

COUNCIL OF ELROND'S REALM MAGAZINE

REALMER'S DIGEST

NUMBER 5, JUNE 2010

60 PAGE SPECIAL

GONDOR

MEN OF THE SEA

FARAMIR

BOROMIR

ARAGORN

IMRAHIL

TRAVEL GUIDE

AND MORE...

EXCLUSIVE

TOUR OF

WETA

WORKSHOP

WITH

RICHARD

TAYLOR



EDITOR'S NOTE



Chances are that after reading the titles on the front cover you'll storm right past the standard editor's rambling and rush to the goodies we've prepared for you. But just in case you decide to return at some point here are a few words about this 5th issue of every Ringer's favorite magazine.

First of all thank you for downloading this issue. We hope that, once again, you will find many interesting articles that will entertain you and improve your knowledge of Tolkien's world. We've added two big changes. A themed special focusing on a specific Middle-Earth culture that will serve

as the backbone of each issue from now on. In this number we'll be presenting the Gondorian culture with detailed character reviews, fan fiction and comedy bits.

There is also a change in the graphics design that we hope you'll notice and enjoy. Thanks to the Blu-Ray editions of LotR we now have a much better source to take screenshots from, so as a result our articles will be accompanied with much better images, revealing all the incredible detail that you might not have noticed while watching the movies on the dvd. Be sure to set your Acrobat reader to display the magazine in the [ACING page layout mode!

And finally, as a huge magazine special, we are bringing you two reports from New Zealand. A true fantasy trip with Magoleth through Weta Workshop accompanied by New Zealand's newest knight Richard Taylor, and a visually stunning trip through 3 LotR tours taken by our first guest writer Littlegreenwoman.

We hope that you enjoy reading this issue and that you'll join us again in the last quarter of this year when #6 is planned to be released. Feel free to send us feedback, comments, suggestions, critique and of course articles that you'd like to share with your fellow fans. Stay safe and see you in a few months,

the ruling steward of Rd,

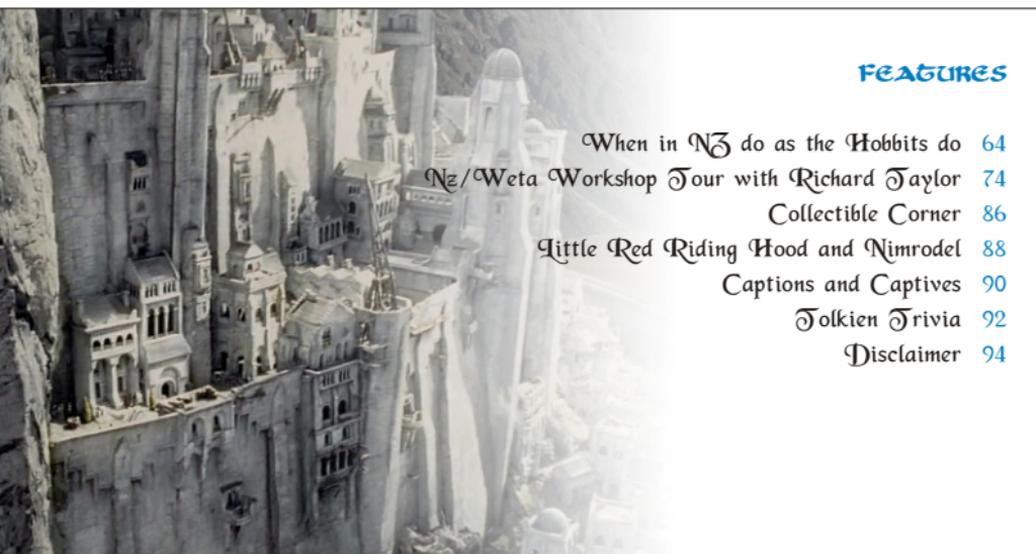
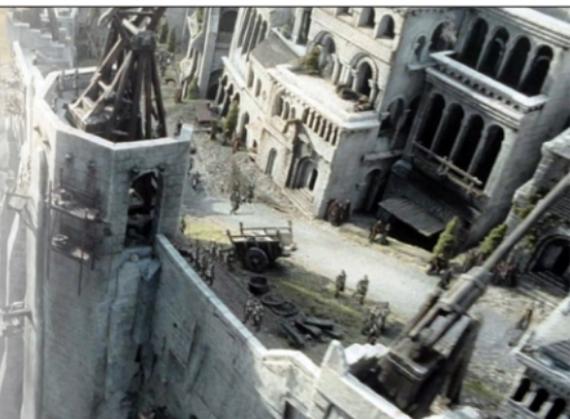
Aegor



