been harping on him to get her some of them, and he was going to oblige. Though, there was going to be an added ingredient she didn’t know about.

When the chocolates arrived, he took a needle and pricked a hole in the bottom of each chocolate and charmed a small bit of the poison into the delicate bonbons. This idea was perfect, she never shared her chocolates with anyone, not even her husband…it would be too easy.

But what if the Dark Lord came back and found her dead like this? That was the thought that plagued him, but then the solution hit him…he could just say that he had planned to kill Dumbledore with these chocolates, and Bella ate them by mistake, yes…he’d buy that. She had done it before after all (before the poison was administered to them) and the old fool was known to be a sweet lover.

He wrapped them up and placed them under his arm, he would nonchalantly give them to Bella…or should he wait till her birthday?…No…she might kill him before that day comes around and then he’d never know if his plan worked…no he’d do it tonight, over their normal fireside time.

He pulled his wife and son aside and warned them not to eat anything that Bella would give them, though he had to give a different reason for his wife, his son was in agreeance with getting rid of his foul aunt.

“She’s in one of her moods dear, you never know what sort of potion or curse is in the things she tries to trick us with.” said Lucius smoothly.

Before dinner, he placed the box of chocolates beside her black chair, (which used to be his, before her jailbreak) and went into the dining room.

Lucius and Narcissia hated this part of the day, for one very particular reason.

Bellatrix had lost any table manners she had before she went into Azkaban. Instead of a spoon to sip the soup from, she’d take the bowl with one hand, pour it down her throat and gnaw on a whole loaf of bread on her own.

Draco, since seeing this for the first time, sat as far away from his aunt as possible and ate quietly, only nodding at the occasional question. Dinner was over only until after Bellatrix would release a loud belch and then announce that the meal was satisfactory, but not worth the china it was put on and then she’d break the plate and glass she would use.

Then they’d be forced to sit with her until the clock would chime ten, just sitting there, looking at each other or the fireplace. She now ruled this house with an iron fist, especially since Voldemort disappeared, but this night, her reign would end.

When she went to go sit in her chair she noticed the box of chocolates.
“Finally, why you didn’t send for them sooner is beyond me!” snarled Bellatrix as she ripped open the box and popped a chocolate caramel in her mouth.

Harry slowly opened his eyelids, he found himself back in King Theoden’s room “Ugh, why do I keep ending up here?” asked Harry as he sat up from the comfortable bed.

“Because you keep doing foolish things.” said Lord Celeborn with a smirk, “Now lay back, you need rest.”

“Wait! Those stones!” said Harry trying to sit up again.

“The two new stones you acquired are safe, Aragorn is once again protecting them.” said Lord Celeborn with Glorfindel’s help pushed Harry back down onto the bed.

“What happened?” asked Harry, his brain feeling a bit muddled.

“You climbed up on a treeherder’s body, put yourself within the sights of Wormtongue and he shot you with an arrow.” said Glorfindel shaking his head. “By the Valar lad, you promised us you’d take care!”

“I…I just saw the stones…” said Harry sheepishly as he laid down in the bed.

“Lad, we could have gotten the stones later, brought Treebeard away from the tower and gotten the stones then.” said Lord Celeborn wearily.

“I…I’m sorry.” said Harry softly.

The Elf lord sighed. “How is it that I cannot stay angry with you? Just rest, we will discuss a suitable punishment for going back on your word later.”

Harry settled back into the pillows and went back to sleep.

The two elf lords left the room and met with the remaining fellowship, Haldir and the King.

“Is he alright?” asked Merry.

“He’ll be alright, now we have to come up with consequence for him for going back on his word to us.” said Glorfindel.

“Make him cook a feast for everyone here!” said Pippin excitedly.

“But he likes cooking.” said Merry.

“Don’t let them know that!” said Pippin covering Merry’s mouth and pointing to the two tall elves. They all chuckled warmly.

“I think making him cook a feast for everyone is a fine idea.” said Gandalf. “It will be a treat for those who had never had his cooking before.”

“Is he the one that made those sticky apples?” asked Glorfindel curiously to Celeborn.

“Yes he was.” said Lord Celeborn with a smile. “Then it is settled, he will make a feast for
Voldemort pulled Anya roughly towards the horse tied outside now with a cart behind them. “Come along my dear,” sneered Voldemort. “we’re going to go meet your lover.”

Anya tried to pull her arm out of the man’s grasp, but to no avail, still she had no intention of going anywhere with this man.

“I’ll escape! I’ll warn him!” threatened Anya.

Voldemort sneered and reached up and squeezed the stone that he had put on a bit of string. Then several spears, swords and axes flew out of the back of the cart and impaled themselves in the nearby tree. “Just try it.”

Anya looked horrified at the now falling, splintering tree.

He threw her harshly onto the back of the horse and climbed on after her. “Now if you’re a good girl, I’ll let you hold Potter one last time, as he’s taking his last breath.” He smiled viciously as she began to sob. “If you’re not, I’ll rip him limp from limb as you watch.”

They traveled down to where Voldemort knew from the old map in the fortress that there was a ruined city beside the land of his dark benefactor. He couldn’t exactly go to the bigger city near there, not if Anya began screaming and shouting that he was in league with the Dark Lord of their realm.

He’d stay there for a while, and perhaps, Potter will stumble towards him. Unaware of his presence, and then he’ll have him!

He spurred his horse onward, and they began their journey south.

Despite several nightmares, Harry had slept the rest of the day away and well into the next, he didn’t stir until Merry and Pippin woke him up and told him to come down to the courtyard.

Harry groaned and sat up. He had had nightmares before, but they were never like this.

He dreamed that he was chasing after the stones set inside a golden crown, he didn’t need anyone to tell him whose crown that was. He didn’t want it, but he just couldn’t stop himself from going after it. He then he saw one of the stones disappear and then reappeared behind him.

He gazed at it, and then he saw a pair of fiery red eyes and suddenly a bunch of sharp weapons began to chase him and cut at him if as they got too close to the stone. He continued running, towards the crown, hoping to get away or at least get at the diamond so he could transform into something that ran faster than he did.

Then he noticed the pearl that was on the crown disappeared as well and hovered above a large city made of white stone. He looked back at the weapons and saw a dark hooded figure with the same eyes, red and slitted like a snake, with...Anya in his arms, she was screaming at him to get away, to save himself. But he had to turn, he had to fight and save Anya, however, the moment he stopped, the blades impaled in him and as he fell back, blood pouring from his body. As he fell, he noticed
the spears and swords flew towards the city. The pearl glowed brightly and then in the light, the weapons fell back as if they struck an invisible wall. The pearl was protecting the city.

“Are you alright?” asked Merry.

“Yeah, just…bad dream…” said Harry shivering slightly.

Pippin and Merry exchanged looks. “Maybe you should stay in bed.”

“And have that dream again? No thanks.” said Harry standing up slowly. “What do they want down in the courtyard?” asked Harry.

“It’s a surprise!” said Pippin.

“After what happened the other day? It won’t be a good surprise.” said Harry tiredly.

When they got down to the courtyard and Harry saw the surprise, and it wasn’t what he expected. He saw a large recently slaughtered pig, a dozen chickens and a stag strung up with a large cooking fire with a pot set beside it.

“You get to cook the feast for all these warriors.” said Lord Celeborn coming up behind him and laying a hand on his shoulder.

Harry looked at the dead animals. “Uh…I’m not a butcher.” said Harry “I’m not good at…”

“Someone else will carve up the meat, you just work with it after that.” said Glorfindel.

Harry ran his hand down his face tiredly.

“Are you alright, lad?” asked Celeborn.

“I had a nightmare.” said Harry, “Nothing major.”

Lord Celeborn raised his eyebrow in confusion.

“Uh…it’s no problem.”

“What was the dream about?” asked Glorfindel.

Harry told them about his nightmare.

“Any ideas what it means?”

“A warning perhaps, that one of the stones may be used against you, and that city of white stone…” said Glorfindel.

“Minas Tirith, the King’s pearl must be there somewhere. It is the perfect stone to hide within the white walls.” said Celeborn.

“So I have to go to Minas Tirith next? But what about the part with Anya?” asked Harry.

“I am not sure.” said Glorfindel sadly.

“Those eyes though…” said Harry.

“Obviously signifying the Dark Lord, Saruon.” said Celeborn.
“Doesn’t he just have the one eye? Though…I know of someone else with eyes like that.” said Harry quietly. “But he can’t be here…can he?”

“Your Dark Lord?” said Lord Celeborn.

Harry nodded. “And if…what if he has a jewel? What if that’s what the nightmare was trying to tell me? And if I face Voldemort when he has that stone…it’ll only kill me….I need that pearl…it stopped the weapons from getting too close….I need to go to Minas Tirith, now!” he turned and prepared to sprint towards the stable.

“Lad! Wait!” said Lord Celeborn taking ahold of Harry’s tunic. “You do not know the way.” he pulled the boy back.

“I can follow this!” said Harry taking out the compass.

“Lad…that may well lead you to Minas Tirith, or it may lead you to your Dark Lord.” said Glorfindel. “You need a guide; Gandalf will take you there tonight.”

“But…” said Harry.

“Tonight, that way, no one will know you left.” said Glorfindel.

“But…” said Harry.

“No more discussion, Gandalf will need to pack, and we want to see you off properly. It will be some time till we meet again young one.” said Lord Celeborn. “I will not go to the East till the Dark Lord is defeated, and I will not go to the West, till I have no other option. And if that option comes, and all is lost, you will come with me, even if I have to come for you myself. “

Harry looked into the elf-lord’s eyes.

“You do not deserve the pains of this world, and perhaps…in the Undying lands, there is a way for you to return home.” said Lord Celeborn gently.

Bellatrix was lying beside the fireplace, trying to sluggishly reach her wand which fell away from her as she fell to the floor. She looked up to Lucius, who looked down at her, with a nudge of his foot, he sent her wand into the fire.

“You…you…” she said thickly.

Narcissia looked horrified down at her sister, but made no move to go to her side.

“You’ve lost your mind Bella, you were bringing too much attention to us, the Aurors and Order would have swarmed us at any time. You’re a liability, and now…you’re finished. “ said Lucius slowly. “I’m taking over.”

“Th..The Dark…L-Lord w-will ki-kill you.” gasped Bellatrix.

“I am willing to take that chance, I think he will be pleased that I had our best interest as a priority, as opposed to random mindless acts to attract attention.” said Lucius coldly.

Bellatrix raised her hand, to try and claw at her brother-in-law, but her hand fell to the floor, and her world went black, and light never shone there again.
Harry could hardly believe it, the entire night was almost a complete blur and whirl of dancing, cooking, and then shouting by Gandalf. As if having the nightmare of Voldemort earlier wasn’t bad enough, they had to deal with an even closer and deadlier threat. The original plan was for both of the hobbits to stay in Rohan or travel back to Lothlorien with Glorfindel and Lord Celeborn, but that idea went straight to hell.

Apparently, (according to Gimli, Merry and Legolas) before they left Isengard and after Harry got knocked out, Treebeard threw a large stone at the tower, in retaliation for nearly killing the small person that gave him such mysterious strength. It flew hard and fast into the tower, causing the entire structure to shake and almost rock back and forth on it's now crumbling foundation, inside it had knocked loose a large orb and sent it pummeling down to the watery ground below.

Legolas had told Harry that Pippin, with his usually untimely curiosity, had picked it up and tried to examine it after it came down into the water. Gandalf saw this and stopped him with a sharp smack to the back of his head and took possession of the orb.

Unfortunately that didn’t stop the hobbit from pursuing the orb.

Merry had chimed in that after everyone had gone to bed after the feast Harry had helped cook, Pippin tried once again to look at the orb, but this time something decided to look back.

Pippin had peered straight into the orb, and a fiery red eye glared back at him, rendering the small hobbit helpless and writhing in pain. Gandalf and Aragorn had to wrench the sphere out of Pippin’s hands and administered aid to him as the eye still burned madly on the floor. Glorfindel and Lord Celeborn kept out of sight of the eye, but in front of the door just in case Harry were to accidentally enter the room.

Once the hobbit was verified as strong enough to travel, they packed their supplies packs quickly and prepared to leave. Harry still in a daze over the news of what happened last night, was scrambling to get ready to go with Gandalf and Pippin. Merry was to stay behind with Legolas, Strider and Gimli for the time being, for, really, his own safety.

Harry's head was pounding in agony over all this information. That was a lot to occur in such a short night...it was the Mines of Moria all over again.

“Be prepared to come to Gondor, Aragorn, when we need you.” said Gandalf on top of Shadowfax with an arm around Pippin to keep him from falling off (and from slipping away).

Aragorn nodded and looked at both Pippin and Harry. “Be safe you two, and listen to Gandalf.”

“They will, won’t we Harry?” said Pippin chuckling nervously.

Harry nodded. Strider looked at Harry fixedly, grasping his wrist. “Don’t use those stones, not that close to Mordor unless you have dire need of them.”

“And especially not as much as you did here at the Deep.” said Legolas with a small smile.

The four remaining members of the Fellowship watched as three of their company left for Minas Tirith, one in particular was distraught.

“P-Pippin…” said Merry softly.
“Don’t worry Merry, he’ll be alright.” said Gimli.

“We’ve never been apart, we’re as good as brothers…I don’t know what I’m supposed to do now.” said Merry hotly, not angry with Gimli, but angry with Pippin as he rode off, deaf to the rants of his cousin. “Why did he have to go and mess with that thing?”

“You’re talking like Harry again.” said Aragorn with a slight smile.

Merry smiled in spite of himself. “I hope they’ll be okay.”

“Minas Tirith is getting Gandalf and Harry, I would be more worried about the enemy.” said Strider with a smirk though the mirth did not reach his eyes.

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Harry rode alongside Gandalf and Pippin on Will-O-Wisp, her stride easily keeping up with her stallion father. Thoughts came cascading through his mind, whether he liked them to or not. With this destination of Minas Tirith, he would have successfully gone almost all over from Gandalf said the more peaceful and pleasant countries of Middle Earth. This place wasn’t home, but…he would miss it when he left. He would especially the fresh air…the clean water, the organic food, the simple way of living and the people. A small part of him wished that his world could go back to these simpler times.

No pollution, plenty of green life, plenty of food, clean water, and crime wasn’t nearly as bad as it was nowadays back home.

He shook his head, he had to focus on what was going on with him now. Ever since that dream he mentally told himself to keep a constant vigilance, not only on his surroundings, but also keeping his ears working hard, straining to listen for any hint of the song he had followed for many, many months.

He could almost feel it, his journey here was almost over. He was only a few stones away from going home…though….this power was nice…he’d easily take down Voldemort with these jewels, maybe he could borrow them for a bit...

Then a flash of Boromir’s face came to his mind and what he said in Rivendell blasted through his memory. No…he’d take down Voldemort another way, he wouldn’t ask for the stones. Now if they were given to him, no questions asked, then that was another story.

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The Death Eaters gathered in the Dining Room of the Malfoy manor. Most were nervous, being summoned this quickly was never good thing as of late. Bella would start screeching her insane demands and if anyone so much as twitched, she would kill them on the spot and declare them cowards and unworthy of her presence.

She ruled over them with a tyrannical iron fist.

They sat in their assigned seats and waited patiently for the madwoman to throw open the double oak wood doors and slump into the Dark Lord’s chair. They wondered fearfully which one of them would either be tortured or be killed tonight. Hoping desperately it was their neighbor and not themselves.

Suddenly, the doors opened, but Bella did not strut through them, it was Lucius and his wife.
“Greetings, my friends. “ he said smoothly. He took out his wand and levitated the ebony throne like chair back against the wall and summoned a different chair from in the corner. He then sat at the head of the table to the shocked looks of everyone gathered.

“What…what’s going on?” asked a Death Eater nervously.

“What is Bellatrix?” asked another Death Eater.

Lucius looked amongst the few that were in on the plan. “She’s dead.”

They stared in awe. They could scarcely believe it.

“B-But how?” asked a Death Eater quietly.

“She was becoming a liability, she had to be removed. So, for the good of us all, and for the Dark Lord…” said Lucius silkily.

“But how?” repeated the Death Eater.

“The how is not important, the why was for our protection against those who would stop the Dark Lord and his followers, she was an obstacle in that path. Now, until the Dark Lord returns, I will lead you.” said Lucius.

“What about Rodolphus? What will happen when he hears his wife is gone?” said Death Eater with a slight quiver in his voice.

“I already knew about the plan.” said a masked figure coming in the door. “Sorry for being so late.”

“Did you take care of her body?” asked Macnair quietly.

“Yes, I buried her, next to her mother, now down to business, Lucius.” said Rodolphus sitting down.

Years ago, he would have been in deep mourning over the loss of his wife and would have struck Lucius down dead for killing her. But times had changed, and she had changed. She was no longer his wife, his and his alone. She was the Dark Lord's pet, and he had to surrender her to him, and she was ecstatic over it. He could still remember the look on her face when he told her of the Dark Lord's wishes.

She looked as if all her dreams had come true. They never shared a meal together, never slept in the same bed together, or spoke to each other the way lovers should ever again, she was lost to him. He was no longer married to her in almost all aspects, all he was to her...was a vault key and a place to fall back on in the direst emergencies.

“Yes…we are unaware of where the Dark Lord is…” said Lucius.

“Severus said that he was taken away into the fireplace, could it have been the Floo Network?” asked Carmichael.

“This was no Floo travel.” said Snape curtly. “I do not know what it was, but it was something I’ve never seen before.”

“So what do we do?” asked Nott.

“We continue on with the original plan, set down by the Dark Lord before his disappearance. We
try and find Potter’s body and kill it.” said Lucius smoothly. “If we can have Potter’s body before the Dark Lord comes back, and preserve his body for the Dark Lord to destroy on his return…he’ll forget all about Bella.”

The Death Eaters nodded approvingly, Severus’ hands tightened slightly.

“Potter would most likely be in the protection of not just Dumbledore, but Sirius Black as well. My wife and I have an idea where to find him.” said Lucius.

As they neared the gates of the city of Minas Tirith Harry marveled at the size and grandeur of the white city. It was just like in his dream, but how did he know about what the city looked like when he had never been there?

Gandalf slowed down his horse and motioned for Harry to do the same. “I’m going to leave you with a friend of mine in the city, the least people now about you in this city in the better.” said Gandalf quietly. “Pippin and I will keep you updated and let you know of any news we hear.”

Harry nodded and followed them through the gates of Minas Tirith, and then high up on the spiraling roads of the White City, they didn't bother getting off their horses and they traveled quickly through the busy streets. On the middle tier, Gandalf stopped at a small home nestled in amongst the other homes, dismounted and knocked on the door with his staff.

A short man came out of the house with a grumpy look on his face, but then it brightened into a smile. “Gandalf! My old friend! What can I do for you?”

“I need you to house someone for me. This young man here.” said Gandalf gesturing towards Harry with a wave of his staff. “He’s very adept at cooking, so he should be a wonderful addition to your bakery.”

The man looked up at the youth on the horse, he was a little young to be trusted in a bakery. Children these days seemed to only think with their stomachs, and he had to chase off a gang of youngsters almost every morning from his pies and cakes. The boy was handsome though, he'd bring in a few younger female customers...he'd give the lad a chance. If it didn't work out, he'd let Gandalf know.

“Well, I could use the help, despite the war and everything, people still need their daily bread.” said the man looking Harry up and down with scrutiny in his eyes. “You can stable your horse in the back lad, then you can help me with a few loaves of bread before you rest from your long trip.”

Harry sent Pippin and Gandalf one last look and dismounted his horse, then led it into the back. There was a small stable behind the man’s house, with a Dapple Gray pony in the back munching contently on a pail of oats.

So he would have to play baker, huh….that should be fun. But he would still have to find the pearl, before something really bad happened.

“Stay here, Will-O-Wisp, don't go wandering off.” said Harry soothingly to his mare.

“Here you are lad, I need help getting the fire in the kitchen ready.” said the man coming out of the house and taking the boy’s pack with him. “I’ll put this on your bed.”

Harry walked into the man’s house, well…when he grew up, he was going to have one hell of a
resume. Too bad they wouldn't be able to confirm his work history.

Days went creeping by and Harry was still working at the old man’s bakery. It wasn’t anything like the bakeries back home, but he assumed that for this world that this place had to be top notch. They made several different kinds of bread and even a few pies to be delivered to the palace at the topmost tier of the city.

The old man really did need help in running the place, he was getting tired easily and his old bones couldn’t lift the heavy trays of bread anymore. So Harry was finding himself being the front end man and the back end. The elderly man would only take money or barter for the bread that people needed.

Like the old man said, despite the battle going on down on the fields in front of the city, people still wanted bread and food, and the Steward of Gondor was no exception. Harry found him to be his most annoying customer and he had never even met him in person. His guards would demand, not ask, but demand that he set aside the best ingredients for his bread and cakes. Even the old man refused to disagree with the guards that came down with the daily order.

“I wouldn’t want to disappoint the Steward if I were you lad, he hasn’t been the kindest ruler as of late.” said the old man the first morning after the Steward’s order came in.

Harry shook his head and continued to pound the dough with his fist. What sort of ruler was this guy? There was a war going on down below, and he’s ordering sweet bread, and multiple loaves of bread a day? The entire city was going to start running out of food in their reserves and this man wanted to have the best of everything, every single day.

So Harry made a few changes to a few recipes, instead of using most of the sugarcane they had, he used honey and berries to replace the things that they were running out of. The old man was a crafty sort, so crafty that he had transplanted several berry plants to his rooftop garden and even had a few beehives to get honey from. At first when the old man learned of his changes, he was mad, but then he tried the bread and decided with a little work, he could make the bread taste even better.

The old man knew his stuff, and Harry was happy to learn all he could from him and the old man was more than happy to teach him.

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The old man didn’t have any family, his wife had died many years ago without having a child, so he was happy to teach anyone that came around. When Gandalf dropped the boy off, he was a bit skeptical at first, the boy was too young to be trustworthy with the recipes for his bread and pastries, and to run the money taking. He found himself to be in the wrong, this boy was the answer to his prayers. The boy knew his way around a kitchen and was kind enough to help him with his day to day needs that he was sometimes too sore to do.

Though the boy could be a bit headstrong and a bit over excitable when it comes to trying to improve recipes, he was a talented baker and a hard worker. Hopefully, Gandalf didn’t ask to have the boy back.
Harry lifted a piping hot kettle out of the fireplace and placed it on the iron holder beside the teapot with herbs in the bottom. He had a long day and he wanted to just unwind for a moment, compared to traveling, fighting and working at the Prancing Pony, this wasn't stressful, but good lord a few of the people from the higher levels were demanding only the finest and he couldn't give it to them due to the seige. Also, he had been lugging and carrying large pans of freshly baked bread and large, full sacks of flour all over the place and it was beginning to wear him out.

The old man was a good employer and even allowed him a few hours off every day, but he was still worried about the things that went on outside the bakery. A war was going on down on the ground level of the city, and people were almost driving themselves insane with worry. A few of the elderly ladies were appreciative of the consistency of the bakery, not shutting down, even with wartimes on.

People would come up from the lower tiers, just to get a piece of normalcy, something to remind them of better days, and that thing would happen to be bread. Harry had to keep up with the entire city's orders for freshly baked bread, and every day it was just barely getting easier. He would try and get up early just to prep what needed to be prepped, and get a head start, but the head start wasn’t much.

Sometimes he'd have to go and make a few deliveries to some of the elderly folk, their joints aching too much to come up all the way to the bakery, the old man would send Harry out with a dozen or so loaves of bread. Despite the hard times, Harry was making a killing on tips.

The elderly ladies were his biggest tippers, he wasn't sure why, but he was appreciative to them. With that money, he was able to get a blanket for Will-O-Wisp, to make riding her a bit more comfortable.

As he sipped the tea in his cup, he heard a faint knocking on the door.

“Harry! Can we come in?” came Pippin’s voice.

“Sure, hang on...we?” he stood up and walked to open the door for his hobbit friend. He opened the door and saw Gandalf, Pippin and a red bearded man standing behind them.

"Did old Berder finally give you a rest period so we may have a visit and some tea?" said Gandalf coming into the bakery.

"Uh...sure..." said Harry looking at the man standing behind him.

"Ah yes, this, Harry, is Faramir son of Denethor..." said Gandalf.

"The Steward of Gondor, yeah, I've met his dad." said Harry.

"Dad?" said Faramir in a confused voice.

"It's another word for Father where he comes from." quipped Pippin as he eyed the cakes and pies cooling.

"Where do you come from?" asked Faramir. “To use such strange words.”

"Somewhere very far away, and I'm trying to get back." said Harry simply. Faramir looked at him
expectantly, he wanted a bit more information than just that.

"May we have a cup of tea? I've had a very commanding day today." said Gandalf sweeping over to sit down at the table.

"Oh, yeah, I'll get a few more cups." said Harry.

As he gathered more cups and a few small cakes, Pippin helped himself to a slice of buttered bread from Harry's plate.

"How did you come to meet the Steward Harry...I didn't know he came down here." said Pippin.

"How would you know where he goes?" said Harry.

Pippin shifted in his seat slightly. Harry raised a brow and looked at Gandalf, who also shook his head.

"Come on, spill it, what happened?" said Harry pouring them each a cup of tea.

"Spill it?" asked Faramir confusedly. "Why would you want to spill the tea?"

"I don't, it means explain, don't hold back." said Harry waving his hand dismissively.

"Oh, well, he took it upon himself to enter my father's service." said Faramir taking the cup slowly.

Harry turned and stared at Pippin, hardly daring to believe what the hobbit did. Gandalf looked at Harry approvingly, feeling confident that Harry felt as exasperated at the hobbit as he did. Gandalf wanted Pippin to keep a low profile, and stay out of trouble, and then he goes and enters the steward's court.

Denethor was most likely the biggest obstacle in Aragorn's path to becoming King of Gondor. He would most likely denounce Aragorn and exile him forever. They would have to get Denethor on their side, somehow. Taking his son, Boromir from him, and taking a, however passive, part in his death will not help their cause.

However, Harry went on down a path that he didn't expect, but he would forever smile and chuckle warmly at the boy's words.

"You mean to tell me, that you finally got a job?" asked Harry with raised brows.

Pippin laughed loudly. "Not like what you have. I only do whatever he bids me to do, messenger, valet, whatever he needs. My duties are light."

"Lets hope that his tongue is not so light." said Gandalf taking a sip of tea. "Be very wary Perigrin Took, he's a crafty sort."

"My father does what he thinks is best for the kingdom." said Faramir somberly.

"Your father, my he be graced with many years of better health, has had his strength wittled down by the constant onslaught of Mordor. He needs to rest, we will not usurp him, (not until Aragorn arrives) but he needs counsel." said Gandalf.

Faramir looked down at the cup for a while, his face clouded with mixed emotions, but at last he nodded.

"Here, have a cake, Harry makes the best cakes outside the shire." said Pippin pushing the small
plate of cakes towards the Gondor Ranger.

Faramir looked up at the youth as he sliced a piece of freshly baked bread and buttered it for Gandalf.

“Where are you from?” asked Faramir once again.

“I don’t even think I can describe it, cause I’m not sure what you’d call it.” said Harry.

“Describe it, then.” said Faramir.

“Well, where to start...” said Harry scratching the back of his head. “If you take all the people in Minas Tirith, it wouldn't be as big a city there as you people have here. A big city has at least twelve times this many people.”

Faramir stared at the boy.

“Horses are used rarely, we usually use a metal...cart I suppose you'd call it, to get around. Uh...the air isn't nearly as fresh and clean, neither is the water....” said Harry.

“Then why return? If that country is worse than what we have here?” asked Faramir in awe.

“That's what we'd like to know.” said Pippin.

“It's still home.” said Harry with a shrug, “I've got to try at least.”

Faramir looked at Harry in wonder as he took a bite out of the cake sitting in front of him.

“Why did you meet the Steward?” asked Gandalf looking at Harry.

“He wanted to know who was behind his bread tasting different.” said Harry with a shrug. “I don't think he likes me.”

“Lad! Where are you?” came a voice from upstairs.

“Down in the kitchen, Gandalf came by for cuppa.” said Harry.

“I swear lad, I can just barely understand what you say.” said the old man's voice, a chuckle hidden beneath the words. “Thanks goodness, I get...how did you say yesterday, the gist of it.”

The man came into the room and smiled at Gandalf. “I'm telling you right now, you old scoundrel, you're not getting him back anytime soon.”

