

Title: Rites of Passage

Fandom: LotR/Tolkien: Lorien Elves

Characters: Lorien Elves (Haldir, Rúmil, and Orophin with the Fellowship)

Prompt: 002. I am not the master of the law, and cannot set it aside.

Rating: G

Beta: Alex, her wonderfulness

Summary: What really happened before the Fellowship could cross Lorien's borders.

Author's Notes: It wouldn't get out of my head. There's another short note at the end, with an explanation of part of the story. I didn't explain it up front because it would spoil the story.

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Aragorn stood back, shaking his head. How was he supposed to lead the Fellowship to Mordor if he couldn't even get them into Lorien without starting a minor war? Of course, the trouble between elves and dwarves started long before, and it would take a miracle to get them to trust one another. If only it wasn't hindering the progress of this quest!

When they got louder, he finally stepped in between Haldir, Legolas, and Gimli.

"Haldir. You know me, and your Lord and Lady know me. Believe me when I say that all of the company can be trusted. Please take us to the Lady."

Haldir shook his head again. "I cannot. Our law requires visitors to be blindfolded. If we let them in at all. I am not the master of the law, and cannot set it aside. I am here to enforce it."

Aragorn blew out a loud breath, frustrated.

Haldir decided to take pity on the man and pulled him away from the group to talk.

"I would be willing to let you and Legolas in, but I am hesitant to allow that dwarf or the halflings to cross the borders. Perhaps you can prove their worthiness?"

Aragorn frowned. "Prove their worthiness? How? I already told you that I trust them all. That should be enough, even for you, Haldir."

Haldir bit back a sarcastic comment. Aragorn was either being deliberately obtuse or he really had no idea what Haldir wanted.

"Are you really that mystified? Aragorn, think back to our previous meeting. You know how to persuade me to change my mind."

Aragorn thought back as instructed. Then, his jaw dropped, and he blushed bright red.

"NO! You cannot...I will not...they will not! You ask too much."

"Then you will not be allowed into Lorien. Your choice."

Sometimes, Aragorn really hated elves. Especially arrogant ones. He sighed again, in defeat. He had to do it. Of course, once they'd seen Lady Galadriel, he could tell her and she'd make sure to exact revenge on Haldir. Hopefully after the Fellowship left.

He held up his hand in defeat. "You win. I will tell the others. But don't expect them to be very willing. They will not like being forced into this."

Haldir just smirked and walked back to where the Fellowship was gathered, surrounded by still alert warriors of the Galadhrim.

Aragorn called the others over and held a rather lengthy whispered conference with them, punctuated by loud protests from the other seven members of the Fellowship. Aragorn obviously had a lot of influence with the others, because the argument ended more quickly than Haldir had anticipated.

He stood back, crossing his arms in front of his chest, a smug smile on his face. His brothers stood behind him, black blindfolds dangling from their fingers.

Aragorn stepped forward. "I'm first."

Orophin stood behind Aragorn and tied the black blindfold around his head, making sure he couldn't see. Rúmil handed him the object, sticky part pointed up. Then the two of them spun Aragorn around three times and pointed him in the correct direction.

He failed. Haldir was sure he wouldn't have to let any of them in; they were so bad at this.

Boromir, Legolas, Sam, Frodo, Pippin, and Merry all tried and all failed. It was up to Gimli.

Rúmil and Orophin gave him an extra spin before sending him on his way with the blindfold. Even Haldir was surprised when the dwarf walked right up to the tree with the picture of the warg on it and stuck the tail right to its hind end. Gimli ripped off the blindfold and crowed with pride.

"Yessssir, I was always the best at pin the tail on the warg! You just can't make a dwarf dizzy! Now let us pass!"

Haldir's shoulders slumped in defeat. How could he have known that of all people, the dwarf would be the best? He gestured for Rúmil and Orophin to start putting the blindfolds back on.

Aragorn sighed again as Gimli, then Legolas started arguing about having to wear blindfolds. They should have by-passed Lorien and gone near Isenguard. Surely, an evil wizard would have been easier to deal with than stubborn and arrogant elves and dwarves!

END

Notes: The game that they're playing (pin the tail on the warg) is a traditional game (though it's called pin the tail on the donkey) that American children often play at their birthday parties. They are blindfolded, spun around three times then sent to pin the tail on the donkey. (A large picture of a tailless donkey is hung and the children receive tails to pin on it). It's not as easy as it sounds, believe me. I thought it only fair that Gimli should win, since he was the one Haldir wanted to keep out of Lorien the most.