

*My dearest Faramir,*

*You do not know what a relief it is to know that you are alive and well, all things considered. You have not left my thoughts or dreams since Narâk brought your letter.*

*I hardly know where to begin this, but since you asked about your children first, I will tell of them first. Elboron has discovered the world of toads, thanks to Túrin, and has learned the Adunaic word for "horse thief" thanks to Khorazîr. He is his usual happy self most of the time, but he does get upset when he remembers that some bad men have stolen his daddy, and he wants them to give you back, now.*

*Meriadoc and Peregrin are strong and healthy lads, growing more and gaining weight every day. Meriadoc seems to have the spirit of a halfling in him, because he enjoys eating and napping thoroughly. Peregrin does too, but he has been fussy in the night lately. Teherin assures me that it is nothing serious, so you do not need to worry about it either.*

*Considering the circumstances, I am well. Exhausted from the birth and nighttime feedings, but I know these will lessen as the boys get older. I have worried and feared for you since you capture, and yet your letter has comforted me greatly. Teherin, Visilya, Lossanna, and all the others have helped me unceasingly since you left, whether it's playing with Elboron and taking him to the stables or gardens, or rocking one of the twins while I nurse the other.*

*As for other people, the men who went with you straggled back about a day after the ambush. Apparently they had been shot at with poisoned darts of their own, but this time with a venom that only made them unconscious for many hours. Other than that, they have no serious injuries. Perhaps Al-Jahmîr (the snake indeed!) did not want to have to contend with anyone avenging a brother or son's death?*

*It has been oddly quiet here since you were taken. The greatest stir was when Lordel arrived, and even that was only because he came unexpectedly during the night. He said he felt he needed to come here. I did not understand everything he said, but Teherin seemed to, so I will trust her reaction. His buzzard has once again proven to be a valuable asset. (However, I fear the bird may be next on Berúthiel's list of prey; she has hardly left Lordel's side since he arrived, and has been seen staring at the buzzard tantalizingly. You know how she loves a good challenge.) I am still amazed that it found you so quickly. We would have sent a longer message, but we did not know how you had fared or whether you were in a place where you could easily receive a winged messenger without drawing attention.*

*It infuriates me to know what that man has done to you. To take a worthy opponent captive is one thing, but to weaken him and then taunt him is another. It is cowardice that keeps him from challenging you fairly and at your full strength! Even as I write this, Teherin is studying her books, searching for any substance similar to what you have described. She wants to know if you can taste any flavours, see any discoloration, if there's any residue, any characteristics of what this poison is. To know that he has one of his spies here both frightens and angers me. It frightens me to*

*realize that he does have someone so close to us, and it angers me to know that somehow we have been careless enough to let them get so close to us.*

*I wept when I read of Horsey's fate. To think that that wretched man knows how to hurt my little boy, who's hardly more than a baby, is almost more than I can bear. He made a mistake in giving the toy to you, though. To him it is nothing more than cloth and cotton, but it is filled with your son's giggles and smiles. Keep it close to you and think of him when you feel your hope is fading. I will see to it that Al-Jahmîr gives Elboron his Horsey and his daddy back.*

*Your letter is being kept secret, especially now that we have a spy amongst us. Only I, Túrin, Visilya, Lossanna, Teherin, Beregond, and Lordel (of course) know about it. Túrin is preparing to ride to Minas Tirith with a copy of the letter to inform the King. He goes under the pretense that his father wanted him back by the 13th to work on some sort of business affair.*

*A few days after the ambush, a letter came from the King requesting that the children and I come to Minas Tirith for increased protection. I respectfully declined, one reason being we all know what happened last time a letter supposedly came from the city, and secondly, I do not feel up to traveling, especially with newborns and a toddler in tow. Teherin said dryly, "Obviously the King has never traveled just after giving birth." Today we are discussing what to do with the information you've given us. No matter how much we'd like to, we cannot send word to Pelargir to storm the island, even if Falastur felt like humoring us. Beregond says we need to wait until we know more of Al-Jahmîr's plan for you.*

*The snake has not made any contact, as you correctly guessed, and certainly we should not do anything to betray the fact that we know things. That leaves us little choice but to wait, and you know how much I enjoy waiting.*

*I must close this now. Your sons are hungry and need their mother. I have told them all that you love them, Elboron in general terms lest in his innocence he says something he shouldn't, and the twins in detail about your situation, since they cannot hold a conversation for long. All three of them miss you in their own ways and look forward to your homecoming. Teherin begs you not to do anything rash, such as make another escape attempt or irritate Al-Jahmîr, until she has a better understanding of what this poison is and what it does to you. In other words, be a good prisoner.*

*Know that you never leave my thoughts, neither when I'm awake nor asleep. Come home to me soon.*

*Love, Éowyn*