“I wouldn't dream of taking him away from you for quite a while.” said Gandalf with a smile and slight wink to Harry. “I was merely catching up with my young friend here.”

“Well as long as you aren't reposessing him...I need you to head down to the lower level to deliver some bread. I just received word that my late wife's sister ran out of bread this morning and she needs some fresh loaves.” he said to Harry

“Alright, does she want any kind in particular?” asked Harry.

“Just take the best we have, and a few of those muffins you made this morning, that should be a nice treat.” said the old man with a smile.

“Okay, I'll get down there right away.” said Harry grabbing a basket and loading it up with baked
goods.

They watched as the young man hurried out the door. The old man turned towards Gandalf with a smile.

“I thank everything that is good that you brought him, I don't remember the last time I was able to rest.” said the old man with a smile.

“Think nothing of it Berder, I surmised that Harry would benefit from staying here. He would help you, and keep hidden from those that would use him for immoral purposes.” said Gandalf.

“Immoral purposes? What do you mean?” asked Faramir looking at Gandalf in shock.

“Perhaps someday I may tell you, but now is not the time, most definetly not the time.” said Gandalf.

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Voldemort and Anya galloped through a large, abandoned farmland. The fields that once produced a winter's worth of food, were now only dried out stubble of dead grass and weeds.

"Lovely countryside, don't you think?" sneered Voldemort in Anya's ear.

Anya jerked her head away in disgust. She hated this man, with all of her heart, and wished him no good will, not even if he were to change his ways miraculously. They had been traveling for several days, almost nonstop, the wagon still full of weapons being pulled behind them, crashing together, waiting to be used against unsuspecting foes.

The horse began to slow it's pace near a ditch with a small stream inside. It was thirsty and weary, and it would go no further without some relief. Voldemort snarled viciously and shoved Anya down into the ditch, her hands were tied and so she was unable to get up and run away again. She landed hard on a small bed of stones and cried out in pain.

"Be grateful for the pain, it means I'm still letting you live." said Voldemort with a hiss, he led the horse to the stream and drank deeply from the canteen. He looked at Anya out of the corner of his eye and smirked at the look of thirst on her face. Her lips were dry and her voice cracked when he forced her to talk. "If you want some, you'd better get up and get over here."

Anya scowled fiercely over to the man and remained where she had landed. She wasn't going to give the man the satisfaction, unfortunately, she was getting thirsty.

As he busied himself with the horse, she inched over to where the stream was and dipped her lips into the water. She drank as deeply and as fast as she could, without Voldemort catching her. Little did she know he was watching her with an amused smile.

He loved taking away a person's dignity, if he couldn't kill her, he'd humiliate her. He rushed over and pushed her face into the water and caused her to accidentally cut her mouth on the stones in the water.

"I told you to come crawling to me, if you wanted water. I didn't say you could help yourself." he whispered into her ear.

She gasped and spat the blood out of her mouth. She wondered how much worse this could get. As she was dragged over to the horse, she and her torturer didn't see a bright purple stone slip into the deep pocket of her dress.
Harry galloped down to the lower tier of the city. He knew better than to just causally stroll or trot down to the first level, especially if the lady was anything like her brother-in-law said she was. He told him stories about her being the most impatient and demanding woman this side of the Mountains.

He even joked that she could give the Dark Lord a run for his life, when she was angered. She reminded Harry of Hermione when she had her...whatever girls called it now a days when they change from sweet girls, to venomous hags once a month. When it came to be Hermione's turn, Ron and he would just nod, agree with what she wanted or be subjected to a few new spells that she had just learned, and they weren't Cheering Charms. He pulled Will-o-Wisp to a halt and carried the bread into the tall stone building.

"Hello, I'm here to deliver some bread." called Harry as he knocked on the door.

He heard a something being put down onto a hard surface and the telltale sound of a cane hitting the floor heavily. Then an elderly woman came around the corner, with a frown on her face.

"I asked for that bread...." she snapped at him as she came into the room but she stopped.

She had expected her brother-in-law to send that carpenter neighbor of his to bring her bread to her. She didn't expect her late sister's husband to send her this handsome young man.

His dark black hair fell into his emerald green eyes and went gracefully down to his shoulders. He was tall and had a lean muscular build, and a sort of stance that made her instinctively feel that he would attack on the spur of the moment, if he was attacked first.

"I came as soon as I could ma'am." said Harry apologetically.

"Oh...oh don't fret about it, dear boy." cooed the elderly lady.

Harry had to hold in his laughter as best he could, she went from demanding to boarder-lining doting. She sat him down in the chair beside the fire, sat across from him and chatted with him till the sun began to set, not even hearing of him leaving her so soon. He just let her prattle on for the entire day, but he was beginning to get a mite edgy, He still had so much work to get down with today.

He tried almost all day to get back to the bakery, but it wasn't till the shadows started creeping across the room that he was able to leave.

"I hope Berder doesn't mind me taking the day off." said Harry as he climbed onto his horse's back. "Cause the day is now gone."

“Oh, don't mind that old coot, he'll find someone else to help him.” said the old woman with a smile. “Now don't be a stranger, but be careful heading back up, you never know when something in the dark can come out and catch you.”

“I'll be alright.” said Harry kindly.

Little did he know, just how prophetic those words would turn out to be.
Night's Assault

After a long day of deliveries, Harry galloped back up to the bakery. He wasn't allowed outside the walls of the city by order of Gandalf, so he had to get his adrenaline rush somewhere, and Will-O-Wisp enjoyed herself as well as they raced through the streets. Every time he'd mention the word "Sprint" she'd get excited and pull on Harry's sleeve to get him out onto the street.

The streets, except for the odd group of guards, were deserted this late in the evening so there was no danger of running over anyone. Curfew was coming closer, so all the people were heading into their solid built houses and lighting their fires. The curfew was a new law in Minas Tirith, and the Steward was becoming anxious and even more paranoid than before. He wanted everyone in his city to stay inside, to reduce any chance of people being attacked in the night.

Harry turned a corner sharply and nearly collided into a small troupe of guards. He pulled back on Will-O-Wisp's mane and pulled her over to the side. He was caught.

"Halt!" said a guard sternly.

Harry instinctively grabbed Will-O-Wisp's mane and prepared to turn her away in retreat at a moment's notice.

"S-Sorry sir." said Harry quickly. "I'm trying to get back home before curfew."

"You're the baker's boy." said one of the guards holding his torch up higher, peering at Harry's face.

"He's more than that..." said another guard. "He's friends with the wizard Gandalf."

"That true, boy?" asked the first guard.

"Uh...yes sir." said Harry hesitantly.

"So what brought you out this late?" asked the guard suspiciously. "Why are you not home?"

"Uh..." said Harry nervously. "I was delivering some bread."

"This time of night? I haven't heard of many shops doing their deliveries so late in the evening." said the guard shortly. "What were you really doing?"

They began to finger their weapons, and Harry began to get slightly worried, the stones, his sword and even the small dagger that Theoden gave him before he had left Rohan was back at the bakery. If he managed to get into a scuffle without them, he would never hear the end of it from Gandalf about being prepared for anything. And he didn't want to think about what Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli would say, especially Celeborn.

Maybe they wouldn't attack him, perhaps they'd just arrest him...no...he didn't want that either. He would never hear the end of it from Gandalf.

Then an idea struck him, and with as young and as rugged as these men looked, they might buy it...

"You won't tell Gandalf or the baker will you?" asked Harry looking nervously around.

"Why shouldn't we?" asked one of the guards.
I should be an actor, I swear. thought Harry. "I was meeting a young lady, down on one of the lower levels, that's why I'm out." he said, doing his best to look appropriately guilty.

The men looked amongst themselves, a faint smile on one of their lips.

"Don't let us catch you out this late again." said one of the guards nodding off to the side of himself.

"Thank you sir." said Harry with a sigh turning Will-O-Wisp away from the guards. He moved slowly, he didn't want to race off and have them chase him...he just got out of trouble, and and he didn't want to land himself back in it again.

Suddenly, a screech came down from the heavens and made them all cringe and cover their ears.

"NAZGUL!" came a yell from one of the watchtowers.

"Little late isn't it?" yelled Harry over the screeching.

Suddenly the darkness from the night sky seemed to swoop down the torch lit street and swallow him up, leaving only the horse behind.

Will-O-Wisp whinnied loudly and tried chasing after the monstrous beast until it sailed off over the fields of Peleennor.

"BOY!" yelled one of the guards. They stared up at the sky and they could hear the now present frightening flap of a pair of monstrous, leather wings.

"GO AND GET GANDALF!" shouted the oldest guard. "May the Gods keep that boy safe." he whispered.

Sirius was gently nodding off, trying to get some sleep. Finally, Harry was settling down, and resting peacefully. No wounds, no nothing showing up on his skin, and he was putting on a bit more weight. The luster was coming back into his hair and his tired wane look was gone. Now he just appeared to be asleep, like he had for these past few months.

Suddenly, Harry began to moan and Sirius jolted awake.

"Harry? Harry are you back? Are you alright?" asked Sirius fretfully.

"Mmph, whassamatter?" asked Hagrid thickly.

Harry moaned again, and Hagrid jolted awake.

"'Arry? Yeh alrigh'?"

Harry began to writhe in the bed, and moan even more. Before their eyes, whip marks, burns and lacerations showed up.

"My god....what the hell?" said Sirius in shock.

In Castle Valor, the King threw his glass of wine against the wall in anger. This wasn't supposed to happen, the boy was never supposed to go to Mordor! Not with that villain still in power, it was too
dangerous for him to go there, if ever.

The entire country of Mordor would have had to be purified before it was safe for anyone to cross that desolate border. It would take all the stones to turn the country back into the lush paradise that it once was. The malice and the treachery of the usurpers turned his wonderful utopia into a country of poison and death.

And now the boy was there.

"I have to do something, there has to be something I can do. Forget the test, things have changed, the boy didn't ask to do this..."

He looked between the giant crystal ball showing Harry's form in Middle Earth and the form of Harry sleeping in Grimmauld Place. In Grimmauld Place, Harry's form writhed and twitched, slowly being covered with wounds of all shapes and sizes. The other, was an unconscious, bloodstained figure being carted in a crudely made wagon to the giant black tower. The giant, flame covered eye fixated on the wagon as it drew closer.

"Now, who to bring to your aid? I'd better make the decision soon, or it will be too late." said King Meandenbor to himself. He had one choice and one chance, there was one person he could bring to this world. If he made the wrong decision, the boy was doomed, and if he didn't make a choice soon, the boy was doomed as well.

He watched as Sirius sat on the bed beside his godson and lifted the moaning Harry into his arms and rocked him gently.

"Good enough." said King Meandenbor. He waited till Hagrid left for his break, Sirius was still sitting in the bed and holding Harry to his chest, then he touched the vision of Sirius Black in the crystal ball.

Back in Grimmauld Place, Sirius felt himself getting drowsy. He tried to stay awake, but he couldn't stop his lids from falling. He laid his head on Harry's head and fell asleep with his godson in his arms. He never saw the golden light creep it's way towards him.
Harry awoke with a pounding sensation in his brain, and his entire body was aflame with pain and his muscles were stiff. He didn't want to move, he didn't want to even think, he just wanted to lay there, and hopefully that would get rid of the pain riddling his body. But not even that helped, as he laid there, he could feel his veins throbbing and his legs wrench in pain even as they laid there motionless.

Suddenly, a cooling sensation came over his body, starting at his feet and then crawling it's way up his body. The pain was disappearing and sweet relief filled his head when the pounding finally stopped. Immediately he thought of Celeborn, and that green pool of his. He didn't remember the elf coming collect him from the whirl of fire and pain he was finding himself in as of late.

He opened his eyes and expected to see the Elvish Lord of Lothlorien, but it was someone else, someone he had never met.

He had never seen this person before, but looking at this person's face, he could tell he was an elf, and he had the same appearance of an elf that was the same age like Celeborn and Elrond, and even Glorfindel, but there was something different.

This elf was as tall as any he had seen before, but unlike the elves of Lothlorien and even Rivendell, this elf's hair was as dark as Harry's was. His face was a graceful and as lovely as any elf he had seen thus far, and he was dressed in the regal fabrics that he had seen Celeborn wear. But something...something he couldn't put his finger on, made his heart agree with his brain to not say anything important, about anything.

"Hello, young one." said the elf smoothly.

Harry sat up quickly, jumped out of the bed with the soft blankets and pillows and rushed for the door. But the elf quickly moved in front of the only exit that Harry saw. "Now, now, you cannot possibly think I'm going to let you go in the state you are in."

Harry backed away from the elf and scanned the room swiftly in search of another escape route, but nothing came to his sight. It was then that he discovered he had large gashes on the sides of his body, as if something with claws or talons had scooped him up.

He also had another discovery, he was not wearing a shirt anymore. He had his pants on, but his shirt was no where to be found. He looked over to the elf standing before the door, and saw with horror that he wasn't trying to smile kindly anymore.

"There is no escape for you, child. You're here with me now." said the elf with a cruel smile.

Harry opened his mouth, to ask where he was, but then a horrifying scene caught the corner of his eye. He was standing in front of the window and he saw a dark swooping shadow cross in front of the window. He turned to look out, and there he saw...

"This...this is Mordor..." said Harry, looking out into the desolate wasteland. This had to be it, no other country he had ever been to looked this terrible. The entire land was like a rocky quarry, no plant life to be seen, and the sky was gray and dark, despite the fact that Harry could almost make out blue skies in the distance.

Suddenly he felt a hand grasp his throat tightly and his windpipe was almost crushed by the force held him in place.
“Seems that keeping this gentle facade will do no good. You're not as gullible as most men that I've had dealings with.” said the elf with a silky voice.

Harry turned his eyes to look at the elf holding him by the throat. His vision was beginning to cloud, but even in his captive state, he could now tell who this was.

“Sauron.” whispered Harry.

“Precisely.” said the elf with an equally quiet whisper in the youth's ear.

“What do you mean, he's gone?” shouted Gandalf loudly to the soldiers that stood before him and Pippin.

“He was taken away, by a Nazgul.” said the leader of the guards. “There was nothing we could do.”

Gandalf leaned heavily on his staff and looked down at the floor in shock. All was lost, the moment the Dark Lord got his hands on the stones...not even destroying the ring would bring an end to these terrible times.

“We've told the baker...” said the younger guardsmen.

“How is he taking the loss?” asked Faramir who was easing Gandalf into a seat, not knowing the awful truth and how devastating the news was. “He was very fond of the boy.”

“He's distraught, but he's given us the lad's things, and his horse is in the Royal stables.” said the other guard.

Pippin sat in shock, from what Elrond had said way back in Rivendell, Harry being captured by the forces of Mordor or Isengard would have spelt doom for all of Middle Earth. He was now in the enemy's hands...what was going to happen to them, what was going to his friend, Harry?

Tears fell down Pippin's face and onto the ground.

“Gandalf...” said Pippin wiping his eyes on a pocket handkerchief.

Gandalf said nothing, but placed a tender hand on Pippin's shoulder. “You say you have his things?” he looked at the guards with eyes that showed weariness.

The guards took out the sword Valarion, the pack that Harry had been using since Rivendell, inside were some of his cooking utensils, a change of clothes and the bag with the stones.

Small mercy, the stones are still here. thought Gandalf with a grim thought. But to lose Harry...I do not know what to do to save him...

Sirius woke up in a large and spacious Hall that he could not place it's location. It was like the Great Hall in Hogwarts only...more exquisite in detail. He saw beautiful paintings and statuettes lining the sides of the wall. He was either in a castle or a very large manor, but who's castle or manor? How did he come from Grimmauld Place to here? Is this just a dream?
Suddenly, as he was still sitting on the floor, a red silken fabric bounced down the empty and abandoned stairs and came to rest at Sirius' hands. There was no one controlling the direction of the fabric, no one that Sirius could see in the thick darkness anyway. He stood up and followed the fabric up the stairs, the silence around him was almost deafening. Each step he took seemed to echo around the around and down the unused corridors.

He continued down the cold corridors, until he reached a giant, golden door, with jewels fixed upon the wooden surface...these jewels resembled that crown that appeared on Harry's head! they had placed in the family house vault for safe keeping, they saw Mundungus eyeing it once. Every week or so, there would be a new gemstone that would appear on the crown's golden frame.

He made to touch one of the stones when the door swung open wide and it allowed him inside. He walked cautiously and slowly through the giant room, marveling at the statues that lined the red silk carpet. Then a glint towards the large throne end of the room attracted his attention. He rushed to the end of the room, forgetting all the other statues and making straight for the one changing statue of his beloved godson.

"Harry?" he said looking up at statue that showed Harry dueling a cloaked Dark Lord.

"Thank you, for accepting my invitation." said a voice coming from behind him.

Sirius turned swiftly around and saw a ghostly figure, sitting in the throne, his hand resting under his chin, a pale crown upon his head.

"Where am I? Who are you?" asked Sirius quickly.

"Really, you've heard my name lately, more times than ever before." said the ghostly figure with a smile. "You should know who I am."

Sirius looked at the ghost in confusion, then his eyes opened in shock. "King Meandenbor?"

"That is right." said the King with a smile.

"What...what do you want?" asked Sirius quickly.

"It seems that my original plan for young Harry has gone horribly awry..." said King Meandenbor.

"Is he alright?" asked Sirius quickly.

"Right now, he is not." said the King honestly, though he said it rather hesitantly.

"Oh...Merlin." moaned Sirius covering his eyes.

"I've decided, to send someone...to aid the lad." said the King. He hoped that this man would agree to face whatever dangers stood in his way, to help the boy.

"What do I need to do?" asked Sirius quickly. He noticed the ghostly figure smiled.

"I will send you to where your best ally will be." said the King raising his hand. "Look for a man called Strider." As the King continued to raise his hand, a swirling mist of gold enshrouded Sirius and he disappeared from his own world, hopefully to return with his godson in tow.

"I will take over the guarding of the boy's body, from now on." said the King to the now empty throne room. The giant crystal ball that showed both Harry's form in Middle Earth, he was still being held captive in the Dark Lord's tower, and the boy's sleeping form. He waved his hand, and
the golden cloud of dust swirled around the half of the sphere and then was absorbed into it.

“Good luck, young man...you'll need it.” said the King somberly.

Sirius opened his eyes once again, he expected to find himself back in the throne room after he got the golden dust out of his eyes, but what he saw made him stagger.

He was in a large stone room that was almost empty, except for a pouch, sword, sheath, and a set of clothes and pair of boots on one of the benches. Sirius looked down at himself and immediately grabbed the pair of trousers. Back in the throne room, he was wearing his lounge pants, and his favorite buttoned up shirt, now they both were gone, including his shorts.

“Thanks for the warning!” snarled Sirius as he threw on the clothes. He got to the tunic but couldn't quite get the ties right so he left his shirt open. He reached for his wand, but then he reminded himself, his wand was in his lounge pants' pocket, so he didn't have it on him. He looked down at the sword that stood beside the bench.

“You've got to be kidding me!” groaned Sirius. “This is the only weapon I get?”

“Be thankful.” said a voice sharply.

Sirius looked up quickly, there was no one there, but the voice definitely came from up above him.

“I didn't give Harry anything to go on. You're lucky enough to get this much, I've included some money as well, another thing the boy was unable to get to start with.” said the voice of the King.

“You gave him nothing? Nothing but clothes?” said Sirius to the ceiling.

“Not even that.” said the voice plainly.

“...you sick son of a...” said Sirius with a growl.

“That's enough of that.” said the voice sternly. “Leave the room you're in and go find Strider.”

“What does Strider look like?” asked Sirius.

The King gave an audible sigh. “The boy was nowhere near this whiny....Strider looks a little like you. Now...”

Sirius was lifted up off the ground by invisible hands.

“Out” said the voice.

Sirius was thrown through the door and out into corridor pass the door and landed hard on his backside.

“Ow...ask a simple question...” groaned Sirius as he rubbed his rear. “So...this Strider bloke looks like me....wonder if Harry called Strider by my name....” he absently bared his teeth, he could hardly believe how possessive he was of his little lion cub.

He left the corridor and opened another wooden door, this time it opened into a large open town. He closed the door behind him and stared around the town, people looked as if they had survived some sort of horrible event. They had a drawn, but relieved look on their faces, but some were holding each other close, as if they had lost a family member.

Sirius continued to look around until he felt something hard hit him in the back of the head. Stars
flashed in front of his eyes and he nursed the back of his skull. Behind him, he felt the sword and pouch land heavily in dirt. He turned to cuss out the King's bodiless voice for nearly knocking him out, but no one was there, not even the door he had just entered.

“Bloody banshee...” snarled Sirius. “Just remember...this is for Harry...”

He took the sword in hand and the pouch and made his way around the town, trying to find someone that looked like him. He spent an hour just wandering around the small village, finding absolutely no one that even closely resembled him. Just where was this elusive man?

“What the bloody hell? Did this Strider bloke leave?” asked Sirius quietly to himself. “Where the hell is he supposed to be?”

Then his eyes flitted up to the large building that seemed to stand above all the others. “Well, I guess that's the last place to check, can't exactly break into people's houses.”

He started to walk up the large stairs when a pair of soldiers came up to him quickly.

“What is your business here?” asked one of the guards sternly.

“Uh...I'm looking for a bloke named Strider.” said Sirius uneasily, he wasn't too sure how he was supposed to take them on if things went wrong. He also was tired of trying to be subtle, the pain from the back of his head was too great.

The guards stared at him, Sirius prepared for a fight, (for reasons unknown to him) he hoped he could win this...he never used a sword before.

“Come with me.” said one of the guards.

Sirius stared at the guards as they walked away from him...were they going to take him to this Strider chap, or were they going to take care of him in a permanent way?

He followed them through a pair of giant doors and into what reminded him of a old Viking Hall from some of the old muggle books that Moony insisted on reading. They walked all the way to the back of the hall, there was a small group of people standing around a large table, a large ancient looking map on it's surface.

“Lord Aragorn.” said one of the guards.

One of the men stood straight up and looked at the guard. Sirius looked at this Aragorn fellow and his eyes widened. Was this the guy? He did see some similarities....

“What is it?” asked Aragorn quickly.

“This man....he was asking for you....and he speaks the same way as the boy...” said the guard.

Aragorn stared at this newcomer in shock. “What...?”

Sirius and the man nicknamed as Strider locked eyes. Each wondering what the other could have in common with their young Harry.
“May I help you?” said Strider firmly. He looked at the man suspiciously, he had been preparing for someone to come to them and perhaps pretend to know Harry and to come from the same place he did. He knew what question to ask, but what to do with them afterwards if they answered correctly was something he'd have to go along as it went.

“Yeah, you can tell me where I can find my godson so I can take him home.” said Sirius just as firmly. The sooner he got his godson, the sooner he could take him home where he was obviously safer.

“Who might your...godson...be?” said Strider.

“Harry Potter.” said Sirius.

Gimli, Legolas, Celeborn, Glorfindel and King Theoden looked at the man in shock. They weren't expecting anyone to show up for the boy...especially when Harry mentioned that he wasn't even of this world.

“You know the lad?” asked Glorfindel.

“He's coming home with me, so give him up.” said Sirius placing a hand in his pocket, it used to be the pocket he'd keep his wand in...but he felt more assertive when he had his hand there. But something deep down inside him knew that he wouldn't have to rescue Harry from these people. The King said this Strider person would be an ally, so these weren't the ones that were hurting him.

If he knew Harry, as well as he thinks he does, these people fell in love with him the moment they spoke with them. He could remember the first time he had ever held his godson in his arms. His entire existence revolved around his godson's life.

*It was a stormy night in St. Mungos, lightning crashed and illuminated the darkness outside the hospital. Both Sirius and James were pacing the floor, their eyes only meeting a few times. James had dark circles under his eyes and was nervously glancing at the door to their waiting room. Remus was standing against the wall, his arms folded against his chest and his gaze fixed on the tile floor.*
“How long has it been?” asked James thickly.

“A good...two hours.” said Remus dully.

“What's taking your daughter so long to get here?” Sirius.

“Babies come when they're ready to come.” said Remus, constantly the voice of reason and logic.

“When is Dumbledore supposed to get here?” asked James worriedly.

“He had to stop down to the Longbottoms and place some protective spells on their house, they just had a son.” said Remus. “I sent him an owl that Lily went into labor. I think he's still believes Jenny's going to be born in three weeks.”

“Oh...just think James, your little girl might hook up with the Longbottom boy!” said Sirius nudging James as he passed him.

“Don't even joke about that yet!” said James shortly.

“Better get used to it, cause if she looks anything like Lily...” said Remus also snickering.

“She's never gonna date...” said James. “I'll scare off any suitor that comes along. She's going to be my little girl forever!”

“That's the spirit, Daddy.” said Sirius with a bark like laugh thumping James on the back heartily.

“Mr. Potter?” said a Healer coming up to them, she had a smile on her face.

James turned swiftly around on his heel and ran up to the Healer.

“You can come in now.” she said with a smile.
“Go on, James, we'll wait for Dumbledore.” said Remus holding Sirius back slightly.

“Whose side are you on?” asked Sirius.

“Let him bond with his daughter...better write down the time and day for Lily...August...” said Remus taking out a piece of parchment.

“Actually, eleven fifty-nine, July thirty-first.” said the Healer before she went with James back to the room.

“Woah...that little girl just barely made it to being a July baby.” said Sirius with a laugh as he threw an arm around Remus' shoulders. “Too bad Peter couldn't make it. He's going to miss out on meeting Miss Jenny! Hey...whose going to be the godmother anyway?”

“Lily and James asked McGonagall, James said that it was the first time he had seen McGonagall cry.” said Remus.

“Damn...where was I for this?” asked Sirius pouting.

“You were still passed out from celebrating the news.” said Remus with a smile.

Then Dumbledore came in, looking frantic, but transfiguring a giant pink teddy bear and a dozen roses out of two wrapped sweets as he came up.

“Is the baby here?” asked Dumbledore.”Is everything all right?”

“Yup, she just arrived.” said Sirius excitedly. “And everything seems to be fine.”

“Thank goodness, August first will have to be a day to remember for next year.” said Dumbledore with a large sigh.

“July thirty-first actually.” corrected Remus.
Dumbledore’s face turned white and he dropped the roses he was holding. Sirius caught them before they made it to the ground.

“You alright?” asked Sirius.

“Hey guys.” came a voice from the hall way. James came out holding a small cherry red blanket in his arms. Lily was riding beside him in a wheelchair being magically propelled.

“Aww...we get to see the little flower so soon?” cooed Sirius.

Lily covered her mouth.

“There’s an issue.” said James trying hard not to smile.

“What?” asked the men in the room quickly.

“Is she alright?” asked Dumbledore swiftly.

“I don’t have a daughter, I have a son.” said James with a warm smile as he pulled the blanket back to reveal a little boy, with already little wisps of black hair coming off his head. Remus, Dumbledore and Sirius cooed softly over the child, though Dumbledore was gripping the now blue teddy bear tightly, his old hands shaking. If they had looked at Dumbledore’s eyes, they would have seen tears, not of joy but of intense grief shining and threatening to leak out.

“Poor thing, he looks like you James. Guess we can count on him not getting married.” said Sirius teasingly as he took the small child in his arms.

“Poor little Harry....his godfather is already making fun of him.” said Lily laughing.

Sirius stared at them...he was holding his godson? He held the little bundle all the tighter. When he saw his godson's Lily green eyes looking up at him, he cooed. “Hear that? I’m always going to be there for you...you'll never be hurt with me around.”
“I’d be more worried about the things he’s going to get away with you around.” said Lily.

“Better believe it!” said Sirius excitedly and Remus as he rolled his eyes.

“I think we can count on Harry being spoiled.” said Remus with a smile.

Ever since that day, his whole life revolved around that little mess maker. That little guy had everyone wrapped around his finger with that sweet disposition and those bright green eyes of his, and he seriously doubted that changed any in this world.

“He's not here.” said Strider.

“He's in Minas Tirith.” said Celeborn.

That jolted Sirius back to the present, but hearing the information that Harry wasn't here, Sirius groaned. “Alright then...when are you going there?”

He didn't know where this Minas Tirith place was, hell, he wasn't too sure where the hell he was now! He'd need that Strider guy to show him where Harry was, King Meandenbor only mentioned Strider's name. He'd have to keep close to that guy.

“Why do you want to know if I am leaving for Minas Tirith?” asked Aragorn suspiciously.

