

*Dear Faramir,*

*I am sorry if my previous reply seemed overly harsh. I was worried about you, and afraid of the meaning behind your words. I understand about your not feeling well, though. The past days have been taxing here as well. If I could, I would wish for all of this to be over and for you to be home again with us. The new year festivities have probably already begun, but I do not have the heart for celebrations. How new can a year be if the problems and trials of the old year carry on into it?*

*It is very quiet here tonight. Most of our friends are in Minas Tirith right now, leaving only Visilya and Khorazîr to keep me company. (And little Vorondil of course, since Visilya is here.) Two days ago Lossanna said she felt she should be returning to her family now, seeing as the really difficult work of the birth was over and the twins were settling in nicely. She has been a great help to me, and I will miss her. She left this morning with Túrin and Éomer and his guard riding escort. Éomer has business in the City; he told me, and promises to return as quickly as possible. He left a surprisingly large detachment of his own guard here in the meantime. Teherin has gone with them as well to seek counsel in the Houses and to study in the library. I do not know when they will return, but I hope it will be soon. All of this company has spoiled me, I'm afraid.*

*But now for your letter. Elboron has not seen the frogs yet. According to Túrin, they are still too small to be of any real entertainment, and besides that, it has rained off and on the past three days, forcing big and little boys alike to stay indoors. An early afternoon thunderstorm yesterday did not agree well with Meriadoc and Peregrin. Neither one slept well while it rumbled. Elboron handled it better, though he still says he doesn't like the lightning very much. I am not sure what I think about you sending him one of those lizards. He would adore it, I'm sure, but there's just as much danger of Berúthiel eating it as there is of Aiglos. I think it would be better if you just left the creature there.*

*As for your little gift to your host, I can certainly see how it cheers you up. It was his own fault for leaving things unattended. However, it was also a very dangerous thing for you to do and I am quite surprised he did not suspect you immediately. Yes, you have a reputation to maintain, but I would prefer that you annoy him when you're not his personal captive! I too wonder what his messenger brought him. He has not made any contact here nor any in Minas Tirith to my knowledge. This silence would be maddening if it were not for Aiglos and Lordel.*

*Teherin greatly appreciated the phial of water. I know not what she has done with it or to it, but she says it is a magnificent advantage. She also appreciated your note that the water tasted differently after a few days. She would have preferred that you waited until the next morning, after you had tested the reserves, to send your letter with the results of that experiment.*

*I'm afraid I must apologize for the briefness of this letter. There are other things I would like to tell you, but it is getting late, and I need to get some rest before the twins want their nighttime feeding. I promise to write more in my next reply.*

*Fare you well, my love, and may the Valar protect you while you are away from us.*

*Love always, Éowyn*