

My dearest Faramir,

There was a time when I thought I would never write those words again and have you read them. You cannot imagine my relief at knowing you are recovering swiftly from the poisoning. I love you, I want you to know that, and I want you to come home soon. Your sons need you, and I need you too. Do not try to cross the healer Zinizigûr, for I have heard that she loses very few arguments. Túrin would like to know more about the lion cub and whether you think you can smuggle it back on your return journey. Túrin has been a great help in translating the Adûnaic these past letters have been in, and it appears his editorial comments have carried over to this one.

As for news from home, rest assured that Elboron has decent food to eat. He and his playmates found some early-ripened berries yesterday. The evidence of their foraging was smeared and stained all over their faces and hands. Yesterday the boy was happier than he has been the two days previous. Not even a visit to the stables or gardens with Túrin and Éomer could cheer him up. His best playmate, Khorazîr, left on the 13th to return home. He was reluctant to leave. He said he wanted to stay here to see how things developed with Al-Jahmûr, but he also wanted to be home for the birth of his grandchild. I told him to go, that Aravôr would need the support when the time came. He seemed a little more at ease after that. I have gotten used to having him around and will miss him too, as will Túrin. The two have spent many late nights talking about the South. I wonder how long it will be before Túrin seriously thinks about journeying there again.

But away from this and to nicer news. Like I said in my note, the twins are growing daily. Meriadoc still does not like being put on his tummy, but now he will tolerate it for a few short minutes before he starts screaming. I try to tell him that he will never learn to crawl by sitting on my lap, but he doesn't listen to me. Peregrin has improved his eating habits, too. He doesn't eat as much as his brother does, but I do not worry about him going hungry anymore. They both recognize their big brother and kick and squeal when he's around. I've had to explain to Elboron again that the twins are still too small for him to play with, even though they look like they want to.

Elboron's birthday is tomorrow. It's hard to believe that he is two years old now. Wasn't it just a few days ago that we were looking into his little face for the first time? And that after everything that seemed to set against his being born. I cannot imagine life without him, or his brothers, now, nor can I remember what it was like before they were born. The celebration will be muted tomorrow. It is hard to celebrate anything without you here. There will be gifts, though, and something sweet for him to eat, and smiles and laughs as he relishes being the center of attention again. I will be sure to tell him you are thinking of him, for I'm sure you will be. We will have a proper celebration of this and all the special days when you come home.

I will hold off discussing politics and plots for another letter. I have little to tell you that you could not find out from other sources anyway. Instead, this letter will be to cheer you up,

prompt a swift recovery, and remind you that things are well and safe here at home. Those who know are relieved that you are healing and in good hands. Teherin says she would like to meet this Zinizigûr someday. I do not know if that will ever happen, but I'm sure it would be an interesting conversation.

Summer is in full bloom here in Ithilien. The trees are almost completely leafed and the gardens have come alive in the past weeks. Berúthiel has resumed her prowling in the forests, though she has not set loose any squirrels in the house yet. She has gone back to most of her old ways since the spy was caught, a sign that (I hope) means there are no more spies and threats around. She has given up trying to pounce on Aiglos too. Not long ago she tried sneaking up on the buzzard while it was resting in Lordel's study, and it turned on her suddenly and started squawking and swatting at her with its wings. She raced out of the study and stayed hidden until late that night. It was the first time I heard Lordel laugh. I had begun to wonder if he had any humour in him at all.

I shall close this letter for now. I do not want to over-tire you when you need to be getting better. Your friends send their love and best wishes for a swift recovery. Know that we love you and think of you every day, many times a day. The boys want their papa to come back, and I want my husband to return home. See to it this happens!

*With all my love,
Éowyn*

Lótessë 16, Fourth Age 11

To Azrahil of Umbar,

Greetings!

Tell Zinizigûr that kingsfoil is still not widely-found. Its quantity declined greatly while Gondor was under the rule of the Stewards, but now that the King has returned, it is coming back in greater quantities every year. I am not sure how plentiful it is near the coast, but around here and especially closer to Minas Tirith it is not difficult to find. From what you have told me about her, I do not doubt that she has the best interests of her charges in mind, and a firm spirit, so I am interested in seeing what happens should Marek decide to poison Faramir again.

And do not think that just because my husband is awake that I am finished with you! I want to thank you for all that you have done for Faramir and me. Like I said previously, it is greatly appreciated and will be remembered. You have displayed an unusual courage and dignity by what you have done. Faramir would call it "showing your quality," and others we know would say, "Handsome is as handsome does." Though you are not proud of what others of your blood have done, there is a particular excellence in your own that is showing. I wonder where it comes from. Do not forget that you had a dam as well, not just a sire.

You asked for a swift end, one with honour if it could be achieved. I sympathize with you more than you may think. There was a time when I begged for the same. I had watched my mother waste away from grief to her death, my cousin die from poison, and my uncle fall into premature frailty and feebleness of mind and body due to a worm-tongued and false aide. I felt caged, confined, trapped in a position where all I could do was wait for destruction to come to the door. When it looked bleakest, I sought death and great deeds, and I almost achieved both. But I found an honourable death cannot compare to a honourable and wonderful life. I made my great deeds on the Pelennor and found honour and peace in living when all the wounds were healed.

An honourable death in the midst of battle brings you nothing tangible. My uncle and cousin, and many noble friends, died honourably, but all that remains of them are memories and songs. There are others who live and daily show why they are worthy of honour.

Éowyn

Lady of Ithilien