“I don't know where that is, and I was told by the King to find you and go and get him.” said Strider quickly.

“King who?” asked Celeborn swiftly. Here was the all important question, now to wait for the answer.

“You wouldn't know him.” said Sirius.
“As the lad used to say, 'try us.’” said Gimli.

“King Meandenbor.” said Sirius looking sternly over at the short man.

The Fellowship exchanged significant looks, was this man really an ally of Harry's? He'd have to be, no one outside of them knew of the King.

Sirius looked around at them all, staring at each other and nodding. He was getting pissed, they weren't doing anything, Harry was in danger and here they were, standing around a table looking at an antique map! They should be out trying to save him! They seemed to know him, so why aren't they doing anything?

“So...are we going or not?” asked Sirius hotly.

“We are going to Minas Tirith, but we need to prepare our forces.” said King Theoden.

“Tell me it's only going to take a few moments.” said Sirius. “Tell me it's only going to be an hour or so.”

The men looked amongst themselves.

“All right!” growled Sirius as he slammed his fist onto the table, causing the others to stare at the man.

Anya sat huddled in the corner of a deserted shack as storms raged outside and threatened to tear apart the roof over her head. Her captor, Voldemort, was sitting on the dust covered chair, staring at the fire. He didn't want to stay here, but the storm was so fierce that they ended up in the ditch three times causing him to twist his ankle. Though he was taking great care to not let her know he was injured.

He kept an eye on his prisoner, making sure she didn't try to scuttle off without his knowing it. She was quiet, and he didn't like it, he wanted to hear her scream...but she wasn't screaming anymore. She had gotten used to his ways and could almost start to pacify him when he was prepared to strike her. She was too much like that Potter brat, he seemed to know what he was going to do next in the heat of battle as well.
He was lost in his thoughts when the fire flared up and in it's place was a great flaming eye. Voldemort, sensing the same pressure as he did in the Malfoy Manor sneered over to the eye.

“Yes?” said Voldemort.

“Riddle, you have something I want.” said the eye with a deep menacing voice. The same voice that had called him here to this world.

Voldemort stared at the eye in the fireplace, how did he know his real name? Also, what did he have that the Dark Lord of this world want? It couldn't be the girl, she was of no use to him, he didn't have anything new that the Dark Lord didn't already give him. It had to be that stone, how did he find out he had it?

“And that would be?” asked Voldemort shrewdly. He wasn't about to openly admit to having something so powerful.

“That jewel that you possess.” said Sauron.

“No.” said Voldemort stubbornly. He wasn't about to give up this power...this awesome power. “This jewel is mine.”

It was either the eye or the flames licking it's edges, but something made a harsh hissing noise. “I want that STONE!”

“It's mine!” shouted Voldemort.

Anyá stared at the man shouting at the fire, he was mad...absolutely mad. There he was yelling at the fire and appearing to have a conversation with it. It was only the two of them in this battered old shack, and there he was screaming at the fire as if it were arguing with him.

And the conversation wasn't going well obviously.
Voldemort felt the heat of the flames crash against his body roughly, but he wasn't going to give up that stone, nothing was going to take that stone away from him.

“I have something that you want...” said the eye, changing tactics. His voice went from harsh whispers to a soft murmur.

“What could you possibly have that I want?” sneered Voldemort.

Suddenly an image of Harry, lying bruised, bloodied and battered on a grand looking bed flashed across the flames. Voldemort's eyes opened wide, Potter...he had Potter.

“Give him to me.” said Voldemort thickly, staring hungrily at the image before him.

“I want the stone.” said the eye. “Give me the stone, and you may have the boy.”

Voldemort felt the stone in his pocket and looked at the ground. What was he going to do, Potter was within his grasp, but he had this stone...he wanted both, and he was going to get both.

“I'll take him...by force.” said Voldemort with a snarl.

Anya sat in the corner, trying to keep silent and keep out of Voldemort's notice, if this man were to turn on her, she wouldn't escape unscathed. Then suddenly, a vision of the shack exploding, sending flames up into the sky came into Anya's mind. She didn't know where these visions came from, but each time one came, it came true and she could head it off and make it not occur. But this was too massive, she wouldn't be able to stop it. She had the uncontrollable urge to escape the shack, she furiously tried to stand up and managed to get out of the shack and into the raging tempest outside.

The storm was raging havoc on the land outside the shack. Lightning crashed overhead and the rain pelted down and stung as they struck her. The thunder rolled over the ground and made her insides tremble. She nearly slipped and fell in the mud as she tried to escape.

She hadn't taken fifty steps when the shack exploded, sending the man inside flying through the air. She could see he was burnt in several places and covered in soot from the fireplace that had exploded. He landed in an unconscious heap in the ditch, and wasn't moving.
Anya stared at the foul man laying in the mud, this was her chance, she had to get away. A sharp piece of stone flew towards her and struck the ropes on her hands, severing them. She, not believing her good fortune, ran to the horse, unhitched him, and rode off furiously southwest. She needed to get away, she needed help.

Days went by, Sirius was getting more and more pissed with these backward hicks. They weren't moving any faster than a flobberworm when it came to preparing for a battle. How hard was it to load up some horses, get their stupid armor on and then head off to the battle? He personally thought he would be up and out in less than an hour.

He wanted to find Harry and take him back home, he didn't want Harry to be injured any more than what has already happened. He wanted his cub safe back home with him, just relaxing at Grimmauld Place and talking about Quidditch and girls.

He didn't notice the scruffy looking man watching him intently.

Strider watched the surly looking man scowl at passersby. How in the name of the Valar could this man be connected with his Harry. This man was unpleasant at best, as far as he had seen, and Harry was the gentlest young man he had ever met. These two were nothing alike that he could see.

Legolas and Gimli walked up behind the Ranger and also looked at the man sitting on the steps of the Golden Hall.

“What do you think?” asked Gimli.

“He's so coarse, it's hard to think this man is associated with Harry.” said Legolas.

“He's got a stubborn temper, almost like a dwarf.” said Gimli.

“Truly he isn't like Harry. Harry could have passed for Half-Elven.” jabbed Legolas with a good natured smile.

Sirius turned and saw the three main males that seemed to not answer his questions satisfactorily. “What do you three want? Are we going?”
“We will be leaving in the morning.” said Strider. “The preparations are done...are you prepared yourself?”

“I've been ready months ago.” said Sirius hotly.

“You just got here...” said Gimli.

Sirius sighed “Why can't we go now?”

“Leaving first thing in the morning is for the best, we still need to pack rations for the trip.” said Strider.

“Too bad Harry is not here, he was in charge of the food and the cooking.” said Gimli.

“The cooking? Harry can't cook...can he?” said Sirius in shock. The smirk on Strider's face enraged him. “What's so funny?” he snarled.

“You don't seem to know him as well as you thought.” said Strider walking away.

The other two followed him as the strange man glared at their backs.

“Why are you taunting him? This is unlike you.” asked Legolas. He had never seen Aragorn acting this way before, it was strange, and frightening all at the same time.

“I'm not sure, but it feels wonderful.” said Aragorn with a smirk. “Harry always talked of going home, and if this man is going to take him home, then he will go. But that does not mean that I'm not going to let him go without putting up some sort of fight.”

Legolas and Gimli exchanged a significant look, these two were going to get along as wonderfully as they did in the beginning.
Harry moaned softly as he moved slightly, his entire body ached and was riddled with unbearable pain. That Sauron bloke was like Dr. Jekell and Mr. Hyde...one minute he was fine, the other minute he was flailing him to within an inch of his life with a whip that felt like icy fire. The only kind thing was that this guy left him on the bed when he passed out, though for whatever reason he didn't know.

He tried to make his aching muscles push himself off the bed, causing him to groan even louder.

“So...we've finally woken up have we?” came a silky voice to the side of him.

Harry turned his head as fast as he dared, the same elf as before was sitting in the high backed chair beside the bed. The tips of his fingers on each hand touching it's pair on the opposite hand and a icy smile on his lips.

“What the hell do you want with me?” asked Harry in a croaking voice, collapsing heavily on the cushions.

His throat was bone dry and his entire body wanted him to cry out and beg for relief, for mercy, for anything to alleviate the pain, but his spirit didn't want that, that was what kept his tongue firmly in check. He wanted to defy this person to the very end, but he had a awful feeling that the end might come too quickly if he voiced his feelings.

The Dark Lord Sauron laughed softly. “Someone wants you, and that someone has something that I desire.” Harry looked at the elf as he stood up and placed a long finger under his chin, forcing his gaze upward. “Though...for the life of me, I cannot fathom how hard it is capture you on his own. I can however understand why killing you is so difficult.”

Bruises covered Harry's body from head to toe, gashes splashed across his body and dried blood clung to the skin under his nose and on his temple. Despite the beatings, and even a touch of intense torture, the boy refused to die. He would get close, but then...the mortal wounds would suddenly heal themselves, as if they had never happened.

A cruel smile played on his lips. “It's so much fun...as you try to defy me. I might just keep you...I've never had a toy as durable as you.”
Harry tried to get his face free of this madman's grasp, but he was still in so much pain that he fell back on the bed heavily.

“But why he wants you so badly, I don't know.” said Sauron as he got up to walk away. “You're a pretty toy, but that cannot be the only reason.”

Harry bit back a retort, this was not the time to try and fight back, he had no way of escaping, and he had no one on the outside that would come and help him, not that he had the strength to get up anyways. The burning question of who it was that wanted him so badly was completely overshadowed by the pain in his body.

“I give you fair warning, for a change. Do not trouble yourself trying to escape...my tower is vast and you'll never find your way out, I won't even bother locking the door. Though if by some miracle you manage to escape the tower, there is still the army of orcs and Easterlings below to kill you on sight.” he sneered as he closed the door. “Till next time...”

Harry's arms gave out and he laid upon the bed again, he was exhausted and his sides still felt that they were on fire. He couldn't stay here, he had to get out...he didn't notice a faint mist of golden dust creeping through the window.

Sirius winced as the horse he rode on jostled him about roughly. He held onto the reigns tightly, not wishing to fall off once again for the hundredth time. He had fallen at least four times in the last hour and he was starting to get bruises where he didn't want them.

“I'm starting to miss Buckbeak.” he said as he bounced around in the saddle.

“You're lucky, Harry had no saddle for his horse.” said Legolas riding up beside him. “He was forced to ride bareback.”

Sirius shook his head, how the hell could Harry live so many months in this world? He was sick and tired of having no magic and no ability to transform into a dog that he wanted to find Harry and get him home that instant.

He hated being so helpless, and so defenseless. Sure he had a sword and even a little dagger, but he didn't know how to use them! Also, he had never felt so...Tonksy...before in his life. He remembered when she was very, very little, she would complain about the smallest things and just go into full blown tantrum for some slightly larger things. Now he felt as if the same small patience
level was creeping in on his mind.

He looked around at the scenery, the rolling hills, the grassy plains...he had to admit, this place was easy on the eyes, if not hard on conveniences. The air was crisp and clean, and the entire area around them was covered with lush wildlife and plants. The people were fairly decent and didn't shout any profanity that he could recognize.

The downside was that it took forever to do something! Get your food...it took almost all day to prep for dinner, and the meat was still under seasoned to his taste. Getting from point A to point B took days to do, when if they had broomsticks, or even with Lily's car it would take only an hour or less. And not having magic was even more of a hindrance, how Harry managed to put up without it was beyond him.

When they stopped to water their horses, Sirius slid off his horse, missed his landing mark, and landed hard on the grounds. He rubbed his back and helped himself up by grabbing the horse's reins. "For Merlin's sake..." growled Sirius.

"Perhaps you need a few more riding lessons, Master Black." said a pretty blonde woman riding up beside him.

Sirius frowned at the young lady, he was introduced to this her and admitted she was beautiful, but if he wasn't so worried about Harry, he'd put on the charms to her...but now was not the time. Though that didn't stop her from speaking kindly to him.

He could tell she liked him, though it seemed that Aragorn also held a special place in her heart...every which way he turned, people told him that the two of them looked alike and that was pissing him off. People had fallen back to ride beside him, but when they realized it wasn't Aragorn, they would ride off in a hurry.

"Back where I come from, we don't ride horses." said Sirius with a groan.

"How else would one get around?" asked Eowyn inquisitively.

"Fly mostly." said Sirius bending over backwards to get the crick out of his back.

"Fly?" repeated Eowyn.
“Smother way of travel.” said Sirius simply.

Eowyn looked at him, and then her gaze moved upward. “What is it like to fly?”

Sirius looked at her, and followed her gaze to the sky. “It wonderful, the wind in hair, and your face...my best friend didn't want to come down half the time.” he smiled in remembrance of his friend. “His son is no different, Harry can fly like an eagle.”

“Harry flew?” said Eowyn in shock.

“Harry was just a baby when he flew for the first time, he was barely a year old when he went for a joyride, James chased him all over the house.” laughed Sirius.

Several people turned and stared at the man laughing, he hadn't shown any sort of positive emotion since he arrived, this side of him was startling.

They'd ride for hours and then set up camp around dusk, he'd have to set up his own bedroll, (his first solo attempt at trying to set up a tent caused Aragorn to almost laugh out loud) and then he'd have to make his own fire. If James hadn't of died so many years before, he would have sworn this was a massive prank of his.

And King Meandenbor's voice would come to him at the oddest times, and it wouldn't speak words of encouragement.

You are completely useless in this world, aren't you?

“If I ever get a hold of you...” muttered Sirius venomously.

“As the people of our world say, suck it up and deal with it.” said the voice with an audible smirk attached to it.
“Smug son of a...” said Sirius darkly.

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Dumbledore paced the floor in his office in a worried state. Sirius was now missing from Grimmauld Place and Hagrid had no idea what had happened. One minute, Sirius was resting his eyes in the room, the next moment he was gone.

“I swear, Dumbledore sir, he couldn't 'ave left, and he wouldn't 'ave!” said Hagrid.

Dumbledore had no doubt in his mind that Sirius would never leave Harry behind in the state he was in...also...he had placed a sensory charm on the front door and the fireplace, no one would have been able to leave or enter without his knowledge.

Unfortunately, he had other pressing matters on his mind. He knew Sirius would be able to handle himself in almost any situation.

He also knew that Voldemort's supporters were busy trying to vainly find out where Harry was. (They were currently trying to infiltrate both Hogwarts and the slowly rebuilding Burrow.) Sirius would not be easily captured by anyone. And he wouldn't have left Headquarters without a fight, and he certainly would never have left Harry's side while he was in that state. If he had been kidnapped, they would have taken Harry as well.

Dumbledore looked around, he had hoped the King would take this opportunity to appear and answer all the questions that plagued his mind. But the ancient monarch did not appear, like they were for so many years, they were on their own.

Suddenly a flash of fire erupted near Fawkes' perch and a scroll fell to the large plate that Dumbledore would place his food on. Dumbledore hurried over and unfurled the parchment and read the simple message.

_We need help, it's happening again._

Dumbledore's face paled, this had to mean that Harry was becoming injured again, he'd have to send Severus and Poppy with a bag of potions. Until the Death Eaters gave up their personal endeavor to invade the castle, he'd have to stay and keep them out.

He would no longer be able to go to Grimmauld Place, and he hoped that the Death Eaters trying
vainly to find Harry's body would never realize that or discover that they were using Grimmauld Place, a house Narcissia knew of, as Headquarters.

Harry turned over onto his back slowly and stared up at the ceiling, hoping that he could rest and be rid of the flood of pain. He wanted some relief, but there was none to be had. He could feel every mark throb and pulse even more pain through him.

Suddenly he could feel the pain ebbing away and a cooling sensation crept across his skin. It was like the greenish water back in Lothlorien, oh no...not this again. thought Harry with a groan.

“Lad...” said a soft voice.

Harry turned and saw someone standing over him, if he had much strength, he would have been startled, it was the person that was in the tomb back in Rivendell.

“I...It can't be.” whispered Harry. “It has to be a trick.”

“No trick lad.” said King Meandenbor. “I'm here to help, but while I may not be able to take you out of this tower without any physical power, but I may be able to lead you to reasonable safety.”

“Anywhere is better than Mordor.” said Harry trying to stand up.

“I unfortunately cannot take you out of Mordor, there is no safe passage through the armies below.” said the King floating above him in a gold mist. “But I may be able to find a place for you to stay safe until the right time comes for you to leave.”

“Who could come and get find me?” said Harry, his voice betraying a hint of desperation. “Boromir said that no one would come and risk this place.”

“I've sent someone from your world to come and take you home.” said the King gently. “Or I should say, at least help a bit in the effort in taking you home, it seems that taking wizards from a more 'modern' age and casting them into a medieval time period is a little bit much to swallow.”
“Dumbledore?” said Harry quickly.

The King looked at the boy with a quirked eyebrow, how did this child think that an old man with no magical abilities in this world, help? “No, I sent a younger man in his place. Now come, we must hurry.”

“But...” said Harry.

“You're healed enough for the short journey, come we need to go.” said the King earnestly.

“What're you talking about, I'm not...” said Harry as he tried to ease up on his elbows. To his amazement, he found that the pain had lessened considerably. He rose out of bed and followed the King to the door, that Sauron boldly said was unlocked. Both Harry and the King paused to listen if anyone was outside, they both couldn't hear anything...so Harry opened the door slowly and watched as the mist of the King squeezed through the small crack.

“Quick, follow me child.” said the King's voice in a whisper.

“Can anyone see you?” asked Harry also whispering.

“There is no time to test your question, we must be off.” said the King urgently as they climbed the stairs. They twisted around the tower for what seemed like hours, the winding stairs seemed endless.

“Where are we going? Shouldn't we be heading down?” asked Harry.

“Lad...don't you realize where we are?” said the King quietly with a small smile.

“Mordor?” said Harry with a shrug.

“Barad-dur, this used to be my palace, but as I said, there is no time to converse out here, come.” said the King leading Harry further up. “I know where there is a safe place, possibly the only safe place in this desolate land.”
As they climbed the winding tower, Harry could feel a blanket of heat come over him and it wasn't until he became incredibly overheated did he voice his whispered complaint. “Why is it so hot?” he asked as he wiped the sweat from his brow.

“We're getting close to the eye.” said the King absently.

“The eye? You mean Sauron? How is he not an eye when I saw him?” asked Harry. “He looked...kind of human.”

“He has great power, but he can only take his original form within this tower, now...here we are.” said the King coming to a large oaken door. Despite the barren, worn appearance of the surrounding walls and steps, it seemed to be in pristine condition and untouched for almost a thousand years.

Harry looked at the door with a skeptical look, “How is this a safe place, we're right next to him!” questioned Harry looking up at the ceiling, sweat pouring off his forehead and trickling into his eyes.

“We'll see if he has been able to infiltrate this room like all the others.” said the King keeping watch around the corridor. “Open the door, and let's step inside.”

Harry placed his hand on the handle, despite the heat crashing down from the ceiling, the handle on the door was surprisingly cool to the touch. He pushed open the door with all his might and walked inside this new haven of safety. Inside was a dark room, dust covering both the floor and the surfaces about the room, a giant fireplace against the wall, and rich tapestries hanging against the wall. There was a large bed with gold curtains standing in the middle of the room with a pile of soft pillows at the head of the bed, a sight fit for a tired, aching teen. Strangely enough, the heat of the giant eye perched a small distance away did not reach the room, it felt pleasantly cool inside the room, like a light spring day.

“He hasn't tainted this room like he did the others, you will be safe in here.” said the King inspecting the room and wafting a small cloud of golden mist towards the door once he deemed it safe.

“What am I supposed to do now?” asked Harry.
“You are to wait here.” said the King coaxing him towards the bed to rest. “No matter if he happens to follow you to this room, Sauron cannot harm you in here.”

Harry looked at the bed skeptically. “Is that all I can do? Sleep and wait for someone to rescue me?” he asked sharply.

“Unfortunately, while you are in Mordor, there is nothing you can do. Besides, you need the time to rest and heal your wounds.” said the King with a smile.

“What about those stones, aren't I suppose to get those for you?” asked Harry.

“Those stones can wait for the moment, we can find a way to get them after wards, I cannot even send the other visitor to look for them.” said King Meandenbor. “He's quite useless without magic.” he added with a smirk.

Harry looked at the bed with a frown. So he had to play Sleeping Beauty for the rest of his stay? He didn't want to spend the entire time sleeping! Though he had to admit, it was better than being tortured continuously...and he was so dreadfully tired...

He climbed onto the bed and eased his back onto the cushions.

“Don't worry lad, you'll be able to get out of here the next time you wake up.” said the King softly. He covered Harry's body with the mist that surrounded himself.

“How did I know you were going to do that?” groaned Harry as he felt his eyelids getting heavy. Soon he was asleep.

The King floated a bit away from the bed. “Don't worry lad, I've got everything...well almost everything under control, and this way, Sauron will not be able to find you in his own tower.”
Sirius retied his boots as everyone rested for the day, the sun was beginning to sink into the horizon and darkness was beginning to set in. Sirius was sick of the riding, and wished he could get away with just walking to wherever they were going. Every time he would dismount, Sirius would slide off his horse slowly and rest on a rock, he had to ease onto the hard surface carefully, how he wished he had a pillow to sit on.

“How are you faring, Master Black?” asked Gimli coming over to build and light the man's campfire. This man had nearly burnt his hands twice and almost the entire camp once, it was best for someone else to make his fires.

“It hurts when I sit down.” said Sirius easing off the rock and down into the soft grass.

“I suppose you'll have that, having never ridden before.” said Gimli as he built the fire.

Legolas brought him over a few rabbits to cook on the fire. “I remember Harry had some trouble riding Will-O-Wisp, he fell off a number of times.”

Sirius smiled.

“Aragorn would leap of his horse every time and help him back on.” said Gimli with a laugh.

Sirius' smile fell of his face and was replaced with a frown. He looked around and saw Aragorn was over speaking to King Theoden, and then headed into the King's tent.

“Where's the grand leader going?” asked Sirius.

“Do you mean, Aragorn?” asked Legolas with a smile. “He is talking to the visitor.”

“What visitor?” asked Sirius suspiciously.

“We do not know.” said Legolas turning the rabbits over in the fire.
“I’m thinking you and Aragorn don’t get along.” said Gimli. Legolas and he knew for a fact that they didn't get along, but they still wanted to find out why.

“He just...annoys me.” said Sirius. “It’s like Snivellus all over again, but now he looks sort of like me....what does he think of me?” he asked looking over to the elf and dwarf.

Gimli and Legolas exchanged looks and smiled over to Sirius. “He is quite fond of taunting you.” said Legolas sitting down.

“All the similarities between us is getting to be a bit much.” said Sirius shaking his head. Then another question came to mind. “So, how long have you known my Harry?”

Gimli leaned back on his rock and smiled. “We've known him since we were at Rivendell, the start of our quest.”

“From what I saw in my world, it wasn't a boring quest.” said Sirius.

“Pardon?” asked Legolas looking confused.

“I don't understand it myself, but apparently, Harry's in two places at once, he's sleeping back home, and every time he sustains an injury here, it affects him at home.” said Sirius.

Legolas and Gimli stared. “Durin's beard, the boy is in two places at once?” asked Gimli.

“Yeah, and I've been going insane, he kept getting injured but nothing in our world was hurting him, anything that was hurting him here, was hurting him back home.” said Sirius. “So...what dangerous stuff did he get into?”

Legolas looked at the man with sympathy in his eyes. “Are you sure you want to hear...?”

“I think I can handle it.” said Sirius rubbing a hand down his tired face.
But after an hour, he could hardly sit still and was becoming more and more agitated.

“Why would he do that? Why would he go into danger like that?” wailed Sirius as he sobbed into his hands.

“What's going on?” asked Aragorn coming over, a new sheath and sword on his hip.

“We've been telling him what has transpired with young Harry,” said Gimli quietly.

“I think it became too much for him to listen to,” said Legolas with as much sympathy as he could muster, without trying to convey to his dwarf friend how sensitive he himself could be.

Aragorn looked at Sirius as he wept, there was no taunting glint in his eye. “I can understand his dismay.” he said softly.

Gimli looked up at the man with a smirk. “You all done provoking him then?”

“Not at all, I just don't kick a man when he is down.” said Strider with a smile. He walked behind Sirius and patted him on the back. “If it's any consolation, he always got back on his feet within a day.”

“He shouldn't have to...he's just a baby...he should have been kept safe.” said Sirius through his hands.

“Oh...we tried.” said Aragorn looking up into the sky. “We tried to keep him in Rivendell, we tried to hide him in Lothlorien, and then keep him out of the battle of Helm's Deep....he wouldn't stay behind.”

“Why does that not surprise me?” said Sirius pulling his hands down slightly. “I swear, if anything dangerous were to happen, he'd be right there in the thick of it. When Dumbledore told me about his years at school, I earned half of the gray hair on my head.”

The Fellowship smiled fondly at the ground.
“So...what you said days ago, is Harry really in danger?” asked Aragorn.

“Yeah, and apparently, he's in more danger than he was before...” said Sirius. “I just want to take him home, where he'll be safe.”

“From what he says about his world, it's no more dangerous than this world.” said Strider poking the fire with a stick.

Sirius watched the fire crackle. “I suppose, but...I just want him home...”

They sat in silence. “I don't think we could honestly say he would rather stay here. He speaks of going home so often.” said Gimli.

“Really?” asked Sirius...he tried to sound excited, but he was still worrying too much.

“He even passed up the love of a young woman.” said Aragorn with a smile.

Sirius raised his head slowly. “Wait, what?” asked Sirius in shock.

“That's right.” said Sirius.

“He...had a...really?” said Sirius with a smile playing on his face.

“In Helms Deep, he had a numerous amount of young ladies attempting to win his affection.” said Legolas

Sirius smiled broadly as he watched the fire, “That's my boy. What's she like?”

Aragorn thought quietly, it had been so long, and he had only seen her briefly very few times. “She was very lovely. I don't quite remember, it had been so long, but I'm sure Harry was fond of her.”
“Oh boy...” said Sirius scratching his head.

“What's wrong?” asked Aragorn.

“From what Ron, and Hermione told me of Harry's past, there might be a few girls back home that might not like more competition.” said Sirius.

The men sat in silence, until all three of them began to laugh.

Remus took over Sirius' spot while watching Harry in the dark room of Grimmauld Place. He flipped through the pages of his book on magical history that he had found in the Black family library. He wanted to know more about this crown that had appeared mysteriously in the house and the king of the magical realm.

He would have read the book downstairs, but Hagrid was now uncomfortable about being inside the room alone. He felt that someone had come in and tried to hurt Harry, but Sirius stopped them and went after them to make sure they stayed away. The others tried to tell him that no one came inside Headquarters that wasn't supposed to, but they couldn't tell Hagrid where Sirius ended up going.

Remus didn't mind sitting with Harry though, he missed the boy terribly but sitting beside him made him feel a bit better. The kids continued to come and see how he was doing, but because of Hermione screaming almost frantically the last time they were sitting there and Harry began to bleed.

“What's going on?” yelled Ron as he held a frantic Hermione.

“Just get outside.” said Lupin trying to sound calm. “We need to get back to work.”

He could completely understand why Sirius was quickly losing his mind, all this worry was starting to affect him too, and not just him, anyone that knew what was really going on was becoming worried and agitated.

Mrs. Weasley could be seen weeping in the kitchen when no one was in there with her. Her house
had been destroyed by the Ministry of Magic and she still hadn't heard from her son Percy, she wanted to make sure he was alright and the Ministry didn't take him into custody to interrogate him.

She had managed to assure him that while most of their possessions were gone, that everyone was alright and she had saved a few things that meant the most to the family, but that was a quick visit and she couldn't stay long, not with people hunting all over for Harry to find out where he was. Even Percy had asked her, but she said that he was not at the house, but the last she heard, he was fine. She didn't want to lie to her son, she hated just the thought of lying to her family.

But she was most worried about Harry, she had seen the bedroom's trash bucket full of bloodied gauze patches and bandages, it was becoming too much for her to take at times.

Remus flipped through the book absently, and looked over to Harry. He had been quiet for a while, no other wounds have shown up, he was just lying there, resting. But despite the peaceful look on his face, concern still bore a hole in his heart.

Dumbledore was also worrying, but he was forced to stay back at Hogwarts. He was having mixed emotions, from Poppy's report when she returned from Headquarters.

“I don't know what is going on with that poor boy.” said Madam Pomfrey placing her bag and wand down on one of the chairs in Dumbledore's office.

