

To Azrahil of Umbar,

Greetings!

It is a great relief to know that Faramir has woken, finally! This is clearly a step toward his recovery, even if the fever and pain lingers. Thank you for telling him that his letter was sent, and that you are continuing the correspondence. That will ease his mind considerably. If you could, the next time Faramir is awake, please give him the short note I am enclosing with this. Thank you also for keeping the letters I have sent secret. I do not entirely understand why you do this, but it will be remembered.

Zinizigûr asked what poisonings Faramir has had in the past. What hasn't he had? His participation in the War of the Ring ended when he was hit by a poisoned dart and also became a victim of the Black Breath. The healers of Minas Tirith did what they could to relieve his suffering, but he would have died had it not been for Elessar and the athelas (kingsfoil) plant. In later years, he has received a vîshti snakebite (treated before the venom had the opportunity to take hold), khorîsh poison many years ago (I'm sure she is familiar with it and its effects), a poison from Rhûn many years ago that almost killed him ere the antidote arrived.

The Rhûnic poison was particularly nasty. It had some similar qualities to khorîsh, such as the heavy bleeding, but also more intense effects, such as numbness that spread throughout the body, the feeling of warmth though the body was chill to the touch, and persistent dizziness and lapses into unconsciousness. I cannot recall the name, but I was told that the poison came from the blossom of the Rhûnic plant and the antidote from the stem.

Faramir may also have poisons in him that we do not know about. He has enough enemies with enough ability to slip him a poison that sleeps long ere its effects begin to show. But Zinizigûr is right: he does have a strong constitution. Rarely does he become ill, and I have only seen him confined to bed due to illness or injury a very few times.

But now I have a question for Zinizigûr. From what I understand, jealous wives created this poison to keep their wayward husbands close to home. With the prolonged high fever and other effects of the toxin, and considering the intent of its original creators, is it possible that sterility is one of the final results?

But to other things. I have been in contact with the King, though he prefers to keep the details of his doings secret, even from me. He did assure me that he is aware of the deceitfulness and treachery of the al-Jahmîr sons and has taken this into full account while planning his actions. But, I do not know his plans or his timeline. It is in the better interest of many to make sure that Faramir has escaped before that happens, but in reality, provisions are in place should he be unable to return to his office. However, when the hammer-stroke of Gondor falls, it will be crushing. At the moment, the list of those to be spared from this is short, though additions could be made should there be good reason.

I have some acquaintance with the Umbarian philosophies of blood and family ties. I have heard of your honour codes and customs. What I have not understood, and perhaps you can enlighten me, is if these ties only bring shame and dishonour, why defend them? Why not seek for the true honour of a good name?

*Éowyn
Lady of Ithilien*

My dearest Faramir,

Azrahil has told me that you are waking more often now, and that Zinizigûr believes you are on your way to recovering. This news has relieved me more than anything else, even when we caught the spy. I have worried greatly about you, even though you told me not to. You should know by now that I have difficulty following orders sometimes.

Your children are well and safe. Elboron is eating almost anything he can fit into his mouth, and Teherin tells me that he must be getting ready for a growth spurt. He is not the only one growing either. The twins are getting bigger every day and are staying awake longer and longer. They are also smiling and cooing more often.

Since reading even this short note has probably tired you, considering your condition, I will close for now. Rest assured that I love you and am eagerly awaiting your homecoming.

*Love always,
Éowyn*