

Faramir,

I am furious with you. Some would say that I should not be angry with you in a situation like this, but I feel I have every right to be.

Do you think you are the only one who has felt despair during these past weeks? Do you think you are the only one who has felt like all hope is lost? Do you think you are the only one who has had the thought that our sons might not see their father again? Do not think you are so special. You are not the only one who has felt this way. I have wept over thoughts like these, and others.

You have not had to look into our sons' innocent faces and realize that they do not understand what is going on and may never understand. You have not had to answer Elboron's questions of "Where daddy?" "Where Horsey?" You have not tried to explain these things to someone not even two years old yet without shedding tears.

You said it would not make a difference if you never returned, that our sons would grow up happy anyway. I think you are sorely mistaken. I have seen Elboron come back from the stables or the gardens after playing with his big friends and search for you. He is convinced that you know nothing about toads and that he needs to show you where they live and how they hop. He misses you and knows that something isn't right about all of this. The other night he woke up crying for you. I had to rock him to sleep before he would settle. I do not say these things to upset you further, but to show you that you are wrong in saying that nothing would be different to the children.

As for certain members of the Council and their talk, you should know by now that they are the ones always eager to suggest a replacement for you whether you're free or not. As for others less inclined to think that way, it is more of a reaction to the events than anything else I'm sure. This is an unprecedented situation in our time, and naturally there are those who will over-react.

As for your promise, I fully intend to hold you accountable for it. You promised me and your children that you would return, and return you will. Alive and whole. You say that we should not set our hopes too high, but then what is the use of hope? Hoping that you return to us is not too high. There is no deeper grief for me than to lose you (save perhaps for... no, I do not want to even imagine losing one of our sons). You are my life, Faramir, and not even the thought of our children would be enough to staunch that wound. They are amazing and wonderful, and mean so much to me, but without you, they are just crutches to hold up a severely crippled woman. You saved my life those many years ago in the Houses, and you continue to save it every day that you live.

Pardon the interruption, but I had to set aside the writing for a few moments. It was becoming too emotionally overwhelming. That, and Beruthiel came in and demanded to have her ears scratched. I think you may be right about her. Her activities are very suspicious for those who know her well. However, Lordel refuses to say anything other than, "She is a good cat," so perhaps she is living up to her name after all.

As for Narak and his message, it quickly became common knowledge that something bad had happened when he came back riderless and with blood stains on his skin and trappings. He was difficult to handle for several days afterwards as well.

I'm afraid there is not much news to tell you this time. Teherin only threw up her hands when I told her about the wine and how it interacted with the poison. She says that it is a good idea to start stockpiling this water, but since you use what rations you get almost immediately, she wonders how long the poison lasts within the water. If it only lasts for so long before 'going sour,' then that only adds yet another element to your problem. She wants to try to get a sample of the water you have to drink but is having difficulty finding something easy enough for Aiglos to carry and without arousing suspicion.

We wonder at the fact that Al-Jahmir has not offered any sort of communication yet. If it weren't for Lordel and his buzzard, I would think that you two had disappeared from the world. But from your letter it appears he is more interested in having you as company than in ransom. I care not for any of his alternatives, though. Please, Faramir, do not do anything to incite his anger.

Ah, here is Teherin with a small vial. She says that she wants a little of your water, if you can spare it. She doesn't entirely like the idea that your storing extra water is causing the poison to react sooner. She would rather know what unseen things it may be doing to you before you start cutting back on your doses, but there hardly seems to be a right way to go about anything. We just want you to be safe. We were both glad to hear that you are able to be outside now. I was worried about you confined to one room all the time. At least now you can be like your son and wear off some of your energy outdoors.

I must now try and talk Lordel into sending this letter out with Aiglos tonight. The bird makes the journey from here to Tolfalas in a little less than half a day, if flying's well. However, Lordel also insists that Aiglos can't fly forever and has been known to refuse if he feels he's been overworked.

Please, stay out of trouble, and come home to us soon. We miss you.

*Love always,
Eowyn*