“Is he alright?” asked Dumbledore solicitously.

“I cannot say for sure, the wounds on his body...it's reminds me of...” said Madam Pomfrey.

“Reminds you of what?” asked Dumbledore.

“Torture.” said Madam Pomfrey.

Dumbledore stared at his school nurse, how could he be tortured? No one in that house would harm a single hair on his head, let alone torture him. It had to be from the other realm that Harry was trapped in, but who was torturing him? And why?
The King still hadn't shown up to reassure him that Harry was going to be alright and to tell him where Sirius was. It was strange, he had gone most of his life without the aid of the King, and yet he couldn't seem to make a decision without first thinking of the king and desiring his consul.

No. He didn't need the king's help, all he needed to focus on was what he himself could do. Harry's plight was nothing he himself could take care of at this time, it was out of his hands. All he could do for Harry was wait for him to wake up, and make sure no one get's to him and harms him.

He walked over to the window and looked out onto the grounds. It was all quiet on the school grounds, and down in the village. But outside the village of Hogsmede, he could see sparks and blasts of spells crashing in the air against an invisible wall.

Death Eaters were attacking the castle.

Twice he had gone out and sent the Death Eaters scattering back to their own Headquarters, he had only sustained minor injuries when one lucky Death Eater struck him with a spell while he was distracted with a cluster of Death Eaters to the left of him. Next time, he would have to bring a few staff members down to protect the school with him.

He was getting too old for this.

“Damn!” groaned Carmicheal as he rubbed his burned shoulder. “How do we know the kid is even here? He could be bloody anywhere!”

“Hogwarts is the safest place anywhere, where else would Dumbledore keep the boy, aside from near himself?” said Nott standing up and leaning heavily against the tree as he gasped for air.

“Why can't Snape come and let us in?” asked one of the younger Death Eaters.

“Fool, he's the Dark Lord's spy, if we ruin it...we could bring back a thousand Potters we'd still be killed.” said Macnair.

“Guess we should be lucky that Snape hasn't been forced to come out and force to fight us.” said Rudolphus. “I can remember when he dueled the Dark Lord, he was the closest out of all of us to
They had retreated almost half a mile away from the castle and village to recuperate from their attack on the castle. A small campsite had been erected and Death Eaters were huddled together, plotting their next attack.

“What is happening with the others? Have they breached the protective spells over the ruined Weasley house yet?” asked Lucius looking over to one of the other Death Eaters.

“No word on that yet, but the Ministry destroyed their house in the search for the boy. Why would they hide the boy there?” said Rookwood. “It's nothing more than a crumbling shack right now.”

“That is the only other available house. My son tells me that the Weasleys always put him up in the Ministry, he had no other summer home.” said Lucius.

“What about the Potter family manor?” asked Nott.

“From what I hear, the Patriarch of the Potter family has not returned to England.” said Lucius.

“How would you know?” asked Macnair.

“I'm related to the Patriarch through a marriage of sorts.” said Lucius darkly.

“Ah...I know who you are talking about.” said Rudolphus.

“So do we.” said a pair of voices coming from behind them. A pair of tall wizards, one with long black hair that trailed down to the back of his knees in a long braid and the other with a short crop of blonde hair. They both had their wands in their hands and pointed at the Death Eaters.

“I'm flattered that you remember me.” said the blonde with a smirk over to Lucius. “To think, you'd dare to take on Dumbledore...either you're getting braver, or dumber.”

“I'm betting the latter.” said the black haired man looking around at his surroundings. The Death
Eaters closed in around them, their own wands drawn.

“I wouldn't if I were you.” said the black haired man with a smirk.

“We've been in Africa for the past fourteen years…” said the blonde man.

“And things...you'll remember…”

“Are wilder down there.” said the two of them together as they snapped their fingers.

Vines erupted out of the ground and ensnared each of the Death Eaters in it's deadly embrace. The more they struggled, the tighter the vines gripped the men.

“Keep it up, and you won't last till morning.” said the black haired man. “Apparate out of here and you'll be fine.”

“You're mad…” gasped one of the Death Eaters. “We worked hard to get this close to the village.”

“You'll never get this close again.” said the blonde. “These things will seek out you and anyone else like you if you come near this place again. You're more than welcome to test out it's range...but after a few times...it'll kill you to keep you from pestering it again.”

The sound of cracks popped around the darkness until the two wizards were left standing alone.

“C'mon Leroy, I've got some questions to ask the old man.” said the black haired man.

“Hope he likes the new flowers we brought, it ought to beef up security for him.” said Leroy with a smile.
Restless Sleep

Harry felt himself floating in the air. His eyes were closed and he couldn't find the strength to open them, as if they were two lead slabs over his lids. He couldn't hear anything, or smell anything. It was complete and utter silence, and blackness.

Perhaps he had died. He had laid down on the bed and fell asleep, maybe he passed away in his sleep...it was the way he would want to go, but not this young in his life. He didn't get to see Sirius again, Ron, Hermione or anyone else for that matter. He wanted to know how Frodo and Sam would make out, would they be able to bring the ring to Mordor? And Anya...no...she moved on with her life surely, just like he told her to. There was a slim chance that he would see her again, and if he had died, then there was no chance.

Suddenly, the pressure on his body lessened and he could begin to move his fingers, then his toes, and then finally his eyes. He looked around himself slowly, he was floating in the room he had just fallen asleep in. Harry turned his head and entire body and saw himself sleeping peacefully below.

“What the?” asked Harry.

“Greetings lad.” said the ghostly figure flying up to meet him. “Welcome to your non-corporeal form.”

Harry recoiled and stared at the man, then he looked down saw that he was just now a pale shadow of what he was. It was like he was a Hogwarts ghost, just not as shiny and brightly translucent as they were.

“So, am I...?” asked Harry.

“Dead? Thankfully, no.” said the ghost with a smile. “You’ve just become an observer. I hope you didn't think I was going to let you just sleep all this time? What would you learn by just resting?”

“I thought you said...” said Harry looking at his hands in awe.

“You get bored in the afterlife son, you need to poke fun at someone.” said King Meandenbor with a smile. “And to be honest, you were the first person I have talked to in this world since I died.”
Finally, he finally had the opportunity to ask questions and hopefully get some answers. No one seemed to know the whole story, perhaps the source would be able to give him more answers. “Listen, I've got a lot of questions, like...why me?” asked Harry. “What's with the stones, how did they kill you...”

“Easy lad.” said King Meandenbor. “We have a lot of time, what is the most pressing question on your mind...why you?”

Harry nodded.

“Well, to be honest, I didn't choose you, at first. You came to this world...partially on accident. The one that sent you here didn't realize that you would be in contention for the Magical World's highest power.” said King Meandenbor. *If she had, she would have sent herself, no doubt.*

“So you did come from our world!” said Harry. There was one answer, he'd have to keep track and let Elrond and Celeborn know. If he ever saw them again, and if *he* could remember.

“That I did, but after a few a while, I became enchanted with this world, I wanted to make this my new home. The one we both come from was(and still is) a corrupted mess. The simplicity of this world was refreshing, and it's people...ah...the people...devoid of such wanting nonsense that most people in our world have. When you get back to your world, I believe that you will understand exactly where I am coming from.”

“So you came here, to escape our home?” said Harry.

“The balance can be maintained by the King anywhere, he doesn't have to stay in the castle.” said the King with an adolescent shrug.

Harry didn't want to go into what the balance was, that wasn't all the pressing at the moment.

“So...me being chosen for this is just an accident?” said Harry.

“A *very* happy accident.” said King Meandenbor correcting Harry lightly. “I've seen hundreds of possible candidates come and go, but you...you” he smiled. “You are by far the best possible
choice.”

How do you figure?” asked Harry frowning slightly.

“Dear boy! Where do I start!” said King Meandenbor with a laugh and a gesture of his hands.

Harry looked away. “I can come up with several different choices.”

“And that's one of the reason why you are the best choice, you don't want it.” said King Meandenbor. “You know what it's like to live without, you don't want everything, you just want the basics, a family, a home to call your own...nothing more than that.”

Harry scratched the back of his head, he could feel his face turning red.

“What's with the stones? Where did they come from?” asked Harry.

“They are a manifestation of my powers here. Unlike wizards, they cannot be drained of magical energy so easily.” said King Meandenbor.

“What do you mean?” asked Harry curiously, he had remembered the battle on Caradhras...he had never felt so...empty before.

“Have you ever been drained?” asked Harry curiously, he had remembered the battle on Caradhras...he had never felt so...empty before.

“No, but it never hurts to be prepared, like this room for instance.” said the king gesturing around himself to the room they hovered in.
“Huh?”

“This room, only I or someone I allow may be able to enter here, no malicious or...we'll use 'self-absorbed personality' may enter this chamber.” said King Meandenbor. “Your body is safe here, now...let's take a small journey...you'll find this amusing, I gather.”

He led Harry through the wall, and into the open air, hovering over the curse ridden land of Mordor, drifting like wisps of clouds.

“See what happens when you value power over wisdom.” said King Meandenbor. “He had a fantastic mind, and great power, but he longer wished to share his knowledge with the world, but instead..wished to rule it.”

Harry looked down at the countless orcs and trolls that tromped around the barren landscape. They were most likely on their way to Minas Tirith, and each one looked as merciless as the next. Harry could hardly believe his eyes, how were they supposed to contend with such force? Every time they'd knock one down, ten would be there to replace it!

“Come, let's not dwell here.” said the King coaxing Harry to follow him downward.

They fell to the ground beside the Black tower lightly and made their way slowly across the scarred land.

It was almost forty minutes of gliding along the dark valley walls when Harry saw something caught his eye. “Hey, how often do two orcs travel by themselves?” asked Harry floating down to the two figures trying to lurk in the shadows, King Meandenbor followed him down.

“Never, they travel in battalions in Mordor.” said the King looking over to Harry. “Why do you ask, lad?”

Harry floated above the pair of them and watched them carefully. “These guys...they seem a little...timid for orcs...don't you think?”

The King looked at them, and then smiled. “They aren't what they appear to be.” said King Meandenbor wisely.
“How are you holding up, Mr. Frodo?” asked one of the iron clad orcs.

“It's Sam!” said Harry excitedly. “And Frodo!”

The King smiled, but then the smile switched to a worried countenance. “Quick lad, come here!” said the King suddenly.

“What...they can't see us...” said Harry as the King latched onto his arm.

“It's not them, I'm worried about.” said the King pulling Harry towards the darkened rocks.

The sky then burned with red hot fire coming from the tall dark tower of Morder. The flaming eye hovering above flashed brightly and a loud scream echoed across the valleys and down the plains.

SHEEEIEEEAAHHHH!

“It seems that he just discovered you were gone.” said King Meandenbor.

“You sure he can't get into that room?” asked Harry with a worried tone in his voice. He didn't want to think what would happen if that nut got a hold of his unconscious body.

“If he could, he would have possession of one of the stones.” said King Meandenbor looking up at the sky, towards the eye enshrouded in flame.

“It's in there?” asked Harry in shock.

“The day I died in this world, I was going to make a grand entrance onto the Pelennor Fields, but...I was interrupted. I had forgotten it in my bedroom and was on my way to retrieve it.” said King Meandenbor. “The onyx stone has the ability to transport you anywhere in Middle Earth...”

“That would have come in handy at the beginning of this journey.” said Harry. This is turning into
some twisted version of *The Wizard of Oz.* thought Harry with a groan.

“I can imagine.” said the King with a smile. “Now...let's get out of here, before that eye sees us.”

“Can he?” asked Harry quietly.

“He's caught me once, quite a long time ago.” said the King. “Though, I don't think he quite knew what to make of me when he caught a glimpse of me.”

“So, are we safe?” asked Harry.

“As long as we stay out of that eye's sight, we are,” said the King. “Come, let's get out of Mordor, there is nothing we can do for your friends, they can neither see nor hear you.” he pulled Harry closer to the shadows, and towards the far black metal gate.

“Where are we going?” asked Harry.

“The end of our journey will be Minas Tirith, just to see how they are holding up.” said the King pulling Harry close to the rocks and through some of them.

“Hold up, if the stone that transports you from one place to the other is in the room, how come we don't just apparate out of there?” asked Harry.

“A simple solution, unfortunately we cannot. Sauron, as powerful as he is, can negate that particular stone just by being around it.” said King Meandenbor.

“How can he?” asked Harry.

“I'm not sure, pure malice perhaps, but when I tried to escape (while I was alive of course) I could not. I tried to summon the stone to me, but I wasn't able to summon it from my room, which I was able to do quite easily in any part of my castle.” said the King.

“How come you didn't just summon it and save all the walking?” asked Harry.
“Dear lad, just because you have the power, doesn’t mean you should be complacent and ignore to
invigorate your body with exercise. When I was attacked, all I could do was secure the stone to the
most protected room in my castle, when I banished the rest of them.” said King Meandenbor
keeping an look out on the eye positioned high above them. “And frankly, it was good for your
world that he never gained possession of that stone, as it would be able to take him to our world.”

“So, there's no getting to it right now.” said Harry, trying not to think about Sauron in his
world...muggle and wizard alike would stand no chance.

“Not right now, there would be no point. We cannot escape with that particular stone at this time,
not without substantial trouble.” said the King. “We will be able to get that stone out at a later
moment, preferably when the Dark Lord’s focus has either been completely taken away from us, or
has been shattered.”

“How do we shatter it?” asked Harry.

“How do we shatter it?” asked Harry.

“Your hobbit friends there, they'll have to destroy the ring.” said the ghostly king pointing to where
Sam and Frodo were once standing.

Harry looked at the tower as they glided towards the Black Gate, he'd have to wait till Sauron was
defeated to get one of the final stones...and he still didn't find all of them yet!

How was he to get the stones he had yet to collect?

Sirius wanted to strangle that sorry excuse for a spook when he got back to his own world.

He was now following an elf, fellow man, and dwarf into a dark and decaying cave with bones and
cobwebs all over the place. He wasn't fond of spiders, and he certainly wasn't on friendly terms
with dead people.

“Why the hell am I here?” muttered Sirius looking around in the darkness.

“You wanted to come.” said Strider leading the way with a torch.
“Only because the King told me to stick to you...if he wasn't already dead, I would swear to everything holy that I'm gonna kill him.” said Sirius darkly. “And you can't tell me that you three were more than excited to come down here.”

Gimli said nothing, but tightened his grip on his axe.

It didn't fare any better for Sirius when they traveled further down the cavernous hole. They walked down into the depths of the mountain in almost absolute silence. Each footstep across the dirt covered stone path held the chance of them cracking a bone underfoot.

“I hate this.” muttered Sirius as he kicked a skull off the path.

“You've said that. Repeatedly.” said Strider tiredly as he waved the torch from side to side. This man had been complaining nonstop since he walked face-first into a spider's web. He was still pulling webbing out of his hair, and he was becoming increasingly jumpy. The first time his boot had cracked through a femur, he nearly shouted in horror. He had to give the man some credit, he didn't scream or (as Harry put it one day) freak out completely, just enough to annoy the Ranger. Though, he had to admit to himself, he was ducking down pretty low in the cavern, just in case another swarm of bats came out to meet them. He was not fond of those creatures, not even a little, and he had nearly dropped his torch when the cloud of bats came pouring out of the cavern when they first entered.

“Try and keep quiet, we're nearing the heart of the mountain.” growled Strider softly.

“The spirits...they are uneasy...” said Legolas looking around sharply.

“So's my stomach.” thought Sirius to himself. “I hope we can get away from here soon.”

They traveled down until the paths came to an end and they were standing in a large open area, like a giant beehive, each open part of the wall held the body of a fallen soldier, but they were fallen no more. They were now swarming around them, and they could attack them, as if they were still breathing.

“I'd give anything to see Peeves right now.” said Sirius looking around. He looked around slightly, he was hoping that the King's voice would come to him and offer him some reassurances...it never came. “Where the hell are you? Now that I need you, I can't bloody find you!” he muttered.
“Where the hell are you?”

“There we are...safe, for the time being.” said the King as they drifted towards the rocky hill in front of the Black Gate.

“The time being?” asked Harry as he gasped against a large stone. He may have been non-corporeal, but it was still hard work trying to get from one shadow in Mordor to the next.

“Remember lad, we'll have to get back to the tower, before the Dark Lord falls.” said King Meandenbor.

“For what?” asked Harry.

“To get the stone.” said the King ushering Harry even further away from the gate. “If Sauron falls, and you're body is still in there, and you're spirit is out here...”

“I'm dead.” said Harry.

“Worse than that...” said the King with a sad expression. “You won't even be at peace, you'll cease utterly.”

“Than why bring me out?” asked Harry.

“While you are unable to take the stone out in my castle, there is nothing to stop you from claiming any other stone.” said Meandenbor looking around.

“How?”

“I'm unable to take the stones from their designated hiding spots...but not my heir...” said King Meandenbor with a kind smile.

“But...I..” said Harry.
“Lad, I know you don't want to assume the throne, but unfortunately, we have no choice, you have no choice. You'll never escape in time if we try and get you out the normal way.” said the King.

“But...” said Harry.

“That stone allows you to transport yourself anywhere! It's not like the others, this requires a royal command, of the highest level. No king here could command that stone.” said King Meandenbor.

“I don't understand.” said Harry with an exasperated sigh tossing his head in exasperation.

“I suppose I'll have to explain the stones a bit further.” said King Meandenbor.

“Please do...” said Harry.
The Stones Limitations

The two ghostly figures made their way a little further away from the Black Gate, King Meandenbor didn't want to test the range of Sauron's vision so they continued on further seeking somewhere inconspicuous to talk. Finally, the King felt that they were safe behind one of the large hills in front of Mordor.

“Start your questions, lad. I won't know what to elaborate on.” said King Meandenbor with a smile.

Harry looked down at the ground, where was he to start? He had questions, not all of them on the stones, there was a few that were on other things, but those could wait.

“Where are those stones from?” asked Harry.

“I thought I told you...” said the King with a questioning look.

“Just...tell me again.” said Harry with a groan. “If I'm going to...take the throne...I want to know everything I can.”

The King smiled.

“But, I'm doing this under protest.” muttered Harry.

The King heard Harry's words, but he let it slide, he could understand the boy's frustrations, and he would placate the boy all he wanted. “Those stones originated from our world, I created them before I made my way here.” said the King.

“Why? Why would you make them if you could just use magic here anyway?” asked Harry. Normal magic would make more sense, you didn't need a different stone for each thing you wanted.

“What makes you think you can use our normal magic here?” said King Meandenbor with a smile. “There is something, something not even all the Kings and Queens could ever figure out, that stops all normal magic from transferring over to the other world. It might be the reason why they never
wanted to come here, being unarmed is a frightening idea.”

“I can understand that, though, for a bit, I thought it was right fun. So, Gandalf wouldn't be able to come to our world and create magic?” asked Harry in wonder. “He'd have to do something like what you did?”

“That's right.” said the King floating back and forth in front of Harry. He was overjoyed that the boy had decided to take the crown, even if it was just to get home. Unless, there was another way that he didn't know of, but that was not likely. He felt guilty that he had to tell the boy his only hope in getting home was to take his place as king of the magical world, but the chance to finally rest in peace...it was worth it and he would endure the guilt till the end of time.

“So the stones came from our world, and you gave them powers.” said Harry repeating what the King was saying, just so he could understand.

“That's right.” said King Meandenbor. “I scoured the royal vaults for the most beautiful of gems to pick from. I had a lot to choose from, a small urn of jewels from those vaults is worth ten times a muggle King's ransom.”

“Is there any limits with them?” asked Harry. He could guess a few, but he wanted to know if there was something that he didn't know about. “Just in case I use them again and something happens.”

“Good question.” said the King with a smile. “Let's see...each one has a limitation of sorts. The opal stone, while it stalls time, but it doesn't last forever. The slowing down will only last perhaps a half hour at best. One would think that a half hour is more than enough...”

“Sometimes no.” said Harry with a smile.

“Exactly.” said the King with a smile. “Sometimes you'll be up against an entire army and you're grossly outnumbered....you need to move very fast.”

“The beryl stone has a fantastic ability, it gives you far sight, and the ability to look at things up close to examine them properly, you can't see through people or objects though. So you'd best use it on an open area to use it fully.” said the King.

“I don't think I got that one yet.” said Harry.
“Yes you did, it was with Treebeard.” said the King lightly. “You didn't get the chance to use it, but perhaps you will soon.”

Harry looked at the King in confusion, how did he know when and where he got the stones? It had been centuries since he sent the stones out into the world, how would know where they all were and when he got them? He decided to save the question for later. “What about the amethyst?” asked Harry.

“Ah, that one is my personal favorite.” said the King with a smile. “As long as weather is present, the sun, clouds, water, fog...the possibilities are endless.”

“Except underground.” said Harry with a smile. “There's no weather underground.”

“Correct. So you'll have to use that stone above the ground, which normally is not a problem. Unless you find some creative way to bring about some weather.” said the King. “The turquoise stone...that one has the biggest limitation. You can only heal as much as your body will allow and you cannot bring back the dead.”

“As much as my body can handle?” asked Harry.

“Learn this lesson well, lad...you can't save everyone.” said the King somberly.

Harry looked at the king in silence, he didn't try and save everyone...did he? He shifted uncomfortably as he floated in the air.

Harry had to think about what other stones he currently had, he didn't want to dwell on the prospect that he was that easy to read, or that naïve. “What about the diamond, sapphire, topaz, and all the other ones?” asked Harry.

“Well, I suppose the diamond is the one that has easiest limitation to overcome.” said King Meandenbor.

“How?” asked Harry.
“You are only limited by what samples you give the stones. Animal samples that is, it won't turn you into different people.” said King Meandenbor. “The sapphire is another story, you need to have some water around you somewhere. It could manipulate bodies of water, puddles, even clouds, but if there is no water, there is no point using the stone.”

“Couldn't you store water in there? And use it like a canteen or something?” asked Harry. The sapphire was one of the stones that Treebeard had, and he never got the chance to try it out for real either.

King Meandenbor looked at the boy...with a slight smile on his face. “I've never had the need to use the stone like that, you'll have to find out when you gain possession of the stones again. Now...about these other stones...the topaz...really the only limitation is your imagination.”

“That's the one that moves stones and dirt.” said Harry nodding.

“Not just that, it manipulates the earth, what you can do with it, is up to you to find out.” said the King. “Now, the emerald one...”

“You have to have plants around.” said Harry.

“Very good!” said the King proudly, he was happy that the boy was joining in the conversation and finding out the limitations on his own, without the king having to spell it out for him.

“One thing though...” said Harry quickly. “Why was it acting oddly in Fangorn?”

“It's the Ents, they draw extra power from it strangely enough. I'm amazed the stone didn't land there, instead of Lothlorien.” said the King with a faint smile. “It could have helped the Ents immensely, I believe, I'm sure the Entwives wouldn't have left if the stone had been there, it's a pity.”

Harry stared, now he wanted to ask the question that come across his mind a while ago. “How did you know I found it there? And about the one with Treebeard?”

“Silly boy, I've been watching you since the beginning.” said the King shaking his head. “Ever
since you arrived as forcefully as you have, I've been keeping an eye on you.”

“But...how come you didn't help me?” asked Harry.

“Who says I haven't?” said the King with a mischievous smile.

“I haven't seen you...” said Harry slowly.

“But you've heard me, surely, doesn't my voice sound familiar?” said the King with a sly smile.

Harry stared at the man, then it dawned on him.

“Wait...Verlairion?” said Harry.

“Exactly!” said the King with a laugh.

“How...”

“I possessed your sword, it seemed to be the most convenient way to guide you when you really needed it.” said the King with a smile.

“I thought I was going mad!” said Harry shortly. “Do you know how odd it was hearing someone talking to me through a sword?”

“I can imagine, but lad, I couldn't find another way to speak to you, without destroying any hope of you becoming and choosing to take the throne on your own.” said the King.

“That didn't go well, did it?” said Harry, he was a little irked that the King was trying to push him to take the throne early on...and not only that, he didn't tell him who he was to start with!

“It went well, for a while, you learned a few moves though didn't you?” said King Meandenbor
with an encouraging smile.

“Well...sure...” said Harry.

The King smiled fondly. “Lad, I know you don't want the crown, I know you could name a dozen or so people you feel that deserves the crown more than you. But I've seen so many people in our world and in this, and lad, you stick out like a diamond on a black sheet.”

Harry turned his face downward and had a faint blush on his face.

“You know, you don't have to stay King forever, you may relinquish the crown to someone you feel would be a better ruler.” said the King with a sly smile.

Harry looked up, the blush gone. “Really?”

“The rules of a King or Queen are absolute, but, there is an escape clause.” replied the King still smiling. “If you don't find yourself able to handle the job, and you want to be noble and leave before the world is sent into a death spiral, you are able to find someone whom you believe to be better and you can make him your replacement. But...they have to believe that you aren't qualified and they have to agree to the change in command.”

Harry sat in thought.

“Now back to these stones...the pearl, as you had seen from that dream I gave you...”

“You've been giving me those whacked out dreams?” shouted Harry.

“Well, I couldn't exactly come up with an easier way to teach you how to use the stones...did you not like them?” asked the King innocently.

“That last one was a bit freaky.” said Harry.

“Well, that was more of a warning than anything.”
“A warning?”

“That your greatest enemy has entered this world.” said the King with a somber look.

“Oh that’s just great.”

“And he has the Jade stone, the most deadly of them all.”

Sirius gasped for air as they left the mountain, and it's dead population. He hadn't ever had to deal with anything like that before. Skeletons lying all over the place, cobwebs lacing the sides of the wall and the entry ways of different tunnels, rats skittering around looking for anything to eat, and on top of all that, dead soldiers that came back to live and would not stay down for long.

Just the sight of the King of the Dead made Sirius nearly sick with fright. The King's spirit looked decayed and worm eaten, he hoped all spirits didn't look like that...he didn't want to think what James would look like after so many years.

Any thought that possessed his mind was focused on death, what it was like to die, what happens afterward and what you might look like to someone else. Legolas had to stop him from placing a knife to his throat to end it right then.

“Black! Fight it, *fight it!*” said Legolas pulling the knife out of his hands.

Sirius shook his head rapidly and the thoughts dissipated. He gasped, looking around at the cavernous tombs.

“You have to keep your mind steeled, this place will put a spell on you if you let your fear cloud your mind.” said Legolas.

“Would have been nice to know beforehand.” muttered Sirius as he put his knife away and drew his sword.

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Sirius didn't even bother to look back at the King of the Dead when he vowed he would join them.

“Fine, yes, thank you.” said Sirius weakly as he hurried away from the skull buried door. He didn't want to take his knife out again.

“Come along, Black.” said Aragorn walking swiftly down the hill.

“What next?” said Sirius holding his stomach tightly. He had just finished retching into a nearby bush after what nearly happened came crashing into his consciousness. It dawned on him that he just about left Harry behind in this primitive world, where he was no doubt (in his mind) somewhere hurt, cold, hungry and needing of his godfather.

“Now we board the black Cosair ships.” said Aragorn.

“Great, from ghouls to seasickness...my day just keeps getting better and better.” growled Sirius as he struggled to catch up to the three of them.

“How are we to take on the armada?” asked Legolas as they ran nonstop to the wide river below.

“Three ships we'll be able to take on easily, but more than that.” said Gimli gruffly.

They stopped at the beach, awaiting for the ships to come arrive at the shore. Strider had seen the sails off into the distance, know all they had to do was plan and wait for the ships to come closer.

“We will have the army of the dead behind us. Those we do not fell ourselves, they will deal with them.” said Aragorn kneeling down in the sand and peering off into the horizon.

“How do you know they will come?” said Sirius. “They could just turn and run like they did the last time right?”

“They will hold their oath true, they know what everlasting suffering is like, they will not miss this chance.” said Gimli wisely. “Though, I hope we can use them at Minas Tirith, sounds like a little out of our league just going by ourselves.”
“Are you scared?” asked Legolas teasingly.

“Not at all, I just want to make sure someone has your back when you run into trouble.” smirked Gimli.

Sirius looked off into the distance, in the direction where Aragorn said Minas Tirith lay. He was worried about Harry, the King said that he was in danger and he'd have to get to him, hopefully in time.

“I wouldn't worry...Harry has quite a lot of luck on his side.” said Strider carefully, out of the corner of his eye, he could see the man's worried expression.

