

*Lótessë 23rd, Fourth Age 11*

*My dearest Faramir,*

*I apologize for the lateness of this letter. I hope you had not begun to think I had forgotten about you, for that was far from the case. Between taking care of the children and seeing to matters with the fief, there has been little time to sit down to write a proper letter. Moreover, the King made an unannounced visit yesterday to discuss several matters with me concerning you and your situation. I am not sure what will come of it, but I will talk more about that later.*

*First to your letter. I must admit I was quite stunned by what you wrote. Azrahil is really Narejde's child? How ironic. I cannot imagine what went through his mind after finding that out. To discover that you're not who you really think you are. To learn that half of your blood is your own enemy. (I agree that there are worse things than being half a tark, but not many.) From what I perceive of him, though, I believe he will come to terms with this revelation once he has had a chance to think things through. How did his conversation with Al-Jahmîr afterwards go, or was he sent on another errand again? Well, this certainly makes getting you both out alive and whole even more imperative. Narejde will want to see her child, and I want to see my husband.*

*These past days I have been seeing to affairs with the fief. I'm afraid I must congratulate you on how you have structured and organized matters concerning Ithilien. For the most part things have been running smoothly in your absence, with the proper people taking up the slack and seeing to it that daily tasks continue to be filled. So far this week I have heard a report on the continuing reconstruction and replanting in southern Ithilien, trade reports from the Harad Road, and a notice about some people caught doing illegal logging. I have a certain suspicion that the letter that arrived today from Pelargir may have something to do with that last bit, but I have not felt motivated to open it. Lately Falastur seems to act like his borders have suddenly extended beyond their usual bounds, and I have received several letters filled with complaints about me enforcing our own policies on our land. I asked Elessar for his advice concerning the matter, and he said he woul*

*Lótessë 24th,*

*Apparently you are not the only one suffering from sleepiness while writing letters. It looks like tonight may be following the same pattern, so please forgive if this letter is shorter than usual.*

*Like I said in the opening, the King visited here to talk about things. He arrived before noon on the 22nd (must have ridden all night!), stayed through the day on the 23rd, and left this morning to return to the City. We spoke mostly of you during our discussions. Elessar surprised me, saying that he had seen you while you were in your fever, using the Palantír. I told him how your health is improving thanks to Zinizigûr's care and that you are trying to earn an ally as well. Then I questioned him about his use of the seeing-stone, and he confessed that it was an attempt to get a better idea of the surroundings near Barad Gwaelin. He went on to say that he has a spy on the island, though I'm afraid not close to you. When I pressed for more details, he answered evasively, so I do not have much more to tell you about that.*

*I can tell you that plans for a rescue effort are underway, but few details are established at this point. Elessar has talked to Imrahil about using some of his ships, especially merchant ones that often make the journey from Dol Amroth to the South. Apparently they are thinking about a sort of marine rescue. I must admit I was rather upset that I was not involved in any of this, but I think Elessar was right in asking, "What could you do better?" Sending a company of rangers west, even on an authentic errand, would look suspicious to many eyes. And certainly an influx of Rohirrim in the area would arouse talk as well. I eventually admitted he had a point. Ships of trade would not look out of place there. After this, Elessar sighed and said he wished that our relations with Pelargir were better, for it would be easier to negotiate use of the fleet for a venture like this. But as it is, asking Falastur for help in a secret mission would be tedious enough, and adding you to the combination would only make things worse.*

*Again, I am telling you what little I know about these things. Not much can proceed with this plan until Imrahil writes back with shipping schedules and ports-of-call for his ships. It's likely that some errand riders are going to have to retire their horses after this.*

*Our talk drifted to other things after this. Some of the nobles have written the king, asking what is going to be done about the apparently-vacant Stewardship. He has written back saying that until it's certain that the position is vacant, nothing will be done. For the more persistent (bullheaded) nobles (and you can guess which ones those are), he adds, "As long as the Kingship is filled, there isn't much need for a Steward, is there?"*

*He admits that he has thought about the possibility. Something he wanted to talk with me especially about is whether I would accept the position if I were asked. I was quite a long while before I said that there was once a time when I would have agreed without hesitation, but now with the children, I am completely uncertain. He nodded, saying he was not asking this very moment. Moreover, he said, he'd like to avoid such a situation altogether. I agreed. He also mentioned that it could be possible to leave the position unfilled until Elboron came of age, but it's doubtful the rest of the nobles would agree with that.*

*It is late, and this kind of talk is making me unhappy. I hear one of our sons is awake in the nursery, so I will see to him before my night is over. Fare you well for now, and do not believe that I have given up hope that you will come home to us. Right now there are many good people trying to bring you back, and I know in my heart that they will.*

*Love always,  
Éowyn*