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The Men of the Sea by Ilandir

A look into the Númenórean fleet and their voyages throughout Arda



1.0 Introduction

The Númenóreans were, without any doubt, not only the greatest mortal beings, but also the finest mariners in the Second Age. Their skills in the building of ships and their voyages across the vast seas of the world were unsurpassed by any other race. This article will give a glimpse into the workings of their fleet and how it was organized. Also, it will look into the innumerable navigations that the men of Númenor undertook throughout the wide oceans. I shall be looking mainly at a span of 1523 years: from the first Númenórean ships to arrive in Middle-Earth, until the death of Tar-Minastir, when they began failing as a race.



This article contains many references that are appropriately dedicated to Aldarion, one of the Kings of Númenor, and probably one of the greatest Númenórean mariners of the Second Age. In the 'Unfinished Tales', not only does Tolkien give us descriptions of the voyages he made, but also how the different havens around the island worked and what the fleet of Númenor consisted of.

Tolkien himself described the Númenóreans as being “The Men of the Sea” giving us a clear idea how much they loved and where closely connected to the waters of Arda.

2.0 The Númenóreans' sea-fairing desire

The 'Unfinished Tales' is the best source from where we can gather all sorts of information about Númenor which we wouldn't find in 'The Silmarillion' or in any other of Tolkien's works. In fact, the section dedicated to the Second Age, starts off with the chapter 'A Description of Númenor', and in it is found all geographical information.

Within the pages of this chapter we find a very interesting and explanatory paragraph which sums up a description of the Númenórean's liking for the sea and a quick account of the main events which I shall be discussing soon:

“Beyond all other pursuits the strong men of Númenor took delight in the Sea...From the fisherfolk were mostly drawn the Mariners ... there were shipwrights among them who had been instructed by the Eldar; and by their own study and devices they improved their art until they dared to sail ever further into the deep waters ... seafaring became the chief enterprise for daring and hardihood among the men of Númenor...”

From this passage we learn that seafaring was deep within the hearts of the people of Númenor and thanks to the teachings of the Eldar and their own ideas they managed to build a fleet and sail unexplored seas for hundreds of years. In this article I will also provide a short list of the named ships that Tolkien describes to us.

The 'Akallabêth' (the account of the Downfall of Númenor) found within 'The Silmarillion', also contains a similar paragraph about the island's inhabitants and I include it here for further information:

“Above all arts they nourished ship-building and sea-craft, and they became mariners whose like shall never be again since the world was diminished; and voyaging upon the wide seas was the chief feat and adventure of their hardy men in the gallant days of their youth.”



2.1 Havens around Númenor

A haven, in simple terms, is some sort of refuge, a safe place where to stay. In this instance, a haven also refers to a harbour or port - an area where ships are kept safely from the power of the sea.

Throughout the chapter 'A Description of Númenor', we learn that the island had a series of havens upon its coasts - to be more precise, three harbours were to be found on Númenor. The following quotes give a clear description of where each of these was to be found and their appropriate names that were given to them by the inhabitants:

“Three small bays it had [the area known as Andustar] ... the northernmost of these was called the Bay of Andúnië, for there was the great haven of Andúnië (Sunset)...”

Of Andúnië we also find reference in the Akallabêth in this short phrase:

“Of old the chief city and haven of Númenor was in the midst of its western coasts, and it was called Andúnië because it faced the sunset.”

Quoting once again from the 'Unfinished Tales' here follows the description of another haven:

“Between the promontories of the Andustar and Hyarnustar was the great Bay that was called Eldanna, because it faced towards Eressëa ... at the centre of the Bay of Eldanna was the most beautiful of all the havens of Númenor, Eldalondë the Green; and hither in the earlier days the swift white ships of the Eldar of Eressëa came most often.”