“He doesn't back in our world, didn't matter what sort of danger it was, it would come to him.” said Sirius, not caring that he and the Ranger were talking cordially with each other. “And we nearly lose him every single time.”

“Yes, but he survives.” said Aragorn with a faint smile. “And that can use up a lifetime of luck when the danger is great enough.”

“I know, but all this...him getting hurt, it terrifies me.” said Sirius. “I missed so much of his life, and now that I have him, I don't want to lose him.”

“I don't want to either.” thought Strider to himself.

“I lost his dad, I lost his mother, and then I didn't get to see him for almost twelve years, I'd give anything to go back, if just to stop myself from chasing Peter.” said Sirius kicking a rock into the mighty river in front of him.

“We all have things we would rather not do in our past, it's just a matter of moving on and doing what you must.” said Legolas.

“Aye.” said Gimli.

Sirius looked over to the three of them, and a small smile played on his lips. They were getting
along a lot better now, at least him and Aragorn, he got along pretty well with Legolas and Gimli pretty well already. They were all just playing nice for now, the prize ahead wasn't just a free world for them, it was hopefully keeping Harry.

And Sirius wasn't going to give up without a fight. So he supposed he would have to buckle down, and get ready to fight as dirty as he could.
The Black ships came closer to the shore, and the Corsair Captain stood beside the helm, scanning the horizon with a disdainful sneer. It wouldn't much longer till they could take their place in the army of Sauron, and bring about the fall of Minas Tirith and its pitiful people. They had been promised rich rewards if they would come and help in the plunder the White city, and with the treasures that were sure to be in there, it was the most tempting of offers.

They passed the forbidding White mountains, and as they did, he could hear his men whispering fearfully. The corsair sailors were not weak men, or men with superstitious tendencies, but even the hardest of sailor knew to fear the White mountains and their haunted population. Tales had been told of a few ships that foolishly drifted too close to the shores were boarded by spectral figures, warriors of old, and the ship and its foolhardy crew were ripped apart, killing them and in turn joining the specters, meanwhile the ship was reduced to nothing but splinters littering the riverbed. All feared the White Mountains, except for the Captain.

“What are you vermin whispering about?” shouted the Captain harshly.

“Don't you know what that is, captain? It's the haunted mountain, they say an army of dead soldiers lay there.” said the helmsman quietly, he then gave a bone deep shudder. “You couldn't force me up that wretched mountainside, not for all the gold in all the world.”

“Well, then it's a good thing we're not, you sniveling dogs.” sneered the Captain nastily. “We're heading for Osgiliath, now if you little maidens can get us there...!”

Despite the fear that his men obviously showed to the White Mountain, he feared the wrath of the Dark Lord Sauron, which they would most assuredly receive if they didn't make it to Osgiliath at the right moment. He had heard rumors of what happened to those who didn't rise to Sauron's expectations, and that made him shudder. Old tales of an old mountain-born race of men paled in comparison.

Suddenly, a shriek came upon the wind and the men stopped in their tracks on the deck, they turned their fear ridden eyes towards the shore and saw a great tidal wave of greenish fog coming down out of the mountainside. At first it seemed to be some oddly colored mist, but this was no harmless fog...they could see frightening phantasms wielding swords, shields, spears and bows and arrows, poised and ready to do some carnage. Their faces twisted, skin with small holes where green quivering maggots dug themselves deeper into the flesh, skulls with eyes burning bright within their sockets.
“They're coming!” yelled the first mate frantically.

“We're lost!” shouted the Helmsman as he left the helm and jumped off the side of the ship and into the river.

“You cowards! They're nothing but spirits!” shouted the Captain drawing his sword.

But that didn't stop the rest of the crew from leaping off the sides of the ship to escape the dead spirits coming down the mountain to wreak their vengeance on them, but as they did so, the ghouls would hover over the water, keeping the Corsairs under, taunting them and stabbing them with their spectral weapons, and it was there that they slowly drowned.

“You won't take me!” shouted the Captain. He turned and saw two men with long brown hair come at him with swords drawn and rushing towards him. The blades of a glimmering, virgin sword and an ancient looking sword was the the last thing he had ever seen.

Legolas and Gimli were beside the helm and helping the rest of the sailors off the ship with both their axe and bow. Soon, there was apparently no one left on the ship, the Corsairs were defeated.

“Well, that was easy.” said Sirius as he wiped the blood off his sword. “Though...I'm not too overly fond of killing someone...never did that before...not...hands on...anyway.”

“First time is always the hardest.” said Legolas softly.

“Let's hope there's no one down below decks.” said Gimli as he turned to the door leading below.

“Oi!” shouted a few crewmen coming up from down below. They drew their weapons and charged up the stairs. Sirius was standing beside the open cabin and slammed the hilt of his sword into the first one's face and as he staggered back, the rest of them did as well. Sirius moved aside so Legolas could take out the others with his bow.

Once they were down, Sirius looked amongst the three of them, and he smiled. “Man, that was...kind of fun. Little sadistic of me saying that, but it was quite...invigorating.”
Aragron looked over to the otherworldly man with a shocked look.

“Where were you two hours ago?” asked Gimli. He failed to mention that even he himself was a little hesitant to strike at thin air whilst in the mountains.

Sirius looked at the dwarf in shock, “Those were ghosts, these were just normal guys.”

Legolas rolled his eyes.

“So, you're ready to fight now?” said Aragorn as he leapt to the helm to steer the ship away from the shore where it was drifting. The ghosts took control of the ships behind them as they sailed almost silently through the water.

“Maybe, guess I should practice a bit...” said Sirius.

“A bit?” said Aragorn with a smirk.

“Yeah...alright..a lot.” retorted Sirius.

Voldemort struggled as he tried to make it down the road, leaning heavily on a stout stick. He had lost almost everything, he had lost his horse, the staff he had been given, and his money. He only had the whatever was left of the clothes on his back, his sword, a few of the weapons he had gathered and the stone.

The little wench had stolen his horse, and he swore that when he caught up with her, she was no longer going to be bait, she was dead. He wasn't going to stop till he had impaled her with all the weapons he had floating behind him.

He had no ally now, all he had was himself and the stone. There was no one to help him. But all in all it made things so much simpler.

Everyone was now a target.

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Anya galloped as hard and as fast as she could to Minas Tirith, she had to take a long detour when saw a vision of the large army standing beneath the white walls of the city. The last vision she had saved her life from certain death, she had no choice but to heed the warning that was now before her. She circled around for many miles around the field of Pelennor to avoid the vast army to try and enter the White City on the sly. That was not a likely event, the army was still laying siege to the great city of Gondor.

She tried making her way far south when she heard a galloping coming up behind her.

“Halt!” said a pair of horsemen riding up beside her. They took her reigns and steered her away from her course. They were scouts, and when they saw a single woman riding nervously towards the mountains, they rode furiously to catch her. While they did not know if she was friend, foe, or even some innocent traveler they could not let her go any further in the direction she was heading. If she had continued on she would have been riding to her doom, if she would take the wrong turn at almost any moment to her left she would have been shot down out of the saddle. They had so far slain fifteen orc archers hidden on the mountain side and prepared to take the life and provisions of any passing traveler. And if it was too big of target for them, they would have fired messages to the other scouts hidden on the mountain to send to the army of Sauron.

As they neared her and led her back to the camp where King Theoden was, they didn't believe that she was an agent of the enemy, she was too...young and pretty...despite what she looked like at the moment. Her hair was disheveled, her face marred with dirt and bruises, and her dress was filthy and torn. The poor fair thing needed help, and they were just the gentlemen for the job.

She looked fearfully between the two of them, thinking they were the enemy. She tried vainly to get away, but the riders seem to think that she was just unused to the saddle and tried to keep her firmly in place, all the while, watching where they put their hands on her. She was about to yank on the reins to get the horse to stop, when she saw the crest on their armor. She remembered travelers wearing the same crest once in Bree...a white horse...they were from Rohan. She almost laughed and cried from relief, she was safe, they weren't going to hurt her...right? Rohan, from what she heard was a kingdom of good people...hopefully that wasn't a lie.

They took her to their camp, many, many miles away from the White City, where the riders of Rohan and the King were waiting for the finalization of their plans were made and then they would ride off. They took the girl directly to the King's tent and spoke gently to her, they handled her carefully, as she already looked ready to faint.

“We're taking you to the King, he should know what we can do for you.” said one of the younger guards. “Perhaps we can see about sending you back to Edoras, or Helm's Deep.”
“Lord Theoden.” said the one scout loudly causing Anya to flinch horribly.

The king stepped out with his nephew and niece at his side. “What have you to report? Who is this?” said the King looking at the young woman with shocked eyes. Eomer’s eyes widened as well, and his lips twitched slightly.

“Anya!” came a small voice.

Anya turned and saw one of the hobbits that Harry left with...did that mean that Harry was here?

“Master Hobbit! Oh thank heavens, it’s a relief to see someone familiar after all this time!” said Anya with a tearful laugh, her knees felt about ready to give out at any moment.

“This is Anya!” said Merry excitedly.

“Who is she?” asked the King with a faint smile.

“She was a barmaid at Bree...she and Harry...” but Anya began to blush so heavily that Merry stopped. But Anya took his break in speech to speak herself, despite the heat in her face, the moment he mentioned Harry, it drove her mind on to speak, and her legs be damned.

“Is he here? I have something important to tell him!” said Anya imploringly to Merry.

“He left for Minas Tirith a long time ago.” said Merry worriedly. “Is something wrong?”

“There is a man after him, a terrible...awful man...he said he knew Harry, but he wants to kill him!” said Anya worriedly. “He’s so powerful, he has the ability to have weapons turn on their owners, he’ll cut Harry to ribbons! We must save him!”

The others raised their brows at the description that Anya gave them, Sirius was out to kill Harry? But he said that he was Harry’s godfather, and Harry always spoke highly of Sirius...the man had lied.
They let Aragorn lead him right to the lad.

The two mysterious men sat in Dumbledore's office, tears falling down their faces.

“So...James and Lily are gone?” said Rudolph thickly.

“I'm afraid so.” said Dumbledore somberly. “I tried to have you contacted, but...” he added a weak smile. “you were always known for not sticking around when abroad.”

“I can't believe it, I just can't believe it.” said Leroy.

“What about the baby, what about Harry?” asked Rudolph weakly.

“Tell me we didn't lose our Little Monster.” said Leroy tears preparing for a second run down his face.

“He's alive...but...not well at the moment.” said Dumbledore.

“What's wrong with him?” asked Leroy quickly.

“I'm...I cannot begin to put it into words.” said Dumbledore. “But I can have Minerva take you to him.”

“Why can't you take us?” asked Rudolph. “You don't need to worry about those Death Eaters...”

“There may be more behind them.” said Dumbledore shaking his head. “I'll have to stay, and protect the school.”

Rudolph and Leroy looked between each other, and nodded. “Alright, we'll go with Minerva.”

“One thing,” said Dumbledore.
“Yes...” said Rudolph.

“Do not use magic in the room.” said Dumbledore.

“What’s the Jade stone do?” asked Harry.

“It controls metal, weapons for example. He could turn your own weapons against you.” said King Meandenbor. “So, everyone in Middle Earth is in danger.”

“We gotta stop him!” said Harry quickly.

“And we will, but like I said, you'll want to collect all the other stones, in order to defeat him.” said King Meandenbor. “If he manages to get back to our world...”

“Then we're doomed.” said Harry, his mouth opened and his eyes widened in fear.

“If you can wield the rest of the stones, then you will be able to hopefully defeat Voldemort.” said the King

“Hang on, I thought you said that I need all of the stones to get home, and to be willing to claim the throne...” said Harry.

“I did, but what I didn't say, was that if this Voldemort, (being a wizard he can see the stones), if he were to collect all of the stones...he could usurp my throne.” said King Meandenbor.

“What?” said Harry. “I don't understand...”

“Lad, these stones work in both worlds, and these stones override any magical law known to wizard kind.” said King Meandenbor. “But enough talk,” he looked off into the distance. “We'll go and get the ruby, the pearl is safe for the moment.”
“Is there a way to get the jade stone? Even with Voldemort there?” asked Harry.

“Not without the pearl...and to use the stone, you need to be solid.” said King Meandenbor.

“But he wouldn't be able to see me, how could he stop me.” replied Harry.

“He never lets go of that stone, and with as dark as his mind is, I can understand why.” said the King. “Now, come.”

Harry and the King drifted as quickly as they could across rocky landscape, all the while Harry's mind was racing with the facts that he learned:

The King was not willing to be completely open with him. Though he could understand...sort of...it had been so long since the king had talked to anyone, and he had been murdered. So trusting anyone is flung out the window.

He learned the limitations of most of the stones, that would help him when he would gather up the rest.

Someone was now in this world to help him, not that the King was willing to tell him who it was.

Voldemort was also in Middle Earth, and was in possession of the jade stone.

And if Harry didn't collect the stones, Voldemort might and that would prove to bring about the end of the world.

If he thought the task of finding the stones was hard...it was now even harder.

It took a long time for the two of them to reach where the King said the stones were. They were in a foul smelling marsh, with tongues of flames hovering over different pools of water. There were dead bodies of men and elves and even orcs floating in the water, but not quite breaking the surface.
“What the hell is this place?” asked Harry.

“This was where the Last Alliance took it's final stance, and here are where the fallen lay in eternal unrest.” said the King somberly. “See those flames...” he said pointing down at a nearby tongue of flame.

“Yes.” said Harry, his eyes unable to tear from the nearest floating elf.

“That comes from the ruby...that particular stone wields fire, once we remove the ruby, perhaps the spirits here may finally rest.” said the King.

“So how am I to get it?” asked Harry finally looking away from the elf. “Where is it.”

“Underneath.” said the King pointing to the heart of the marsh.

“So...how am I supposed to get it?” asked Harry deadpanned. He couldn't help but keep thinking back down to the elf lying in the water.

The King looked at Harry in surprise and then looked at him up and down. “You're a ghost lad...”

“Oh...right.” said Harry sheepishly. He then slid down through the ground, but then came up right away.

“I don't wanna.” said Harry, his eyes almost popping out of his head.

“Why not?” asked King Meandenbor quirking an eyebrow.

“I see dead people.” said Harry.

The King rolled his eyes.
The Ships Land

The King and Harry were still in the Marshes of the Dead, Harry had seen almost a city full of ghosts floating under the water, each face looked decayed and gaunt. The sight of them sent Harry shooting back up onto the surface, especially when they would reach out and try to latch onto him with their rotten hands.

They had gotten a hold of him once, and as they touched him, he saw his own skin begin to take on the same worm eaten look that these specters had and begin to take on a ominous glow. He also felt a cold sensation creep up his arm and into face, as if there were small cold maggots trying to reach all over his body and burrow into his flesh. He had barely time to escape before the ghoulish figure dragged him down to join their ranks.

“Lad, were you able to see the stone?” asked the King.

“No, something else held my attention!” snapped Harry.

“Take it easy, we'll be able to get it, just calm down.” said the King holding up his hands placatingly.

The King looked around the marsh slowly, sinking beneath the surface to search would not do them any good, especially if the specters were going to be malicious, and there were. They would need to find the stone, just to calm the spirits and allow them to rest at last after what felt like an eternity. But they needed to go where the spirits dwell in order to find the stone quickly. Unless...

“Come lad, we need to find the one candle that is unlike the rest.” said the King.

“Say what?” asked Harry. “All the flames look the same.”

“No...there is one candle that different.” said the King. “We need to find it, I'm sure that is the easier way to go about this.”

“Is that where the stone is?” said Harry stunned.
“I believe so, yes.”

“Than why were you asking if I could see it underground?” shouted Harry angrily.

“The ruby we would be able to see easily, as opposed to the one candle different then the rest.” said King Meandenbor slowly. “It'll take a little while longer, but we'll be able to succeed, hopefully without intruding on the spirits.”

“Couldn't come up with idea before I get caught by those things...” muttered Harry.

“Being King doesn't mean that all the decisions you make is the correct one.” said Meandenbor.

They examined each candle carefully, nothing was out of the ordinary for the countless candles that they had already inspected, and there were hundreds more for them to check. The day was ending and nightfall was beginning to fall. They were not rushing to find it before nightfall, but they needed to find the stone soon. For who knew when or if Frodo and Sam would destroy the ring, and that would be the only time to escape the tower.

But it wasn't just Frodo and Sam to worry about, there was also Voldemort, if he were to get to Minas Tirith and find the pearl...then there was nothing he could do against him...not if he still held onto the Jade stone. They would have to hope that Voldemort didn't know about the pearl and keep away from there.

As Harry was examining a trio of candles in front of him, the King's voice shouted out out. “Here it is!”

Harry floated as fast as he could over to where the King was and in front of where he was standing, was a white flame candle, they couldn't see it for the rocks that surrounded it. There was one body in the pool underneath it, a elf with long black hair. But Harry couldn't see the ruby right away.

“Where's the stone?” asked Harry.

“Look closely, the shield laying behind him.” said the King. “It has the ruby lodged on it. Though, I'm not sure he knew the stone was there in the first place.”
“So...how do we get it out.” said Harry.

“Well, to start with, get the shield out of the water.” said the King with a smile.

Harry looked at the King, and then down at the shield that was almost covered by the body. The ruby was in the middle and surrounded by ornate still shimmering diamonds. Harry dipped his hands in the foul smelling bog's water, he didn't want to touch the body that was beneath the water, but he noticed something.

He didn't have to touch the body, in fact, he couldn't. His hand went straight through the decaying elf and he could clearly feel the stone pulsing and radiating heat. He gripped the stone tightly in his hand and pulled. Despite the stone having been fused to the shield, it came out as easily as if it were just stuck in the mud.

“I got it!” said Harry.

But as he took it in his hand, the flames that hovered around the pool and the spirits residing inside erupted into the air and hovered over them.

“Oh dear.” said the King.

Sirius stood along the deck of the ship, watching the countryside pass him by. He couldn't help but think of his godson, they were now on the straight path to Minas Tirith, where Harry was. He could hardly wait to see and hold his Harry once again.

He could remember when Harry came to his family home over the summer, Harry was almost running to him when he saw his godfather and wrapped his thin arms around him. Sirius returned the hug, holding the young boy close to him. Breathing in the scent of his beloved godson, it was a mixture of spices, seasonings, earth and a little sweat. How it didn't dawn on him that he was a cook when he smelled the cooking ingredients, he didn't know.

He would remember that scent, till the day he died.

He looked down at his sword, it wasn't a wand, but it was effective in this world. Thanks to
Legolas, he was quickly becoming a decent swordsman, (mediocre according to a smirking Strider) though...he still suffered from a lot cuts that his swords did while they sparred, but he was almost able to land a few hits. Something that Legolas said that not many could do, unless they were lucky.

“We are almost to Minas Tirith, Black, let's have a few more lessons.” said Legolas taking out his twin blades.

“Sure.” said Sirius. “I'm not completely diced up yet.”

Aragorn watched as Legolas and Sirius sparred on the deck, his face was plain.

“He's getting better.” grumbled Gimli.

“He is, Legolas is a good teacher, seems that Black is more attuned to speed based attacks.” said Aragorn. “He'll need all the skills he can get before we reach our destination.”

“I wouldn't worry about him, I doubt these undead soldiers will leave even half a battalion to us to defeat, besides, orcs are not the hardest foe to beat on the field of battle.” said Gimli. “They have no warrior training...it's either kill or be killed. It's the bigger foes we need to have him watch out for.”

“You're right, he'd better not try and take on a troll, or worse...” said Aragorn. Then off into the distance, they could see the tall white tower of Minas Tirith. “We are almost there.”

Legolas and Sirius stopped sparring and saw the tower themselves. Strangely, a thought, (but it wasn't like a normal thought, it was like a daydream) came to Sirius' mind.

He was riding up to a large tower, with sword in hand and a shield and the reins of a fiery charger in the other. He then scaled the wall and climbed into the tower through the lone window. Inside was a bed, and his godson lying on the bed as if he were dead, gossamer curtains shielding him poorly yet gracefully from onlookers. His hands folded peacefully over his stomach, no breath escaping his lungs. He made his way slowly over to the bed, and bent over near his godson's head....
What the hell was he thinking?

Sirius shook his head and was rewarded with a smack to his side by the flat side of Legolas' blade.

“You're not paying attention.” said Legolas pulling his blades back.

“I was just thinking...never mind.” said Sirius. “Just ignore me. Let's get back to what we were doing.” said Sirius.

“I was doing what we were supposed to be doing, you drifted off.” said Legolas bringing his blade up to strike again.

Sirius couldn't figure out where that idea came from, it was just...weird, weirder than Gilderoy, Dazzle Gums, Lockhart. Merlin, he was a freak. He would never shut up and he would lie through his teeth and try and pump up his own ego. Not only that, but he swung and batted for both teams, but that wasn't the creepy parts, he liked the younger years, third years and under...he was a real piece of trash. And he and James made it a point to hex the nutjob every time they heard he had flirted with someone three years under him....he was weirder than anything he could think up.

Perhaps the King placed that idea in his head, but why? Was Harry unconscious somewhere? Was it his duty to wake him up? Was he cursed and only he could save him? What did that daydream mean? And did it mean anything, was he just panicking?

Harry dodged the grasp of the spirits clawed hands and tried to make his way back to the king, who was holding them off with blasts of light that caused whatever spirit it hit to disappear.

“Can't we just leave?” asked Harry.

“They'll follow us everywhere.” said the King, sending a blast of light down to a trio of spirits that were getting too close. “There would be no point in leaving till this becomes resolved.”

“So you just keep blasting them away?” said Harry standing behind the King.

“You can do what I'm doing as well.” said King Meandenbor as he waved his hand, sending a
dozen or so back to the murky depths.

“What? I can? ...but I don't know how.” said Harry. Not that you've shown me how to do much more than float since this little jaunt started.

“Just think of what you want, you want these spirits to go, so just summon a blast from your fingers and the power will do what you want.” said the King. “Experience is the best teacher.”

He's in my head again. “How do I get started?” asked Harry.

“Take your hand, and want.” said the King.

One malevolent spirit came close to them and Harry threw his hand up, thinking of only keeping this thing away from him. A warm glow erupted from the palm of his hand and suddenly a red and gold beam of light came from his hand and pierced the spiritual bodies of all that stood in front of him.

“...Woah...” said Harry as he saw the spirits regroup a few hundred feet away.

“Not bad for your first time.” said King Meandenbor with a smile.

“Not bad? You're just shooting one bolt, I'm a whole wall!” said Harry with an excited smile. What's going on...I feel...funny...he thought to himself. He couldn't stop himself from sending wave after wave of pure energy towards the creatures before him. As if he was hungry for more power and to see the after effect of his labor.

“I'm using pinpoint accuracy, and I'm conserving energy, you're wasting it...see...you're already exhausted.” said the King as he lifted the youth off the ground by his arm. Harry's body gave way and he began to sink to the ground after sending wave after wave of red and gold energy towards the spirits.

“Don't use up your power so quickly. It may be more powerful than most of the stones, but these have bigger limitations than any other power.” said King Meandenbor. He shook his head, when he saw that Harry was completely knocked unconscious. “Now you're powerless, just like before.” He slung the ghostly form over his shoulder and continued to blast the remaining specters to peaceful oblivion.
“You're stronger when you're flesh and blood it seems. You're a little power hungry this way...strange...” said the King.

He didn't notice, that despite the body of the boy being almost opalescent, there was a dark blotch inside him, growing larger and more visible. It was like a small black jellyfish, sucking onto his heart.

The orcs rested in the ruined city of Osgiliath, it was a long siege and a long day of battling. They had been bombarding the city of Minas Tirith for many days and many nights, they were getting tired, not that their orc captains would let them leave and return to their crude homes, and now with the newly arrived army of Rohan, they were quickly becoming weary, not that they would voice that.

They were waiting for the ships that would relieve them, and bring about the final attack on the greatest city of men. Once the corsairs were upon the shore, they would strike for the final time and take the city from the men who foolishly opposed them and in that one fell swoop, Rohan would also fall.

Then, a scout up in one of the ruined towers spotted the nearing black sails of the corsair ships come into the harbor, and slowly they pulled into the docks.

“Finally! Corsair scum!” shouted the captain of the orcs.

“We've been waiting for you blasted sea rats!” shouted another orc.

The ships came to a halt, and beneath the railing of the ship, Sirius could hardly hold in his laughter.

“These things are idiots!” whispered Sirius with a bright smile. “I can't wait!”

“Wait for it...” said Aragron. “NOW!” he whispered loudly.

They jumped over the railing and landed on the stone dock, drawing their weapons. The orcs stood in shock, staring at the two men, elf and dwarf.
“Yarrgh!” shouted Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli and Sirius. The four of them lunged towards the enemy,

and the orcs began to sneer. That is, before the spirits that were on the boat, from the White mountains, came out and smothered the orcs and the countless ones behind them.

The King carried the unconscious boy as far away from the Marsh as he could, the poor lad wasn't waking up, but all he was was knocked out. Perhaps getting away from the bog and those fallen warriors would have a positive effect, fresh air and the ever present chill. He laid the boy down on the rocky ground and made a startling discovery.

“What on earth is *that*?” breathed the King, he nearly fell backwards in shock.

The black spot on the lad's chest finally caught his eye. It wasn't there before, but strangely, it had decided to appear in the Marshes, and grow to an immense size.

It was the size of his fist, and continued to pulse over the heart of the boy. Small black tendrils etched over the heart of the lad, and it seemed to grow with each passing moment.

The King removed one hand from the boy's head, and made the same glowing force he had used early surround it. Then he lowered the glowing hand into the boys' transparent chest, he grabbed a hold of the vile black parasite and pulled carefully. The slimy thing was not loosening, it was stubbornly hanging on. He sent his own thumb under the vile thing, taking care not to puncture it, and moved the thumb to peel off the thing carefully. He managed to release the tendrils from the boy's body, but he saw that there were more tendrils coming out of the blob. He had to work quickly.

He pulled as hard as he had dared, the thing was gripping where the boy's heart was, and if he pulled too hard...he didn't want to think of the consequences. And if his nail were to puncture it...

Finally, the thing loosened and it came off, twitching horribly in the air. The King looked at it intently, he had never seen anything so...twisted, vile, and wretched. This was dark magic, this was the most disgusting enchantment he had ever seen, this had to be.... He waved his hand over it slowly and it became encased in the golden magic that trailed after him everywhere.

Harry's eyes fluttered open and he looked up at the King with the blackened blotch suspended in the golden mist. He groaned and rubbed his head, trying hard to sit up. “What...what is that?”
“This came from you.” said the King holding out the blotch and pushing the boy down gently to the rock beneath him.

“What the hell is it?” asked Harry in a whisper.

“This...is a powerful bit of dark magic. This magic will enable the caster to in a sense, never die. They slice their soul, almost to shreds, and fix it to objects, mostly inanimate...it's very rarely attached to a living thing.” said the King.

Harry's face turned white.

“This, wretched thing,” he gestured towards the foul thing hovering in the mist. “made you a Horcrux.”
Harry stared at the blotch in the king's hand, that was inside him? And he was a horcrux? Since the king removed that nasty looking thing, did that make it so that he wasn't one anyone? What really was a horcrux...were there others...whose horcrux was he? Was he Voldemort or someone unknown to him that just picked him because he was the Boy Who Lived?

“Are you rested enough lad?” asked the King waving his hand and the blotch disappeared.

“Where did it go?” asked Harry.

“Someone where safe, now answer my question.” said the King.

“What? Oh, yeah, I'm rested.” said Harry. He still felt tired, but strangely, he felt a bit lighter as if something were taken off his shoulders.

“Good, now come along, we'll get the pearl...” said the King as he helped Harry to his feet. “That'll be paramount to the cause, especially if we have to take on that Dark Lord of yours.”

Harry straightened up and followed the king as they glided towards the city of Minas Tirith. There was a question that was bugging him, he couldn't remember if he had asked it before, but maybe he'd be able to sneak a little more out of the man.

“So, how am I supposed to keep a hold of the stones when I wake up?” asked Harry. “Or are you going to hold them for the duration?”

“Gandalf currently has the rest of the stones in his care, we will collect them while we get the pearl, and when you awaken, they will be next to you. The only stone you need to worry about is the onyx.” said the King. “That one you'll have to get the moment you wake up, so you'll be able to escape.”

“Where is the stone?” asked Harry.

“It's in the drawer beside the bed.” said the King, “It shouldn't take you longer than a few minutes
Harry looked at the spirit floating in front of him. He still wasn't telling him everything, he wasn't being upfront about it all, these stones, and this world.

“Come lad, thinking about my lack of revelations is getting old...now come up here and think of fresh ideas!”

This king was going to drive him insane.

Anya sat back in the kingdom of Rohan, she had enough excitement to last her a lifetime and decided to hide out in the Golden Hall until the battle was over, well...Lord Eomer decided for her. The King, seeing how attached Merry was to her, promised that she could seek refuge there until the battle was over, no matter what the outcome, and with that, Eomer had a few of his men whisk her off to safety.

Lord Eomer was quite kind to her, he even gave the men orders to place her in the nicer rooms and to have new clothes made for her. She had to admit, sleeping in a bed and having new garments would be an absolute luxury, as well as some rest...she was still quite shaken up over the whole ordeal, and a pot of freshly made tea wouldn't be amiss.

She wanted to go home, but...the man seeking Harry...it worried her so much and she wanted to make sure that he was alright and that he was warned. Merry promised her that he would find him and tell him, but she still was uneasy.

What if the madman intercepted the message? Harry would be taken off guard...how would he survive? How was Harry going to beat this mad man? He had so much power, so much terrible power...how was Harry going to contest against it?

“Lady Anya?” asked one of the servant girls coming into her room.

Anya turned around quickly and saw the maid that seemed to be attached to her hip. She hardly left her side since she arrived waited on her hand and foot. She wasn't used to being called such a lofty title, she came from the same class as the girl waiting on her...she couldn't help it, it felt sort of nice, if not a little awkward. “Y-Yes?” stammered Anya.
“Lunch will be served momentarily, would you like to follow me?” asked the maid pleasantly. Anya stood up and followed her out of the room that was given to her. She stopped at a window facing east, she hoped Harry was alright and that he was safe. She was grateful that the king had her taken back to Rohan to further her escape from the man that hunted Harry.

She was shocked that they knew of the man! She didn't know that they knew them, she had been with him since Bree and they hadn't been in Rohan, they were too far north for them to be in the land of the horse-masters.

“My lady?” asked the maid.

“Tear my eyes away from the window and heading to the dining hall.

The servants didn't say anything, but the rumors were already flying that Lord Eomer held an instant soft-spot in his heart for her. She was very lovely, and very soft spoken, her hair was as golden as Lady Eowyn's...they all had to admit she would fit right in with the royal family of Rohan.

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Voldemort snarled as he watched the armies of Sauron pass underneath him as he sat on the side of the cliff. He had lost his horse, annoying beast as it was, and he had lost the girl. Now he had had to travel about the countryside on foot, or that was...until he realized he could levitate a cluster of spears and just stand on them. By standing on them, he manged to fly along the ground and travel at amazing speed.

This world just held so many surprises, and it seemed to relish him being here, he couldn't wait to make the people of this world bow to his will...

But, speed or not, he was unsure of where to go from this point. No doubt the girl would have made her way south to the city beside the Dark Lord Sauron's realm and warn them about his presence. He couldn't go to Mordor...he didn't have the right amount of power to take on this might...he'd have to collect more weapons...and what place better than a battlefield? He'd wait until the battle was over and collect the fallen steel weapons.

Then once he had an army of weapons behind him, he'd take on Mordor, with lifeless soldiers, he
couldn't lose!

He looked at the orcs marching beneath him, they hadn't noticed him yet, and he wasn't about to alert them to his presence, he would bide his time, and allow the rest of this pathetic world enlarge his arsenal. He would wait, until this war was over, and then...whoever was the winner, he would face them.

He decided to stay up on the cliff, he didn't want to wear himself out traveling from one place to another. He would wait for the war to be over, and take on the survivors while they were weak and recovering.

Sirius, Strider, Gimli and Legolas sliced their way to the city of Minas Tirith. Sirius swung his sword like a madman, working furiously to get to the city, where he was sure Harry was. He dodged horses crashing through the ranks, with or without riders and trampled anyone that got in their way. The waves of specters that rolled over the enemy and their massive Oliphant mounts bombarded the city walls and pooled out of the sides, causing the great city to look like a ghostly green waterfall.

Sirius ran as fast as he could to the city doors, and stepped through their broken doors. He looked around, trying frantically to find his godson amongst the fleeing people.

“HARRY!” shouted Sirius. “HARRY! WHERE ARE YOU!”

He was so close, so close! He had to find him!

He climbed the spiraling heights of the city, he banged on the doors, shouting out his godson's name, but no one came to the door, he moved onto the next one and the next. No one came out to talk to him, his godson didn't come busting through the door and into his arms, he was quickly losing hope....was he too late?

He banged on another door and this time a gruff voice inside came to his ears after he called his godson's name.

“Eh? Harry did you say?”
Sirius froze. The door opened and an old man peered at him skeptically. “Who wants to know about the boy?”

“I do, where is he at?” asked Sirius quickly.

“And how do I know I can trust you?” said the man holding a large pitchfork in his hand ready to thrust it at the frantic looking man.

“I...please...” said Sirius panting. “I just want Harry to come home.”

The man looked at him with a calculating gaze and then pointed down to the bottom tier. “Gandalf will tell you where he is.”

Sirius turned and looked down in the direction he man pointed. “I just came from there.” muttered Sirius. “Thank you!” he turned and ran back down.

The old man shook his head, he didn't feel like breaking the news to the man, he wasn't one of those that could break bad news softly, best leave that job to others. He could handle bread and cakes, but people...they were too complicated for his tastes...though he could understand the man, he missed the lad something awful as well.

He hoped the boy died painlessly.

Sirius ran as quickly as his legs and gravity could take him, now he had to look for this Gandalf person, he had forgotten to ask what this man looked like. Hopefully he could see someone that would take the time to stop running around screaming and point him out.

He got down to the main level and looked around, there was no one willing to stop and pause for even a moment. He saw one old man however, directing the soldiers to and fro, shouting that the spirits were not going to harm them, and to return to their posts. He wore long white robes and held in his hand a shimmering sword and had a walking stick in his other. This bloke was obviously was in charge, perhaps he would know where this Gandalf bloke was.

“Excuse me!” said Sirius loudly as he tried to make his way to the white dressed man.
The man turned and looked at him.

“Gandalf! Look out!” shouted one of the Rohirrim soldiers. Sirius and the old man turned and saw Eomer come out brandishing his sword.

“Hey!” shouted Sirius, he threw up his sword and deflected the blade, though it knocked him back. “What are you doing?”

“He's after the boy! He wants to kill him!” shouted Eomer continuing his assault on the dark haired man.

“What? I don't...you're crazy!” said Sirius ducking behind a pillar.

“Eomer!” shouted Aragorns voice. Sirius dodged another blow and held out his sword.

“Strider! He's lost his bloody mind!” said Sirius as he deflected another blow with his sword.

The old man dressed in white raised his staff with both hands and brought it down, causing the ground around the two fighters to shake and cause them to both to fall to their knees.

“That's enough.” said Gandalf. “Now, what is going on?”

“He's after the boy! He's been hunting him!” said Eomer getting to his feet and raising his sword.

Legolas pulled back on his bow and pointed it towards Eomer's head. “That's enough.”

“What's going on here?” said Gimli.

“He's...” said Eomer.
“I'm not trying to hurt him! I just want to bring him home! Go and get him! He'll tell you who I am, I would never harm a hair on his head, I would *die* before I even laid a hand on him!” said Sirius looking to the white haired man. This had to be Gandalf, from what Strider told him, he was a wizard and that was magic as he had never seen it before.

Though the man looked less than happy at the thought of getting Harry.

“What's wrong Gandalf...?” asked Strider looking at the worn face his old friend had.

“Harry...he was captured by Sauron.” said Gandalf looking down at the ground, shame stretched across his face and his hand tightening around his staff.

Aragorn staggered. No...all their protective measures...and it all fell apart.

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Harry floated in silence beside the king, as they mad their way slowly to Minas Tirith, but something attracted his gaze out of the corner of his eye.

“What's that?” asked Harry pointing.

The king looked over and saw what he was pointing at. “It seems to be a man, holding up there.” said the King. “A foolish place to rest, the Mordor army walks just beneath there.”

Harry peered over to the man's figure, there was something familiar about the man's face. He wafted over to where the man was, but when he got close enough, his hand went to his mouth to stifle his scream.

“What, is it?” asked the king coming over quickly.

“It's...it's...*Voldemort!*” said Harry looking horrified up at the man peering around himself, keeping watch.
“Come lad...” said the King pulling Harry away from where he was staring at the man sitting above them. “We don't have much time.”

“But...” said Harry. “You said he had a stone!”

“And I told you, we can't take his just yet, we need that pearl before we even think of attempting to take his stone.” said the King.

Harry looked up at the man that had plagued his life and ripped his family from him. They were now in the same world together, both didn't have their usual magic, and both had at least one stone.. Nothing in life was easy.

“Come lad, we cannot waste time here, we need to get that pearl, and then get you back to the tower.” said King Meandenbor. “There is nothing more important right now than to get the pearl and then get you back in time.”

Harry kept sending fleeting glimpses back to the the man sitting on the rocks above, but the King grabbed ahold of his arm and pulled him along behind him. He knew the urgency, and he appreciated that the King wanted to make sure he survived, but...there was Riddle, and Harry was in a corporeal state, Harry could have...haunted him or something...

“Don't be foolish.” said the King.

Harry groaned, he wished the king would stay out of his thoughts.

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“How could this have happened Gandalf?” said Strider pacing the throne room of Minas Tirith.

Aragorn and the rest of the commanders of the armies of Middle Earth stationed themselves in the thorne rom of Minas Tirit. Gandalf said that it would show the people that Aragorn had come to claim the throne and not just aid in it's protection. It worked, the people hailed him and sang
praises to him as he rode his horse up to the top part of city. Merry and Pippin rode with Gandalf and Eowyn as they climbed and waved to the people good-naturedly, though they were fearful for Harry's safety.

But the reason they were coming together to speak at the top of the city, was to discuss the final confrontation with Sauron, and the kidnapping of Harry Potter.

“I don't understand it, how could Sauron know about the lad?” said Gimli.

“I'm not all together sure on that, the guards told me that he was snatched away by the Ringwraiths late in the night. I don't know how they knew he was going to be out and about at night, or who he was.” said Gandalf.

“I've heard stories Gandalf, that those fell beasts they ride, can see in the dark...but how they knew who to pick up in the dark...” said Legolas. “And those Wraiths, one can only guess how they would have been able to see the boy.”

So we lost him...” said Gimli shaking his head, “That poor lad...he didn't deserve a fate such as that.”

“It is just as well, that man would have killed him on sight, I shouldn't wonder. He would have been killed either way.” said Eomer. “He wouldn't have left this city alive.”

Gandalf looked at Eomer firmly, then he turned to the golden haired shied maiden. “Eowyn, you said a young girl came to your camp and said someone was hunting for Harry? Do you remember how she described him?”

“The girl said he was tall, dark, and quite good looking, but he had a wild and mad look in his eyes whenever he spoke of Harry.” said Eowyn.

“She had a terrible ordeal, it was too much for a young thing like her.” said Eomer, a small flash of tenderness came to his eye. “Though she's an amazing girl to escape the way she did.”

“I cannot believe that Black is the man she spoke of.” said Eowyn shaking her head. “He spoke so gently about Harry.”
“Of course it must be, there is no one else searching for the boy.” said Eomer. “He fits the description.”

“When Black speaks of the boy, he doesn't have a mad look in his eyes.” said Aragorn.

“Aye, that he doesn't.” said Gimli. “There's another emotion there.”

“There is love, devotion, and anguish, but not madness.” said Legolas. “She said that she had just left the man behind before she came to you, he was with us to the south, she came from the north.”

Eomer didn't look convinced, but Strider was.

“Where did you put him?” Strider asked one of the guard.

“I placed him one of the anterooms, my lord.” said the guard. “We didn't imprison him, as per your orders. He is agitated, he's tried to leave the room several times. He says he needs to find a cub or something along those lines.”

“That' must be a term of endearment for the boy.” said Gandalf. “You don't call someone you desire to kill a name that sounds endearing.”

“I'll vouch for the man.” said Gimli, “If he's false, I'll cleave his neck personally.”

“Bring him back in here.” said Aragorn. “Be gentle, he's not your enemy.”

The guard turned and walked out of the room, leaving behind an irate Eomer.

“We should show caution to this man, he could be the one hunting the boy.” hissed Eomer.

“I don't believe this man would cause Harry any harm.” said Gandalf, “He did not appear to have any malice towards the boy that I could sense.”
“Of course not!” said Sirius coming out of the room. “I love Harry, I’d never harm a hair on his head.”

Sirius looked pissed, he had heard a little bit of the conversation and it set his teeth on edge. He had enough of hearing of people say that Harry's life was in danger everyday that he was free and on the run. He had heard it when he was on the run the first time, before he made it to Hogwarts, everyone muttering, how they hoped Harry would stay safe and away from him.

Those stupid people never realized that he also wanted Harry safe. That it made him sick to his very soul the thought of even Harry having a cut on his finger, let alone seriously injured.

“We know Black, but what that girl said....” said Aragorn.

“I can guess who you're talking about, but in my world, he's far from handsome.” said Sirius. “He's called Voldemort, he's our version of this Sauron guy you have.”

“He's here?” said Legolas.

“You know of him?” said Sirius in a shocked tone.

“The boy told us about him, it was not...the most pleasant story I had ever heard.” said Gandalf.

“Well, he should know all about him...and I've known him longer than he had. Voldemort had been missing in our world for a while, turns out he was here the entire time.” said Sirius, “And he won't rest until he kills Harry. And he won't stop there.”

“Harry spoke of him.” said Gandalf softly.

“When will he stop?” asked Pippin nervously.

“When he takes over, and after he's seen this world, he'll probably want to come back.” said Sirius.

“If Sauron wins, he won't be able to contend against him. Sauron will defeat him easily.” said
“As long as he can't use magic, he'll be about as weak as...” said Sirius.

“You.” said Strider with a smirk.

“So much for the truce.” muttered Sirius.

Silence trickled over them, until Sirius spoke once more. “So how are we going to save him?” asked Sirius with a pleading tone in his voice.

Gandalf, Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas looked at each other. Gandalf turned back to Sirius.

“We cannot save him.”

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On the fields below Minas Tirith, Harry and the King had arrived, “What the...what happened to the battle? Is it over? Did we lose?” asked Harry as he and the King floated over the fields littered with weapons and the burning bodies of orcs, trolls and oliphants.

“It seems, that they won, against all odds...” said the King with a warm smile. “That's good, I was becoming a little concerned for these people. It pains me that I cannot do a thing to help them. Though, it does hurt my pride that they don't need me.”

“That's crazy, the army wouldn't stop coming...how did we win?” asked Harry. “We should have been overrun.”

“I can't even begin to fathom, unless...well...he would have been able to.” said the King.

“What?” asked Harry curiously. “Who would have been able to do what?”

“You're friend Strider would have had to remake an alliance, with a long dead race of men.” said
the King.

*Great, the king was talking in riddles again.* Harry didn't bother to ask what he meant by it, but pulled a head of him to get to the city faster.

“Ease up lad, don't tire yourself out, we have a lot of searching to do and not a lot of time to do it in.” said the King. “We must find that pearl and get back to the tower.

The King and Harry inspected every tier in turn as they climbed the city of Minas Tirith. Harry couldn't hear the music and the King couldn't see where it could be. The city was bustling with people on their errands and to their jobs of refortifying the city and making repairs to the towers that stuck up in random into the sky.

There were families that were trying to collect their children from their hiding places, then locating their husbands from wherever they were stationed or placed to aid in the defense of the city. There were carts that once held fruits of a farmer's labor and sweat were overturned and the contents were tossed onto the ground and smashed by the feet of population of the panicked city.

They climbed and climbed until they reached the level where the baker's sister's house had been.

“Wonder if she's alright?” said Harry. He slipped through the stone wall and a horrifying sight met his eyes. The entire room was destroyed, slash marks were made all over the place and every piece of crockery she had was broken and smashed to pieces.

He thought the woman had to be dead, laying dead somewhere underneath all this mess, but her voice came piercing through the carnage.

“I want this place cleaned up!” she screeched loudly.

Two guards came into the room hurriedly. “Ma'am we're sorry, we didn't mean to take refuge in your house.”

“I don't care what your intentions were, you brought those things into this house and I won't stand for it. There's a king now, and if you don't fix it, I'll complain to him. My brother in law knows Gandalf personally.” she said waving her stick in the air. “He'll tell the king, and you'll both be strung out for the crows!”
“Nice woman.” said the King with a snicker.

“She was pleasant to me.” said Harry looking at her with a smile.

“You have a charming face.” said the King. “Old ladies are swayed by a charming face.”

Harry shook his head, his non-corporeal face turning a faint pink.

“When you go up to the top, stop at the Baker's, tell my brother I'm out of bread, and be sure to send that handsome young delivery boy....I want to make sure he survived all this.” said the woman, a shy smile played on her lips for a moment.

“The Baker's assistant?” said one of the guards, he looked at his confederate.

“Ma'am, the Baker's assistant was killed days ago...Nazgul took him in the night, he was riding up to the Bakers.” said the guard., his voice somber.

The woman stared at two guards, Harry's heart went out to her, she looked devastated, but why he couldn't understand why. The guards solemnly promised to fix her things or replace them, and then she sank into her chair and covered her mouth with a handkerchief.

“Come along lad, you can't help her, you'll have the ability to see her once it's all over. I think she'll be very happy to see you.” said the King with a soft smile.

Harry followed the King and they continued their search. They continued their way up to the citadel, Harry stopped in at the Bakers and watched as the old man struggled under a tray of loaves.

“He needs someone to help him.” said Harry.

“The people are trying to put their city back together, no one has any free time to help him.” said the King.
“He gives them their bread, their food, they should help him first.” said Harry shortly.

“His place is not damaged, he was too high up to get most of the carnage, that is the blessing this city has, as long as there is wheat and other ingredients, there won't be a shortage of bread for the people.” said the King.

They continued upward, not willing to spend anymore time on anything else. They had to find the pearl quickly, but they weren't having the best luck. Until they were on the top of the citadel, then the King pointed higher up into the sky. There, on the tallest part of the mountain behind the city, there was a large tower, with a ladder climbing up the side. Harry could make out a tall pile of wood.

“There, we've searched everywhere else, we'll check the Signal Fire tower.” said the King.

“Signal Fire tower?” said Harry.

“Well, it's the best name for it, in my opinion. It's a tower, that when in times of trouble and the city needs to call for aid from Rohan, the pyre is lit, and then...a watchtower sees the fire alight, lights their own, and it continues on, until it reaches Rohan.

“Rohan sees it, and then they come?” said Harry.

“Did you see all the hoof prints, and the horses all over the place? Rohan came.” said the King with a smile. “They can choose to come or not, I've never known at anytime that Rohan refused to come. Gondor has even come to aid them a time or two.”

“They could have used, some help, both of them.” said Harry.

“And help came, Rohan reforged an old alliance, then Gondor sent for help, and another alliance was remade.” said the King with a smile. “Now, let's get up there, we've gawked enough today.”

They slowly hovered up to the top of the Signal Fire tower, they circled the tower inspecting the stone and seeing if the pearl was lodged in the aged tower.
“See anything over there?’ asked King Meandenbor.

“Not a thing, maybe it's higher...hang on...here it is!” said Harry excitedly.

Planted in the stone, was a small white orb. Untouched by human hands and the hands of time. It was almost at the top of the tower, and it was almost passed by, except the sunlight reflected off it's smooth surface and glinted in the corner of Harry's eyes.

“How are we going to get this out?” asked Harry. “It looks locked in tight.”

“Well, you can slip through walls, and you remember how you got the ruby out, don't you?” said the King with a smile.

Harry looked at the ghostly king, then looked over at pearl. He placed his hand carefully over the stone, and pulled his hand back slowly. The pearl came out slowly, but soon, he felt the round pearl in the palm of his hand.

Harry held it in his hand, the pearl, and if he tallied up all the other stones...that meant he had all but three...from what the King said, Voldemort had one and there was one in the tower where his body was..but where was the other stone?

“There now, now we just have to get you back to the tower, and...” said the King.

“Wait, is that...that's SIRIUS!” said Harry looking down and seeing the form of his godfather as they fell slowly back to the citadel courtyard.

The King watched as his ghostly ward made a beeline for the man. “Just when I thought I had seen it all...he survives this world.” he said with a smile.

Harry fell to the stone walk way and ran to his godfather. He could hardly dare believe it, Sirius was here! So this was who the King sent to fetch him!

“What do you mean we can't save him?” said Sirius chasing after Gandalf. Harry had to float in order to keep up with the irate man.
“He's in Mordor, and in the clutches of Sauron...for all we know, he's gone...”

“Gone?...No...he can't be gone, I would know if he was gone.” said Sirius fiercely.

“I'm right here, Sirius.” said Harry.

“He can't hear you.” said the King softly. “Come along, let's get you back to the tower, if these people plan a march of Mordor, I fear it will be the climax of his reign of terror.”

“I want to...” said Harry.

“Lad, if we can get you back to the tower and get you prepared to wake up at the right time, then you'll be able to spend all the time in the world with him.” said the King with urgency. “Now come along, it'll take time to get to the tower, especially with Sauron's defenses so heightened.”

“Don't we need the stones?” asked Harry. “Don't we need the others? I thought I needed all the stones together to Apparate with the Onyx stone.”

“Only if you wish to return to your world, here, a royal command is all it takes.” said the King. “Besides the further the other stones are from Sauron the better.” Harry watched as King Meandenbor took the stones' pouch off Gandalf's hip, becoming as ghost like as himself. “We will take these, but the last two...will be saved for last.”

Harry gave Sirius one last look and followed the King out onto Pelennor Field.
Returning to the Tower

Harry followed the King back to the black land of Mordor, he noticed that the King looked nervous about something, and kept looking behind them to see if anyone was following them.

“What's wrong?” asked Harry.

“We need to get back to the tower. If what I think is going to happen, happen before we get there...then...I don't want to think of the alternative.” said the King swiftly. The alternative, was possibly the death of his young protege and replacement. The death of a child left a bad taste in any sane man's mouth, but a boy that he had grown to be incredibly fond of..it was terrifying.

He reared back and grabbed Harry's hand, pulling him along with him.

It was hours later, resting periodically to gain their strength back, when they managed to reach the black gate of Mordor. But a giant wall of fire was in their way. The fire wasn't really there, but it alerted them to the gaze of the giant, lidless eye hovering over the Black Tower. The eye of Sauron was gazing fiercely between the city of Gondor and it's front gates, waiting for the foolish men of Gondor to challenge him.

The King looked worriedly at the gazing eye, as it made it's swift monitoring of it's boarder.

“Can't we just go through the rock?” asked Harry. “It'd be a hell of a lot faster.”

“We wouldn't be able to see where the eye is looking once we come out. We need to keep out of it's gaze....”

“What would happen if he did see us?” asked Harry.

“Those specters at the marsh? You'd be reduced to something like that.” said the King absently.

“How...how would he catch us?” asked Harry. He then looked over at the flames licking the ground. “If we step in fire I take it?”
“Precisely, thankfully,” King Meandenbor looked off into the cliff side beside the Black Gate. “there is another way...I hope I remember that path. We don't have the time, but we don't have much choice.”

“What way is that?” asked Harry.

“It's a cave entrance to my realm. It was lovely all those years ago, the walls glistened with precious stones and crystals...though I don't think that Sauron has kept up with it's upkeep.” said the King. “Come...we need to hurry.”

The King pulled Harry off in a different direction, away from the Black Gate of Mordor.

“Rush rush rush...” thought Harry with a slight smirk. “So much for sightseeing.”

“You may sightsee at another time.” said the King.

“Get out of my head.” said Harry mumbling.

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In the Malfoy Manor, Lucius paced in front of the fireplace. There was still no word on the location of Lord Voldemort, but it was no matter. There was no one who could defeat their master, and if he had been wounded in any way, they would all have been summoned.

Lucius however had his master's orders to fulfill, the dark lord wanted the Potter boy captured, and captured he would be.

Hopefully.

Dumbledore was putting up a powerful defense around the school, and with the arrival of his cousin, Leroy and his...husband...the school was now untouchable. The fool...he should have stayed down in Africa where he and his damned male lover belonged. Lucius could never understand that side of the family and how they could never truly understand the grand and noble work he was trying to further and aid.
Especially not his younger cousin Leroy, he had broken his father’s heart and bedded down with a man...and a man from a known muggle loving family to boot. He tossed aside the chance to marry Bellatrix for someone else...though...he couldn’t quite find fault with him on that. True, Bella was a beauty years ago...but once she became enraptured with the Dark Lord, she whored herself to him, he never bedded with her that he knew of...but she always yearned to touch him and tried to please him as best she could and as best as he allowed her to do.

He jabbed at the fire, they had to find the boy...if they didn’t by the time he came back...there would be nothing to quell the Dark Lord’s anger at the death of Bella....they couldn’t lie and say she died in battle, he was no fool and was a master at seeing through their best lies.

Narcissia came into the room, with Draco walking slowly behind her. They were both wearing bathrobes and had obviously been awakened by Lucius’ mutterings and continuous pacing. They looked at Lucius with concern.

“Dear...are you alright?” asked Narcissia worriedly. “You haven’t slept in days.”

“I'll be alright once we have Potter's body here.” said Lucius shortly. “Once we can surrender the boy and once Voldemort finally has his revenge, than everything will move ahead with his plan. The boy's death will signal the rebuilding of Voldemort's reign.”

Draco looked sideways uncomfortably.

“But Dumbledore has put up strong defenses, none of our kind can even get to the village, let alone the castle.” said Narcissia. “And he wasn't at the Weasley's house, we looked everywhere Potter has been.”

“We haven't looked at Potter's ancestral home.” said Lucius quickly.

“I've managed to stay in the social circles despite all this, and I haven't heard of Potter being there.” said Narcissia.

“They would keep it quiet.” said Lucius.

“Not Angora and her sisters, remember, they also said that James and Lily Potter were going into hiding, before Pettigrew told us.” said Narcissia. “If the young heir to the Potter Patriarch was at
“Paradise Castle, I would have heard it.”

“Father...maybe Potter is at Hogwarts, you could always send me back and I can see if Potter is hidden in one of the towers or something.” said Draco hopefully.

“It might not be a bad idea, Dumbledore may stop us, but he won't stop Draco from coming back to school...” said Narcissia.

“Dumbledore knows we support the Dark Lord, he won't let Draco back into the castle, especially if Potter's body is there.” said Lucius. “Go back to bed Draco, your help isn't needed this time.”

Draco looked hurt, but walked swiftly to bed.

He looked at his wife, and then a thought struck him. “Narcissia...didn't you say that you're family house couldn't be plotted on a map?”

“Grimmauld Place? That's right.” said Narcissia.

“Doesn't Sirius Black have the only right to that house?” said Lucius with a sneer.

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Harry and the King reached the stone steps that would lead them to the secret entrance to Mordor. There was no one about, but Harry stared transfixed at the greenish glow of the tower that stood in front of them.

“There's no one here, we could just go through.” said Harry. “Besides, they can't see us anyway.”

“I'm not risking it, and neither are you.” said the King pulling Harry by the hand. “Up the stairs with you.”

“But...” said Harry.
“Lad...we don't have time.” repeated the King. “Least of all time to argue between ourselves.”

Harry took the lead and floated up the crumbling stairs.

“What is this pathway for...not really secret if you can see the stairs.” said Harry.

“It's secret enough, no one has the time, or leg strength to get up these stairs.” said the King. “Back when I was alive, this was a beautiful countryside, and once you got high enough, it would show a lovely landscape.”

“So...it's a scenic route.” said Harry.

“Precisely, I love nature and it's grand beauty...I think it's a final stab at my memory that Sauron has completely destroyed everything I worked so hard to perfect.” said the King. They turned to see the blacked earth and the continuous phosphorous like glow of the large structure beneath them. Crows flapped beneath them and squawked loudly, bickering amongst themselves. “My world...my utopia...destroyed.”

“Can't it be fixed?” asked Harry.

“Oh...it will take an immense amount of work, and the time it will take to purify the air alone will be long indeed. I fear...it will not be in your lifetime that this world will become it's lush paradise again.” said the King solemnly. “To be honest, this world could be labeled as too much trouble for it's worth...but...it's all up to you if it is or not.”

Harry looked at the King and then back down at the blackened earth.

“We've rested enough, it's time to press on.” said the King and he led the youth into the dank, dark cave that stood behind them.

“It doesn't look like it could be much of a scenic route.” said Harry looking at the cobwebs that lined the edges of the cave a little ways in.

“”It didn't always look like this.” said the King with a sad smile.
They traveled down the winding, dank, dark, sticky caves, there were several paths that veered off where they were traveling. Twice they had to double back, the King's memory of this cave system was slightly lacking and they found themselves at dead ends.

“Here we are, this is the way.” said the King with a smile.

“It's Moria all over again.” groaned Harry.

“Now, now, give me some credit, I haven't been down this path since I've died.” said the King. The paths began to be drenched in spiderwebs as they continued down the path. Spiders skittered across the ground and on the walls, if they had been walking and solid, no doubt they would have been covered in the eight legged creatures.

“Ron would be having a fit in this place.” said Harry as he watched several exceptionally large spiders come down on thin lines. They were the size of a his head, and looked strong enough to take on Crookshanks, and he didn't think Hermione's cat would win that fight.

“Look at the size of that one.” said the King with a gasp.

Harry looked around and saw the curled legs of a gigantic spider. It was a little smaller than what Aragog was, but no less frightening. There was a wound on it's belly and a sticky trail of something went down it's side and onto the ground, leave a dried puddle mark.

“Something killed it...” said the King.

“You said that this is a secret way into Mordor, perhaps Sam and Frodo...” said Harry.

“It would be the safer way into Mordor, but I can't quite picture them killing it.” said the King. “Hobbits are known to be gentle folk...this is a bit out of character for them.”

“You don't know Sam.” said Harry with a laugh as they floated swiftly past the fallen creature. They exited the cavern and saw a tower up a further set of stairs. Harry made to go up the stairs, but the King stopped him.
He pointed towards another path, that led down into the valley.

“We need to go there, the tower is this way.” said the King. “Going there would be time consuming and pointless.”

They made the trip to the tower, nothing out of the ordinary happened, the orcs and Easterlings were all congregated by the Black Gate and the Eye was fixed solely on it.

“Just as I thought.” said the King.

“What?” asked Harry.

“Aragorn has come to the Black Gate, he's going to challenge Sauron.”

“He can't! Sauron is too powerful! And...” said Harry.

“I think, he's trying to give Frodo and Sam time to get to the center of Mount Doom.” said the King. “It would make sense, taking Sauron's focus off finding the ring and tending to the bold army attempting to remove him from power.”

“Do you think it would wise to take the onyx stone now?” asked Harry.

“We'll find out when we get you back up there.” said the King. They flew up to the window where their spectral journey started, and stepped into the room. Harry stared at his own lifeless body, resting peacefully just where he left it.

“This is no less creepy. Now where is that stone?” asked Harry.

Suddenly, a great crack ripped through the sky and caused the mighty tower to sway slightly.

“What the bloody hell was that?” yelled Harry.
“The Ring! Quick boy, get to your body! It seems we just made it in time!” yelled the King.

Harry leaped over to his body, and settled back into his skin and bones. His body began to groan and his eyes fluttered. Just as he began to move his fingers, the tower began to lean even further, poised to collapse to the ground, taking them with it.

“Hurry!” said the King. “You need to get out of here!”

Harry's entire body ached, he couldn't control anything his limbs did, he tried to move as fast as he could, but his arms and legs were sluggish. The King placed the stones they had collected into the boy's pockets, and pointed to the bedside table.

“The stone! Get the stone!” said the King hurriedly.

Harry raised his arm and slowly reached into the drawer....the tower now cracked in half and began it's descent.

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Remus sat in the room where Harry's body slept, calmly sipping a cup of wine and reading a book. He had become agitated from the lack of knowledge where his best friend was at, but the wine was easing the tension in his body.

Suddenly, a pounding noise came from the hall and the door burst open. The kids all came into the room.

“Remus! It's the Death Eaters, they're right outside!” said Ron.

“They're trying to come in!” said Hermione.

Remus stood up quickly, his wand was out of his hand and Hagrid picked up his flowery umbrella. Then a flash of gold and red burst forth from the hallway and a small note, floated into the room and landed on the bed, directly over Harry's heart.
“Stay with Harry, send the children back to school, I'll be there with Rudolph and Leroy soon.”

“They're back?” asked Remus.

“Isn't Rudolphus a Death Eater?” asked George, his face white, and his twin matching it shade for shade.

“That says, Rudolph, but who are they?” asked Hermione.

“Never mind that, go with Mrs. Weasley.” said Remus ushering the children to the with who came to the room.

“We can't leave you guys behind!” said Fred.

“We'll be fine, they can't get in without Dumbledore's permission, but it's too dangerous to move Harry. Now get going, the last thing we need is to protect you kids as well.” said Remus.

“We can...” said Fred.

“Now yeh heard Remus, get outta here!” said Hagrid roughly. “We'll take care a' Harry.”

The kids were taken out of the room and from upstairs the two half-breeds could hear the telltale whoosh of Floo travel.

“Dumbledore should get here soon, he'll send them away...but once he does, they'll figure out that he's here.” said Remus.

“Tha's alright, we can find another place to hide him.” said Hagrid hopefully as he pulled the covers closer to Harry's chin. “Don't ya worry Harry, we won' let no one hurt ya.”

“I'll set up some protective spells in the front hall...they won't be able to get past it.” said Remus.
“Dumbledore said to stay in here.” said Hagrid sternly. “Gotta follow his orders, they won't make it in.”

Remus turned to look at Hagrid, but when he saw Harry, he faltered, “Alright, but I'll just make some protective spells on the door.” He took out his wand stepped out into the hall and placed multiple spells on the wood and the knob.

Now all they could do, was sit and wait. Wait for either Dumbledore to come, or for the Death Eaters to finally break through the Fidelius Charm.

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Lucius sneered to himself. They knew they had Potter, the proof was the house that was not making itself known to them. Narcissa did what she was supposed to make the house show itself to a member of the family, but it wasn't revealing itself.

Harry Potter had to be here. Now it was just a matter of time to find a way into the house. They tried using a few Muggle hostages, but leave it to Dumbledore to place protective spells all over the area of Grimmauld Place, protecting the other houses and it's inhabitants. They would not be able to harm anyone here.

They were all focused on the space between number eleven and thirteen, that they didn't see the three figures come rushing up behind them, waving their wands.
Merry and Pippin watched in horror as both the Black Tower and the mountain of Doom both erupted and fell to ruin. The mountain roared and caused the sky to burn red with lava bursting forth from the summit. They knew that Sam and Frodo were in the mountain and had just destroyed the Ring and hopefully were trying to escape. And if what Gandalf said was true, Harry was trapped in the Black tower, his current status unknown....watching both of the landmarks fall, was as if they were watching their three friends die right before their eyes.

“SAM!”

“FRODO!”

“HARRY!”

Sirius fell to his knees in shock, he had lost him...he had lost his godson, after coming so close. This was wrong, so wrong. It wasn't fair, he worked so hard to get here, to see Harry again, alive, happy and awake...now, he'll never hear his voice again. Never hear the laughter of his godson from one of Fred and George's pranks...never hold him again...who had it out for him...? Why did...why did whatever deity that carved out Harry's path, hate the boy so much that he'd do this?

“I'm sorry...” said Gandalf, touching the man's back sympathetically, and his eyes holding back tears for the three young ones that were lost. “I'm so sorry.”

“If I ever get my hands on Voldemort, I'm going to kill him...with my bare hands.” said Sirius, tears flowing freely from his eyes.

“I can't wait.” came a voice from above them.

They turned and saw a lone figure standing on top of the cliff looking down at them. It was Voldemort, a manic look in his eyes, and a twisted smile on his lips. He had his hands resting on his knees and seemed to be waiting for them.

“That's the man that Anya described!” said Merry. “When she told us about the man that
Sirius looked up at the Dark Lord Voldemort and then over to Eomer. “Seriously, you got me...mixed up with that?” said Sirius with a shout.

Eomer looked away slightly. “You *do* have similarities.”

“I'm insulted.” said Sirius with a disgusted look towards Eomer and a wrathful glare at the Dark Lord.

“As am I, but I must say, I'm beginning to prefer this younger body...” said Voldemort flexing his fingers languidly. “I have the knowledge that I sacrificed my appearance for, and now my vitality is back. I can't wait to face Dumbledore again, to see him struggle against me.”

Sirius looked up at the man teeth bared wolfishly.

“So...Potter's finally dead...too bad...I'll have to find his body back in my world. Especially if I want to harvest those *beautiful* eyes...” said Voldemort silkily.

Sirius' fist clenched tightly, leaving deep and bleeding marks in his palm. Strider unsheathed his sword.

“It wasn't *just* the eyes I wanted,” said Voldemort, knowing that he was causing the ones that knew the boy great pain. “I want that heart, I'll petrify it, and it'll make a fine...*knickknack*.”

“You son of a *bitch*!” shouted Sirius as he whipped his sword out.

With a flick of his wrist the weapons that were held by every warrior far below, were lifted out of their grasp and hovering in midair, pointing menacingly towards their owners.

“What's going on?” said Merry as he stared at the floating weapons, his own short blade within a foot of his skull.
“Get behind me.” said Gandalf pulling Merry and Pippin back behind him. His staff in his hand, ready to defend himself and the hobbits.*

“I think the odds are stacked in my favor.” said Voldemort with a sneer. “Now...I'd love to continue playing, but I've got a carcass to find. Please...give Potter my best.”

“You...bastard...” said Sirius through gritted teeth.

Voldemort laughed maniacally and pulled the weapons back. “I do hope that Potter welcomes the company.”

He waved his hand and the weapons began to shoot towards their owners.

Gandalf was eye to eye with Glamdring.

Aragorn was staring at the steel of his Anduril.

Gimli was gawking at his axes.

Legolas was dumbfounded as his arrows and his twin knives hovered over his eyes.

Sirius was glaring at the man above him. He was going to die...well...he'd live a good life...minus the twelve lousy years in Azkaban, the awful childhood, lousy summers at home...well, his school life was great, the time he spent with Lily and James, and Remus. Holding Harry in the hands...then seeing how he changed into a fine, kind young man. So...all in all, he had a good six years at best. He'd be with Harry again...that's all he wanted...they'd both be able to see James and Lily again...

He closed his eyes and prepared to say good bye to his life.

Lucius was gripped in the large vines of an enormous plant that was dragging him slowly towards a large venus flytrap's mouth. How did he get this way, was this a trap the whole time? Were they just waiting to catch them all in one fell swoop?
His wife and a few of the Death Eaters were on the ground, tied up by threads that came from Dumbledore's wand. They had given up, to spare a death by these carnivorous plants, he was the last captured...what was he going to do...

“Cousin Lucius...you were never this stupid before. Give up.” called Leroy.

Lucius strained against the tendrils. “No...if the Dark Lord finds out I failed...I'd be better off dead.”

“Think of your son you idiot!” shouted Leroy. “He needs a father!”

Lucius looked up at the sky, a father...could he honestly say that he had been a father to his son? No...he couldn’t quite call himself a father...but it was too late, he was dead either way, if this plant didn't kill him, the Dark Lord surely will.

“Lucius!” screamed his wife from below.

His eyes looked over to the mouth of the carnivorous plant, it was terrifyingly close...he could smell the sickening sweet nectar that oozed from deep within the flora.

This...was it...he steeled himself for the end.

Sirius kept his eyes closed, he didn't want to open them. Then the sound around them went completely away, as if something had sucked all the noise the planet had to offer. He didn't feel anything penetrate his body, so he cracked his eyes open slightly. The weapons were still in front of them, but there was some sort of shiny film in front of them, like a giant bubble and it was keeping the weapons away from them.

Sirius looked up at Voldemort, and saw to his surprise that the sneering smile was gone, and was now replaced with a look of fury, raw undiluted fury.

He looked over to where the Dark Lord was staring at and what he saw, brought tears to his eyes.
It was a young man, hair fluttering in the light breeze, a regal robe around his shoulders, black leather boots, white silk shirt, with a rising sun embroidered in rich red and gold thread and a crown adorning his head, there were different stones in the metal which varied from silver to gold as if it were swirled around in the forge before it was poured. Light positioned itself on the tips of the crown, giving it an ethereal glow. He had his hand up, as if halting the weapons in midair.

There were two figures huddled behind him, staring up at him in awe. They were both filthy and drenched in sweat, gasping for air.

“H-Harry?” said Sirius weakly.

“Frodo! Sam!” shouted Merry and Pippin.

Harry turned his head slightly to where Sirius stood, then he looked at the others. “Keep back.” he said in a strangely commanding voice. “I've waited a long time for this.”

“So the cowardly boy shows himself at last.” said Voldemort smoothly as he stood up slowly.

“Oh please, I heard what you said...” said Harry with a smirk.

“You think you can beat me? A change of clothes means nothing!” said Voldemort spitting angrily.

“You're right a change of clothes doesn't mean anything, unless something you're wearing makes some difference...” said Harry with a smile.

Voldemort looked at crown, with it's multiple jewels, then he tightened the grip on his jade stone.

“So...you have some special stones as well...no matter, I doubt you'll be able to stop all these weapons forever!” snarled Voldemort.

“Oh, forever is too long to just sit here and wait, I'd get bored after ten minutes. I plan on wrapping this years long drama over and done with in the matter of a few minutes.” said Harry with a sneer.
Voldemort blinked. *Where did this brat get the bravado from? He was a cringing child the last time I had trapped him. Something, aside from the stones, happened...no matter, I'll win this...and take all the stones he has...and those eyes and heart of his.*

“How about we take this battle in there?” said Harry with a smile as he pointed behind him, the raging wasteland of Mordor. “Away from any possible hiding spot I may take refuge in.”

“Do you think I'm a fool? But yes...I'll accept your *last request.*” said Voldemort with a smirk as he slid down the side of the cliff.

“Harry's going to attack him the moment he hits the ground!” said Pippin.

But Harry didn't attack him, he extended his hand to allow Voldemort to go ahead of him.

“Oh...after you.” said Voldemort with a sly smile.

“Really, you'd think I'd fall for that?” said Harry with a raised brow.

“Just gauging how far your stupidity reaches.” said Voldemort shrugging as he led the way to the black land of Mordor.

“Everyone stay here, I'll bring your weapons back if you're that concerned.” said Harry, choosing not to look at any of them.

Aragorn reached forward to grasped the young man's shoulder, but the film that kept them safe against Voldemort's attacks stopped him, he was on the other side.

“He'll be alright...won't he?” said Merry.

“I surely hope so...” said Gandalf gripping his staff tightly.
Frodo and Sam turned to face the speaker, and when they saw who it was, their eyes welled up with tears.

“Gandalf!” screamed Frodo as he flung himself to Gandalf’s ankles.

“How did you survive the fall, Mr. Gandalf?” said Sam sinking wearily to his knees.

“I suppose I have the time now...we are unable to leave this protective shield, until Harry returns.” said Gandalf as he placed a hand on the surface of the shiny film that separated them from the rest of the world.

“What if...what if he loses?” asked Pippin nervously.

“Then we're no worse off then we were a few moments ago.” said Eomer.

Legolas turned to look at the man that had said naught but one word since the youth's return...he was staring into space, in utter shock.

“Harry...what....” said Sirius weakly. He was on his knees, his entire body slack.

“What do we do now, your highness?” asked one of the Gondorian gaurds.

Aragron looked at the back of the young man they had given up for dead, walk away from him again.

“We wait.” said Aragorn. We cannot do anything else.”

“Then let's rest and get our strength up, we'll need it if the boy fails.” said Eomer.

“You don't seem to have faith in the lad...” said Gimli.

“He got himself kidnapped by the Dark Lord by being foolish, I doubt he had has improved.” said
“He saved your kingdom, didn't he?” asked Pippin shortly.

Eomer turned away from the hobbit.

“I'm betting he's jealous, he's in love with Anya.” said Merry with a smile. “That's the reason he's acting like this.”

“Anya's here?” asked Sam.

“She's back in Rohan.” said Merry smiling towards Sam and rushing over to the pair of long lost hobbits.

Merry and Pippin were so overjoyed that their friends were back with them that they nearly piled on top of Sam and Frodo. Sam nearly threw them off Frodo when he winced and held his hand closer to his body.

“How did you two get back here?” asked Merry shoving Pippin off his legs.

“Harry brought us back.” said Sam. “One moment, we were running for our lives away from the mountain's lava, and the next Harry was standing in front of us, wearing that strange outfit and waiting for us. He had his arms out to catch us as he ran down the slope and the moment we touched him, we arrived here.”

“How...how did he do that?” asked Faramir. “And what was that strange garb he was wearing.”

Gandalf reached into his pockets, but found nothing, his eyes widened. He had a theory, and now...it was true...

Harry was now...the new King.
Voldemort turned around, facing the young man that had plagued his life for years. This more confident boy aggravated him to no end, the fluttering cape that seemed to shout nobility, the leather boots that sparkled as if a servant used powdered diamonds in the polish, the crown upon his head, and that knowing smile…it made him want to slaughter the boy all the more!

“Shall we start then?” asked Voldemort, pulling back his hands, the weapons pulling back as well.

“Tell me something, Tom…” said Harry.

Voldemort’s eye twitched.

“Have you learned anything while you were here?” said Harry.

“I learned I want to take over this land, and with that blasted Eye gone, it’s going to be amazingly simple.” said Voldemort gesturing to the decimated landscape.

Harry looked around them, “That's it...you didn't learn anything here at all?”

“What did you learn?” said Voldemort.

Harry smiled.

“I learned, that this place can go along very well without us. We're not needed here, someone like...well...me is wanted, it seems, but you...they're a bit sick and tired of people like you.” said Harry.

“I don't care what they like.” said Voldemort with a snarl.

“You and I both got a second shot at life, starting over, without magic and you still can't let it go.” said Harry shaking his head.

“And you couldn't ?” spat Voldemort.
“Oh I wanted to get home, and I wasn't wasting much time in the process, but I still wanted to enjoy this place...It's a nice world, too bad you can't seem to realize that.”

“Enough with the chatter, let's end this.” said Voldemort.

“Don't you want to even...” said Harry.

“ENOUGH!” screamed Voldemort as he flung the weapons to his enemy.

The swords, spears, axes and arrows flew towards Harry, prepared to impale him.

“I don't think this place agrees with you, you were a lot smarter back home.”
The Battle of the Stones

As the people stayed behind on the other side of the great Black Gate of Mordor, Harry dodged a barrage of spears nimbly as they rained down upon him. Voldemort was causing them to rise into the air and fall down upon the black haired youth like terrible bolts of destruction.

“Why won't you stay still?” growled Voldemort as he continued to miss again and again. “You talked big, and now...you can just barely escape me!”

Harry continued to dodge the weapons, further into the land of Mordor. He wasn't running from the madman, he was drawing Voldemort further and further away from the edge of Mordor...he had a plan and with the Dark Lord's help, it would be easier to accomplish it. Not that the Dark Lord would be aware of his participation.

As he led Voldemort further into the land of Mordor, fresh green grass began to grow as they made their way, discarding the burnt ground and turning it into a lush grassland. Harry was wielding the emerald stone to bring the flora back to Mordor, and with Voldemort's help at attacking the ground, and pulling the weapons back up into the air, he was aerating the earth around them. The plants would use the Dark Lord's help in growing faster and stronger naturally, helping rebuild King Meandenbor's paradise faster than it would have without the Jade stone.

Soon, the lava that once was cascading down the side of Mount Doom, was coming up quickly behind them. Harry noticed this out of the corner of his eye and the feeling of intense heat upon his back, leapt aside onto a thicker piece of rock, and focused his thoughts on an additional stone, the topaz.

“Won't be long now, Potter, and you'll be with your dear Mudblood mother once again.” sneered Voldemort.

Harry ignored the jab, he would be getting his comeuppance soon enough, just as soon as he was finished with the first thing on the agenda.

With the help of the topaz stone, the burning lava cooled underneath his feet, and the same sensation crept up the side of the mountain causing an end to the fiery rage. All the while, more and more plants: bushes, trees, flowers, grasses, began to blossom and burst forth from the ground.

“What are you doing? Fight me!” shouted Voldemort.
“I’m getting there...” said Harry with a sly smile.

Voldemort yelled with rage and began to hurl the swords and spears even more ferociously at his retreating foe. He didn't notice that the crown upon the boy’s head flashed a purple and blue shade.

As Voldemort pelted the annoying pest in front of him with all the weapons he had at his disposal, a downpour of sweet rain came down upon him. He was getting angrier, this boy...this little bastard was avoiding him, and prolonging the end of this long-standing battle. He wanted to finally rest in peace, he wanted this thorn in his side to be wrenched out and cast into the dirt...and he wanted to finally harvest those trophies he had been waiting so long for.

The rain began to nourish the ground and the plants that had just been reborn into the land of Mordor and the water began to well up in the canyons and ditches that still remained. The rain that fell gently down to the ground broke up the toxic fumes that still hung in the air, and dissipated it, bringing fresh air into the barren land.

“Damn you, quit moving!” muttered Voldemort. Then he saw it, he stopped moving himself, the ground, the cliffs they were once dried out, scorched, or just barren. Now...it was becoming greener, filled with life....what was Potter playing at? Was Potter doing this? Those stones, they must have some sort of plant regenerative power...well, he didn't need that stone, Potter could play with that one all he would like. The jade stone was all he would need.

Harry stopped as well, “You're finally looking around. What do you think? Great start to restoring this place.”

The Dark Lord glared at the boy, he wasn't taking this fight seriously!

“I thought we were fighting!” said Voldemort.

“We are...” said Harry. “You're right where I wanted you to stop.”

“What?” said Voldemort. The clouds overhead darkened and a bolt of lightning came crashing down, striking the man surrounded by metal weapons. The lightning struck the weapons and then in turn the energy struck the Dark Lord's body.
“Arrgh!” yelled Voldemort.

“Metal conducts electricity, I'm glad you kept the weapons above the ground, I didn't want my grass to burn.” said Harry with a smug smile.

Voldemort's body fell the ground. He was stunned, he didn't expect this...Potter didn't land a hit on him before, he didn't even try, and the first time he wanted to actually strike him...he landed a hit, admittedly, a devastating one.

“You're not done yet, don't bother playing dead.” said Harry looking down at the stunned man.

“D-Damn you.” growled Voldemort. “I'm going to kill you!”

“You keep saying that, and I'm still here.” said Harry with a shrug. “Besides, I haven't even started to fight yet. I'm just warming up. Seeing what I can do.”

Voldemort staggered to his feet, but noticed something out of the corner of his eye, the bubble that was protecting the others back at the border, it was still there. Could he...?

Voldemort moved his hand behind his thigh, out of Harry's sight, and flicked it. One of the smaller blades flew low across the ground, until it dug deep into Harry's thigh.

“Arrgh!” yelled Harry. He looked down and saw the dagger, despite being firmly in the boy's leg, it continued to make it way deeper into his skin, he pulled the knife out of his thigh and forced it to rust away to dust with the opal and sapphire stone in his crown.

“So, I surmised correctly, you can't make more than one of those bubbles, least not with one that size.” said Voldemort.

“W-Well, I guess I'm happy you're thinking again. You were a little mad with power cause of this stone.” gasped Harry as he clutched his thigh. I got too overconfident, he warned me about that.

-=-

Harry opened his eyes and saw that he was standing a glistening white room, sunlight poured out of the windows, making the room hard to look at. Harry had to shield his eyes with hands.
“Is this...did I die after all?” said Harry.

“No...you're back home, in a way.” said King Meandenbor's voice to the left of him.

“What do you mean?” asked Harry looking around, his eyes finally adjusting to the light. He was in a large room, with statues lining a large woven carpet that led to a large throne at one end of the room.

“You're back in your own world, your spirit at least. But you have more pressing matters to deal with before you can even think of going home for real.” said Meandenbor. “There is still the Jade stone, the other missing stone is easy to collect, we will get that later, but the jade stone is the one we need to get you prepared for.”

“How do I prepare for it?” asked Harry.

“It's simple. Sit on the throne, and take the crown.” said King Meandenbor.

Harry looked down and away from the royal throne. He didn't want it, he hoped that there was a way to get around that.

“It's not just the only way you'll be able to get home, as well as Black. But if you take the throne, you'll be able to utilize the stones to their fullest extent, without the need to clasp them in your hand. You'll need that to beat that Jade stone.” said King Meandenbor.

“The Jade stone is really that powerful?” said Harry.

“The most deadly stone there is, and in the hands of that mad man, you'll need to be on your guard at all times. Keep your wits about you and try end it quickly.” said King Meandenbor. “Now, come with me.”

Harry followed the man to a large white chair that stood at the end of the room. It was the throne of the Kings and Queens of the Wizarding world. Harry could only stare at it, he had never really heard of a king in his world before this happened, what sort of king would he be? Would people even realize he was there? Would he be worse than what Voldemort was trying to be? Or would he...
“Please, sit here.” said King Meandenbor.

Harry looked at the throne, he didn't want it, he wasn't ready...but there was no choice, and no time...

He sat down. As he sat, the throne seemed to change with each moment, as if it were deciding what shape to take. He could feel the surface change from what felt like wood, to metal, to a smooth cool stone. The armrests changed in their design and the cushions behind him changed their density and texture.

He looked up at King, who was waving his hands over Harry's head, an even brighter light blossomed between his palms. This also was changing shade and shape.

“Do you vow to do what you think is best for the Magical Worlds?” said King Meandenbor firmly.

“I-I do.” said Harry.

The King lowered his hand and the light encircled his brow.

“What the...you mean that's it?” said Harry staring at the King incredulously.

“There are many many more vows to make, but that's a general vow that takes care of them.” said King Meandenbor with a smile.

“More than that?” asked Harry.

“About one hundred and seventy-four to be precise, But I think you'll be fine, with the abridged version.” said King Meandenbor as he placed the crown on Harry's head. “The stones are in there, once we get the last two, they'll go straight into the crown, no trick to it.”

Harry touched the crown on his head, it felt cool, and his hair still flowed in the breeze, it was like
it was there, and yet wasn't.

“A word of advice before we go and get the jade and tourmaline stone.” said King Meandenbor. “Don't get cocky with that man, he's mad with power, so don't push him any further. He was a brilliant man, and still is, don't let him see a weak point anywhere on you.”

-=-

That's right, I was cocky...I need to end this battle quickly, I gave him too much time to look around...He's getting back his mentality in the battle, should have taken him out when he was going nuts...oh well, it can't be helped. I'll just have to stop playing and fight seriously. He removed his hand from his thigh and with a flash of turquoise light, the stab wound was healed.

“Guess I don't have much time then.” said Harry. I'll have to end this fairly quickly, no more messing about.”

“Still think you can win?” said Voldemort. “How delusional...wait...where's the wound I gave you?”

“Gone. I've healed it already.” said Harry. “You won't be able to hit me that easily again.”

With all the running and fighting that I've done with Strider, Legolas, Gimli and the rest of them, I'm as agile as a cat, I didn't think I could feel this strong, this place is amazing...I swear...

I'll take good care of it Meandenbor.

“Looks like I'm going to have to start over with this place again. It can't be helped though.” said Harry rolling his shoulders. He twitched his eye and rocks sprung from the ground, they were shaped like small daggers. There were hundreds of them, poised and ready to strike. With a nod of Harry's head, the rocks began their flight towards the man.

Voldemort managed to deflect most of the stones with the help of his weapons, but the rest still whizzed past his body, giving him deep cuts that caused him to stagger.

“What, what is this?” said Voldemort.
“Rocks, from the ground around us. You're lucky that I didn't use the molten lava that's still underneath, not quite cooled off.” said Harry. “If it comes to that, I *will* use it.”

Voldemort stared at the young man standing before him. No...he can't lose...he won't be defeated this easily.

“You are like that...you're a sweet...naive...foolish boy...” sneered Voldemort.

“Give me the Jade stone, and give up.” said Harry holding out his hand. “You can't win.”

“And you can defeat me?” said Voldemort still sneering.

“I've shown the easiest, less complicated ways to kill you, I think I win.” said Harry. “So give up, give me the stone, and I'll let you stay here. I'll have Gandalf or Strider keep an eye on you, but you can stay here, start a new life with your new found...youth.”

Voldemort sneered. “Sorry, I ate it. You won't get it without killing me.”

It was true, before he had leaped down to the soldiers that were standing before the Black Gate, he had swallowed the stone, so that no matter what happened, he wouldn't be apart from it, and he wouldn't loose it on accident. He found utilizing it in this fashion was more...liberating than just holding it in his hand.

“So what are you going to do now?” said Voldemort, smiling venomously.

Harry blinked, but then sighed. “I suppose...I have no choice.” In a blinding flash of light, he was gone.

Voldemort laughed loudly “I've beaten him, he turned tail and ran!....what?” Voldemort looked down, and saw his feet were wrapped in tight, bright green vines that seemed to shimmer in the light.

“Fool, does he think that the weapons I have can't cut these plants?” He raised his hand and brought it down, but the weapons didn't move past his ankles.
“What?” said Voldemort peering at the vines at his feet. The dust around them blew towards him, but bounced off a few inches away from his feet...as if there were... “No...there's a shield around my legs, protecting the vines...but...” said Voldemort in shock. He looked behind him, “The bubble is still around the people outside the border...he..damn him...he can make more than one! WHERE DID YOU GO! COME BACK YOU COWARD!”

Was Potter just going to leave him there to die? Was he going to leave him to let the sun bake him and let the vultures have their despicable way with him...Potter wasn't that cruel...perhaps he taught the boy something after all...

Suddenly, he felt something creep up his throat, as if he were prepared to be ill.

“Errk...urgh...wh...” said Voldemort thickly, and then it came.

“Eaurrgh!” said Voldemort retching loudly as bile crept up his throat, but something...something hard came up his throat and out his mouth as well, nearly knocking out a tooth and sending itself projecting six feet away.

*It was the Jade stone.*

“W-What? How?” said Voldemort weakly. He reached for it, but with his legs locked in place, he couldn't reach the stone, it was too far.

“No...I have to...”

He felt something dig in his chest...Potter had to be behind this, but where was he? He couldn't...he wasn't...He began to claw furiously towards the stone. He was not going to die this way...He was Lord Voldemort...He was...

Then, his eyes froze in place, his muscles tensed, and he fell limply, his feet still in the vines, holding him upright slightly. His mouth was open, bile still dripping out of his mouth. Something else began to creep up the throat of the lifeless mad man, causing the skin on the Dark Lord's throat to shift. Then something began to slither out.
A snake.

The snake fell with a thud on the ground and curled around the Jade stone. It was a pure white snake, with a multicolored head, its scales seemed to sparkle in the sunlight and its eyes were like a pair of emeralds. In a flash of light, the snake turned into Harry, still in his regal robes.

Harry looked at the now dead body of his most hated enemy. “If you had just given me the stone...this could have been avoided, if you just gave up...took your punishment...I guess...you were beyond saving...” said Harry. He turned the stone over in his hand “Not even your horcruxes are around anymore. Meandenbor and I took care of that back home...it's over....it's all over...”

Harry stood up and looked at the Jade stone. “Do I even want you? I won't use you if at all, but you'll be in handy when we take back the weapons to their owners.”

The Jade stone glowed and floated out of his hand, and secured itself safely in the crown on Harry's head. Harry's eyes flashed open, the Jade's power flowed throughout his body.

“So...weapon control isn't all that you do...” said Harry with a smile. He waved his hand quickly in the empty air, where Harry's had just hand traveled, Verlairion appeared.

“You would have been useless in this fight, and the King's now resting in peace...you won't speak to me ever again...Sorry to say, I'll miss your voice.” said Harry running his hand over the blade.

“Now...let's go return the stolen weapons...and then go home.”

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“Remus look!” said Hagrid staring at the bed.

The bed was encased in a blinding white light, Remus and Hagrid had to shield their eyes from the aura radiating off the bed. Once the light disappeared, they lowered their hands, their faces pale with surprise.

“What...What's going on?” said Remus with a gasp.

“Not a clue, but...yeh think it's a good thing?” said Hagrid.
“I hope so.” said Remus.

-=-

The people outside the Mordor border waited patiently for the battle to end. It was quiet, they didn’t see anything that showed that a fierce battle was going on. Then the bubble disappeared.

“What happened?” said Pippin.

“Did Harry win?” said Frodo looking up at Gandalf.

“Or did...” said Sam.

Then they saw the forest of swords, spears, arrows and axes come into view around the corner.

“No...he lost.” said Merry tears leaking from his eyes.

“Without our weapons, we'll have to rely on physical attacks.” said Strider. “It's been a while since I've punched anyone. Gandalf, take the hobbits out of here.”

“No...my magic can still help, my staff was not metal, it's the only weapon we have.” said Gandalf. “You take the hobbits, a kingdom needs you.”

“The world needs the both of you.” said a voice coming from the dust cloud.

The dust settled and showed Harry, standing amongst the weaponry, uninjured, a bloodstain on his pant legs, but other than that, not a scratch on him. The people who were standing there, stared at the young man.

“HARRY!” shouted the Fellowship members. They ran towards him, but none so fast as Sirius Black, who tackled him to the ground.

“Harry! Harry! Harry!” cried Sirius, he held Harry in his arms and rocked him back and forth.
Tears streamed down his face. “I was so worried, you have no idea what I've been through, don't ever do this to me again!”

Harry looked at his godfather fondly. “I promise, I won't do something like this again.”

“Where is that King at, I'm going to rip him limb from limb.” said Sirius angrily.

“He's already passed on.” said Harry with a smile.

“Shit, he put some weird crap in my head, I wanted to know what he meant by it, especially the last one...” said Sirius with a growl.

“What was that?” said Harry.

“Don't ask, he must have just been trying to be funny.” said Sirius.

“Sounds like him, took forever to get the smallest info out of him too.” said Harry with a smile.

“Harry!” shouted the hobbits happily as they swarmed over him.

“Hey guys!” said Harry with a bright smile as he hugged them all at once.

“Harry! Think you can make us some food when we get back to Gondor?” said Pippin.

“Don't you think of anything besides your stomach?” said Merry.

“You have no room to talk.” said Harry with a smirk.

“I'm hungry too.” said Sam.
“As am I.” said Frodo weakly.

“Than I suggest...” said Harry standing up out of Sirius' arms. “We go to Minas Tirith, and I'll cook a big meal...hey...this'll be the first time I've cooked for you, you're in for a treat I hope.” said Harry looking down at Sirius

“Harry...” said Gandalf coming up to them, his eyes bright with pride. “You're a King now.” he bowed slightly. “We must wait on you.”

“Nonsense, I've been itching to get into a kitchen again. Besides, we got one king here already that everyone bows to, two would just be annoying.” said Harry with a laugh. “You don't need a king here anymore, you have your own...I'll repair the damage done, but really, you all can take care of yourselves.”

“Come on, Harry!” said Pippin and Merry pulling Harry's arms. “We want food!”

Suddenly a whinnying sound came from the distance. It was Will-O-Wisp, galloping as fast as she could to her rider. She blew past the soldiers that stood in her way and stopped at Harry's side.

“How did she get out?” asked Gimli.

“I don't know, but if her father is indeed Shadowfax...no stable could hold her.” said Legolas.

“Hey girl!” said Harry running his hand through her mane. “Think you can give me a lift back to Minas Tirith? I want to make a big feast for everyone.”

She brought her head down and then brought it back up. Harry leaped on her back, he turned to the rest of them. “I'll have the food already for you guys, find your weapons and head on back.”

“Harry! Wait!” said Sirius as Harry galloped away from them. “Don't I even get five minutes of your time?”

“It has been a while since he cooked, he must be very excited, and with everyone back to together, and you being here, he wants to make it even more spectacular.” said Legolas.
“Let's get our weapons then and then head off to the feast!” said Gimli, handing Legolas his twin knives as he looked for his axes.

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Harry arrived at the gates of Minas Tirith and with the aid of the Topaz stone, he elevated the ground under Will-O-Wisp to bypass the gates and most of the tiers. The people in the city watched in wonder as the shining man rose into the air and landed at the top of the city. There were no guards left to stop him, but the citadel guards.

“Halt...” said the guards brandishing their weapons. But when they saw the light coming off the young man's body, they faltered.

“I'm not here to attack anyone.” said Harry holding up a hand. “I'm just here to prepare the feast for when the army comes.”

“The army...you mean, the King...it's true...we won?” said the guards.

“That's right!” said Harry with a bright smile, “You'd best spread the word. Oh, I'll need every cook, wife, and Berder to help me make the feast. If you have any remaining horsemen, send the message to Rohan, they're invited as well. I'll make enough to feed everyone!”

“Yes sir!” said the guards scrambling to follow the orders of the shining youth.

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Soon, everyone on the kingdom that had cooking skills were down in the royal kitchens. Livestock were brought to where the butchers were to be carved up, fruits and vegetables were gathered by the bushels, and chickens were plucked by older children as the younger ones were the taste testers for the sauces. The people of Gondor were happy to help in the preparations as barrels of wine, ale, and pitchers of milk were lined up for the beverages for the hungry soldiers and citizens of both kingdoms. Butchers were carving up the meat with ferocious speed so that they could be cooked the moment that the army and people of Rohan arrived.

Berder himself was baking mountains of bread, he was overjoyed at the return of his young friend that he rolled up his sleeve and put all of his talent to the test, out baking the younger bakers. Harry was fileting several fish and putting them large pans, pouring creamy sauces and herbs over top of them.
The smells from the kitchens wafted down the tiers, if anyone wasn't helping, they were almost salivating at the smell of the cookings going on up on the topmost tier.

It wasn't long, till the people of Rohan, who were already on their way to Gondor, and the army was making their way to Gondor.

Anya was riding in the lead on Voldemort's old horse, who seemed taken with her. He would allow no one but Anya to get close to him, and she doted on him while she was in the Horse country. They knew to come to Gondor, due to a vision that Anya had, she saw a great celebration, and saw that the flags of Rohan flying over the people, alongside the Gondor flag. It took some convincing, but the remaining soldiers of Rohan escorted the people to Gondor.

When she saw the small hobbits, and Strider...she galloped on ahead of the escort and towards them.

“Lady Anya!” shouted the men who were ordered to protect her.

“Anya!” said Merry.

“Wow! She is here!” said Pippin.

“I'm glad that you all are safe...I saw...” said Anya. Then a twinkling stone came from her pocket, the tourmaline stone. It had traveled from dress to dress that Anya had worn. As if some invisible hand had made sure that she kept it on her at all times. Anya stared at the light.

“What is that?” asked Anya.

“That would be another stone of Harry's...it seems you had it...” said Gandalf with a smile.

“Harry's safe?” said Anya quickly.

“Is this her?” asked Sirius nudging Strider.
“It is...” said Strider with a smile.

“I can see how it can be difficult.” said Sirius with a roguish smile.

“He's making the feast...I can smell it from here.” said Sam with a smile as he closed his eyes.

“I can't wait to see him...but what of...” said Anya.

“Harry...defeated him.” said Strider.

“Thank the gods...” said Anya her eyes brimming with joy.

Eomer looked at Anya's joyful smile, and glared at the top of the tier. Jealousy ripping through his body.
The party that waited for the people of Rohan and the army was immense. The food that poured from the royal kitchens trailed down to the third highest tier came in all varieties. Every table that was available, every plate, bowl, goblet, was put out at the street. Every inch of the tables were covered with either food or drink to tempt the people in the area.

People danced, sang, and ate for joy. Finally, the siege was over, the battle was over, the war was over. The men were returning home to their families and life could return to a peace that they all had almost forgotten. The army came back home to their families and the people waved and cheered to Aragorn, Gandalf, Legolas, Gimli and the four hobbits.

“Wonder where the lad is.” said Gimli.

“If you're looking for King Fainasinqui, he is up on the top level.” said a young woman placing a bowl down on the table.

“King Fainasinqui? He asked to be called that?” asked Gandalf.

“Well, no sir, but he's wearing a crown and he looks like a King.” said the woman with a blush.

“What does that even mean?” asked Sirius. “I like Harry better.”

“Jewels of light, is the simple translation.” said Gandalf with a smile. “A proper name...”

“Yeah, but Harry's shorter. Well, then what are we waiting for? Let's get to the top!” said Sirius from his own horse.

They galloped up the city to the topmost tier, leaving the armies and people of Rohan at a spot on the tables where there was particularly tasty dish. They had gone on, waving to people that waved at them, and finally stopping at the top tier. On the large stone pathway that jutted out from the city, a giant bowl carved out of mountainside was sitting over a giant fire. There was the young man they were looking for, in front of the fire. To be precise, he was expelling the fire from his mouth, as if he were a dragon.
The rich scent of the stew caused Sirius' sharp nose to almost imagine him eating the smell. It was a meal fit for a King...and there was a King making it.

That thought brought him to a halt, he could hardly believe it, his little boy was a king now...After what seemed to be a comatose state Harry had been in, he was crowned king, and was now in charge of the entire wizarding world. He had to talk to Harry...make sure that they were still...that Harry wasn't going to leave him behind.

Sirius made to move forward, but one of the citadel guards caught him.

“Don't get any closer, the fire is too intense for anyone else to get near it.” said the guard.

Harry stopped breathing out the fire, and stood up, he waved his hand and the giant stone spoon began to stir the contents. With his other hand, he controlled the knives around him to chop multiple vegetables and with the help of a small tornado, they were picked up into the sky dropped into the large pot of stew.

“Not surprising that he would use endless power to cook a meal.” said Gandalf shaking his head.

Harry touched the bottom of the giant stone bowl and amazingly, a small hole opened in the bottom, big enough to allow some stew with all its ingredients drop into a large pot. He touched the bowl again causing it to close seamlessly.

“Here's another pot, ready to be taken to a table...oh...hey!” said Harry with a smile.

“Harry! That smells really good!” said Sirius with a smile.

“Your guys' food is up at the table, get up there and tuck in!”

“And what?” said Legolas. “You're speaking your world's tongue again Harry.”

“Go to the table and start eating.” said Harry with a smile. “There are some people waiting for
They turned towards the table that stood before the doors to where the throne of Gondor was. At the table, was Elrond, Arwen, Haldir, Galadriel, Celeborn, and Glorfindel. While Aragorn and Arwen embraced tenderly, Anya sat beside the hobbits, and Eomer took the seat directly beside her.

“Lady Anya...” said Eomer with a mellow voice.

Anya blushed faintly.

Harry noticed out of the corner of his eye at the two of them, a sharp pang went through his heart, but he smiled. He did tell her to find someone else...but it was a bit hard to watch her do it right in front of him. He was a good man though...she could do far worse.

Merry and Pippin looked disappointed as they looked between Anya and Harry. “Darn...”

“You two really are spending too much with Harry. You're speaking his language like a bunch of copycats.” said Sam with a smile.

“You have no room to talk, Sam.” said Frodo with a smile. “Copycats?”

They waited until Harry was done serving the stew to eat. Waiting for the man to join them for the feast.

“How come you didn't eat anything yet?” said Harry.

“We were waiting for you, dear child...or should I say...Your Majesty.” said Celeborn with a smile.

Harry turned a faint pink. “Haven't done anything regal yet. That's going to have to wait a bit.” said Harry taking a seat across from all of them. Sirius picked up his chair and moved it beside Harry.
“What will be your first act?” asked Glorfindel.

“Well…not sure yes. Guess…I'll go home….” said Harry.

Sirius smiled brightly.

“But I'll be back the moment I let everyone know I'm fine...if Sirius was like this, I can only imagine what the others were like.” said Harry.

“Hey, I was worried the most!” said Sirius with a frown.

“There is still some stuff I have to do here, fix the messes that Sauron and Saruman caused…and then…I don't know…I haven't decided….” said Harry.

“Decided what, lad?” said Elrond.

“The way that Meandenbor made it here was a curtain, in one of the rooms of his castle…and I haven't decided…if I should destroy that or not.” said Harry.

The people on the other end of the table gasped.

“But…why?” said Sam.

“This world…it might have been spared the first battle that raged here over the ring, if the King had not had such tempting powers. I don't know…our world’s magic might be too dangerous for this place. You don't need us…”

“But we do Harry.” said Aragorn. “True, we can handle ourselves in the most dire of circumstances. But without you…this journey could have ended far worse.”

“That's right! Without you coming to get us, we would have died on Mount Doom!” said Sam.
“I think Gandalf would have done something to help you without my coming to get you.” said Harry.

“But we'll never know that, also that extra pack you gave us, it kept us going even longer than what ours did.” said Frodo.

“You saved many people back in Helm's Deep, ending a battle that would have claimed many lives.” said Eowyn.

“You, were more than needed here...” said Elrond. “The trials we all suffered would have been more terrible and hundreds of lives could have paid the price. And if you do close off the way between our worlds...we will sorely miss you.”

“Don't go Harry!” said the hobbits, Pippin wiped the tears from his eyes.

“If I may offer a suggestion.” said Gandalf with a smile. “Perhaps, you could insure to future kings...what has happened to you and King Meandenbor, and offer them the choice to come here...”

Harry looked at Gandalf.

“For I have no doubt that your successor will share the same qualities you possess.” said Gandalf.

Harry looked down, his mouth twitching in a smile.

“As long as it's just a visit.” muttered Sirius as he put spoonfuls of stew in his mouth.

“Are you that afraid that he'd prefer to stay here?” said Aragorn with a smirk.

“He already mentioned coming home, I think I win this little war.” said Sirius sneering back.

Harry looked between Sirius and Strider. “Wow...what did I miss?”
“You don't want to know.” said Legolas and Gimli together.

“Well...I guess...” said Harry picking at his stew...a smile on his face. “I'll keep the way open...and I'll see if the next King is ready to help keep it the way it is. And I'll come back to visit.”

“So you aren't staying?” said Eomer with a smile.

Anya looked over to Harry, tears in her eyes.

Harry stood up, walked over to where she sat and knelt down in front of her, his chin on his hands. “I'd be staying in my world and that world's...a bit...too tainted to have you in it. You'd most likely get sick with all the poisonous smog in the air, and it's rivers and food isn't half as clean and pure as this place is. It's best that you stay here.” said Harry with a saddened look in his eyes. “Besides, I think I can count on him to make you happy, if he can.” he nodded over to Eomer.

Eomer stared at Harry, he was prepared to challenge him for the courting rights to Anya, but...he was backing down, the man that destroyed the Uruk-hai army was backing down!

“I...” said Anya.

“If I took you home, I'd only be breaking both our hearts, you'd miss this place, and I'd watch you get sick from so much as stepping foot outside the door.” said Harry.

“He's got a point, London at the very least is known for it's smog. This place is a veritable heaven compared to our world.” said Sirius.

“Then why go back?” asked Merry through a mouth of carrots.

“Home is home...” said Sirius. “And I'm missing my wand...can't wait till I can do things so much easier...first thing I'm going to do is take a bath...”

“Good idea.” said Harry with a smile.
“Stuff it.” said Sirius giving Harry a shove.

“Remember, he's the king of your world now.” said Galadriel with a fond smile.

“He wouldn't do anything with me.” said Sirius with a smile.

“Don't count on it.” said Harry with a smile.

“Hey now!” said Sirius.

Several of the people laughed.

“Now...about this new name of yours...” said Legolas with a smile.

“What new name?” asked Harry.

“A few people have been calling you Fainasinqui, King Fainasinqui.” said Strider.

“What the...what does that name mean?” said Harry with wide eyes.

“Jewels of Light.” said Sirius.

“Makes sense I suppose.” said Harry touching his crown gently. The jewels glistened and sparkled brightly in the crown upon his head.

“So...you've found all the stones, Harry, a staggering feat.” said Elrond.

'Yeah, but I haven't used them all either. I haven't used this, and this one yet.” said Harry pointing to the beryl, and the tourmaline, “One of them just showed up out of nowhere.”
“How did you take down that crazy guy.” asked Merry.

“That...who?” asked Arwen.

“He ambushed us, right outside of Mordor.” said Pippin.

“I still can't believe he's gone, are you sure he's dead?” said Sirius.

“If he can survive an adder bite to the heart, he's earned immortality.” said Harry.

“A...what?” said Sirius in shock.

“I turned into a small insect, flew down his throat, grabbed the Jade stone that he swallowed, turned into an ant, carried it out, burrowed my way to his heart and then turned into an adder...and I bit it.” said Harry.

The table was silent.

“I wanted to use all the stones, to see what they could do...but...I was getting too...cocky...” said Harry.

“What's cocky?” asked Legolas.

“It's what Sirius and Strider kept acting like around each other.” said Harry.

Sirius and Aragorn smiled.

“Wait...” said Sirius, the smile coming off his face. “Did you get injured?”
“He stabbed me yeah...but I healed right away. The fight didn't last long, I didn't want to drag it out when I didn't have to.” said Harry. *I'm still getting used to the power, and it's a real strain on my body. Using the stones for normal, kitchen duties, is a lot easier to get used to the power than by using them in battle.*

“So, you won...without really any trouble...” said Sirius.

“Oh there was trouble, but it didn't happen here.” said Harry, “and I can't say it was trouble, more like awful.”

“What?” said Gimli.

“Before we head back, we have something to do first.” said Meandenbor.

“What's that?” asked Harry.

“Remember that horcrux I took out of you?” said King Meandenbor.

“Y-Yes?” said Harry.

“I can sense others, made by that man.” said King Meandenbor.

“Others?” said Harry in shock.

“About...five more I shouldn't wonder.” said King Meandenbor.

“How are we to find them?” asked Harry. “They could be anywhere, right?”

“Well, it would normally take a long, hard process to find them. But...you're the King now, hard work is now not a required part of life. I still have some residue left from the horcrux that attached itself to your body. Take it in your hand.”
Harry held out his hand and the King placed a smoky orb in his hand, it’s wispy fog condensed and dispersed repeatedly.

“Now what?”

“Look at it.” said King Meandenbor.

Harry looked at the orb.

“That...would have drained your life...it would have caused him to peer into your mind, possess you...until...it would have been possible for him to kill your closest friends, through you...” said King Meandenbor.

Harry’s eyes flashed, tears of anger sparkled in his eyes and his teeth were bared. “Damn...damn him...” snarled Harry.

“Now...look out that window...now...just...” he stopped, the glare in Harry's eyes were so intense, that even in his spectral form...a shiver went up and down his spine.

“You're done.” he said with a voice as cold as poisoned steel.

The aura in his hand, disappeared with a small flash. The King stared at the young man's hand in amazement, but he smiled. “And that's that, a long painful quest, done in a matter of seconds with a royal command.”

“You mean to tell me, that I can end someone's life, with a command?” said Harry, despite the still furious look, there was a flicker of worry.

“Oh no...you were only able to do that because it was a form of magic. You can control what magic is active and what is not. You could cease the worlds' magic with the blink of an eye if you desired.” said King Meandenbor.

“So...he's really gone?” said Harry.
“He will, once you defeat him.” said Meandenbor. “If you don't, well, he might have enough foolishness to remake his horcruxes. But, I'd bet on you to defeat him, no chance of him winning, so long as you take him seriously from the get go.”

Harry still looked down. “Not something I'm comfortable talking about...let's just say, I didn't think he could sink so low.”

“And this is Voldemort...how low did you think he could get?” said Sirius shaking his head, though he didn't know what Harry was talking about.

“So the fight...it went somewhat smoothly...” said Legolas.

“As well as anything.” said Harry with a smile, though he sighed. “Sort of anticlimactic with all the grief he's given me.”

“That's a good thing...” said Sirius quickly.

“If only he didn't swallow that stupid stone, the fight would have gone on longer.” said Harry.

“You wanted to fight?” said Sam in shock.

“I wanted to find out why...I wanted to know so many things...but I figured, that since I was in there, I'd finish it.” said Harry.

“Odd discussion for dinner.” said Glorfindel.

“But quite exciting.” said Celeborn with a smile to his old friend.

“So...are you going to go to the Grey Heavens?” said Harry.

“We may be recalling our kin from the Grey Heavens, we are unsure even now.” said Galadriel.
“The Golden Wood is still weakening.”

Harry looked down to her and then looked down at his plate.

“Do you want it renewed?” said Harry softly.

Galadriel and Celeborn looked at Harry in shock.

“That...that would be...incredible.” said Celeborn with a gasp.

“If you want to stay in Middle Earth, I can restore the Golden Wood, as well as Fangorn and many other forests in Middle Earth.” said Harry still looking down at his half eaten bowl.

“Please!” said Arwen looking at her father, who nodded.

Harry stood up slowly, and walked all the way down the long outreach of Minas Tirith.

They all stood up and watched him, his robe fluttering in the breeze. He had a focused look in his eye and continued walking towards the very end of the outreach.

“What's he going to do?” asked Sam moving forward, the other hobbits followed.

When he reached the the very end of the outreach, he held out both hands and tilted his head up. Suddenly, the wind picked up, blowing fiercely towards the west, on the wind, they could see a millions upon millions of tiny sparkles flashing in the sun. As if they were a tiny glittering snowflakes, blinking in the sunlight. They moved out onto the Pelennor Fields and beyond.

He then turned back towards them. “That should do it.”

“What was it?” asked Frodo as they hurried up to him.
“I just sent a special bit of pollen off to where the forests were. That should revitalize anything it touches, and there's more than enough to restore a hundred forests.” said Harry.

The hobbits looked up at Harry with awe in their eyes.

“Now...Frodo....” he said kneeling down to his level, he could hardly believe how much taller he got since he last met the hobbit. There was something haunting about Frodo, something that wasn't sitting right. “There's something beside your hand that's hurting.”

Frodo blinked, “Y-Yes...but...I don't think even Elrond can help...”

“Who said anything about Elrond.” said Harry, placing a hand on Frodo's head.

Frodo gasped, a warm tingling feeling blossomed from the top of his head down to his furry toes. His shoulder, his back, his hand, they all began to grow warm.

“I can't regrow bones, but I should be able to smooth over that gaping wound.” said Harry softly.

Frodo looked at his hand and new smooth skin stretched over the wound, as if it had been years that Gollum chomped his finger off.

“This is the first time I've been able to touch you.” said Harry with a smile.

Frodo's eyes began to well with tears, he rubbed his eyes as Harry removed his hand.

Glorfindel, Haldir and Celeborn saw how vibrant he looked. His stamina for healing must have increased.

“Remember lad, you'll have to go back to Rivendell...” said Elrond.

“Actually, I already did. King Meandenbor and I collected his body and brought it back to Castle Valor.” said Harry.
“When did that all happen?” asked Pippin.

“While the tower was falling.” said Harry.

“But...there was no time.” said Merry.

“There was plenty of time, with the Opal and Onyx stone. Why does it always have to be the first thing one finds that helps you in the long run...it's like that movie with the Emerald City and the Flying Monkeys.”

“What?” said the hobbits.


“Huh..uh...yeah...” said Sirius.

“Will-O-Wisp!” called Harry.

She came trotting over from where a large bale of hay stood in the corner of the square and came up to him, her magnificent head resting in his hand.

“I asked if I could take you with me...and Meandenbor said yes...would you like to go with me?” said Harry.

Will-O-Wisp whinnied and nuzzled Harry's hand.

“I promise, I'll take good care of you!” said Harry with a smile.

“You'll take the horse, but not the girl? You really have no priorities.” said Sirius shaking his head.
“She wasn't eating much while Harry was in Sauron's clutches. She would barely allow anyone else to ride her for long. Taking Anya to your world, could spell her death, but leaving Will-O-Wisp could mean hers.” said Gandalf with a smile.

Eomer looked down at Anya, who looked up at him.

“Please, be my Queen.” said Eomer, bowing low.

Anya looked up at him, then looked at Harry, Harry smiled and nodded, “Remember, I wanted you to be happy...you wouldn't be happy with me...But Eomer is a great guy...er...good man...he's a better match for you.”

“But...I'm not the same status.” said Anya. “I'm a barmaid from Bree.”

“I could care less.” said Eomer quickly.

Anya looked up at Eomer.

Harry caught Sirius' eye and flicked his head to instruct him to come towards him. Sirius walked over to Harry and stood beside him. Harry flicked his finger towards Anya and instantly an image came to her mind.

She was sitting in large throne, with Eomer on her right. They were smiling down at the people standing in front of them, people were happy, dancing and singing, and children were running around the large hall. Three children, with bright blonde hair, like shining gold were chasing around a large dog, leaping on it's back and riding it like a pony. They had Anya's eyes.

In an instant, the vision was gone, Anya gasped and looked towards Harry, his body was wavy and was surrounded in shining light.

“Goodbye, I hope to see you all again soon.”
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