From this chapter we only learn about two of these havens. The other is mentioned in the following tale. From what we can see both harbours were to be found on the west side of the island and one of the reasons for this was due to the dealings between the Númenóreans and the Elves of Eressëa, whom they would often bring gifts out of the Undying Lands to provide to the mortal beings.



At this stage we also read about how the Númenóreans used to get their wood to build their mighty vessels:

“From the days of Tar-Aldarion there were great plantations in the Hyarrostar to furnish timber for ship-building.”

As we shall see when tackling the next chapter of 'Aldarion and Erendis', this event will be more clear as we are given explanations for how and why these plantations occurred. Also in this chapter we get to know about the third haven in Númenor:

“...Rómenna, where was the chief haven of Númenor, the greatest shipyards, and the most skilled shipwrights...”

- 'Unfinished Tales'
Aldarion and Erendis

Unlike the other two havens, Rómenna was situated to the east of the island and this will, later on, prove to be the main harbour from which ships departed to sail on long voyages to Middle-Earth and beyond.

2.2 The Ban of the Valar

Númenor is known as being the 'Land of Gift' as it was given to the Edain by the Valar at the end of the First Age for all their efforts fighting against Morgoth. They were also given a longer life span, which allowed them to develop into a more advanced society than the lesser men of Middle-Earth.

Although out of all this, the Valar had given them one limitation, that is, not to sail to the West and reach the Undying Lands. As we are told in the Akallabêth :

“the Lords of Valinor forbade them to sail so far westward that the coasts of Númenor could no longer be seen;”

This was the price they had to pay in return for their higher status as mortal beings. This Ban both helped their achievements but also proved to be their doom. For being given restrictions to sail to the West, they were free to travel all other seas to the east, allowing them to explore uncharted lands far beyond Númenor:

“Thus it was that because of the Ban of the Valar the voyages of the Dúnedain in those days went ever eastward and not westward, from the darkness of the North to the heats of the South, and beyond the South to the Nether Darkness and they came even into the inner seas, and sailed about Middle-Earth and glimpsed from their high prows the Gates of Morning in the East. And the Dúnedain came at times to the shores of the Great Lands ...”

- 'The Silmarillion', 'Akallabêth'

Tolkien also wrote about this Ban in one of his letters and this is what he had to say:

“...being men of peace, their courage is devoted to sea-voyages. As descendants of Eärendil, they became the supreme mariners, and being barred from the West, they sail to the uttermost north, and south, and east. Mostly they come to the west-shores of Middle-earth ...”

- Letter by J.R.R. Tolkien to Milton Waldman (1951)

Letter: 151

The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien'

2.3 The First Voyage to Middle-Earth



It is said, both in the 'Unfinished Tales' and in Appendix A of 'The Lord of the Rings' that the first Númenórean ships appeared on the coasts of Middle-Earth in the year 600 of the Second Age:

“When six hundred years had passed from the beginning of the Second Age Uëantur, Captain of the King's Ships under Tar-Elendil, first achieved the voyage to Middle-Earth. He brought his ship Entulesse (which signifies 'Return') into Mithlond on the spring winds blowing from the west...”

- 'Unfinished Tales'

“A Description of Númenor”

We are told that the lesser men living by the western shores of Middle-Earth were at first afraid of these majestic people, but soon found out that the 'Men of the Sea' were friendly and thought them much about things they did not know.

2.4 The Guild of Venturers

During Aldarion's reign, the Guild of Venturers was set up. It was a form of meeting place for all the finest mariners in Númenor. It was also useful for keeping records of all their voyages and would have possibly been a sort of training guild from which new mariners to learn.

“Aldarion son of Meneldur ... formed the Guild of Venturers, in which were joined all the tried mariners of Númenor;”

- 'Unfinished Tales'

"A Description of Númenor"

In the following chapter, we find two other quotes referencing the Guild. The first explains what has already been said about who formed part of the Venturers.

“... he [Aldarion] formed the Guild of Venturers, that afterwards was renowned; to that brotherhood were joined all the hardiest and most eager mariners ... and Aldarion they called the Great Captain.”

- 'Unfinished Tales'

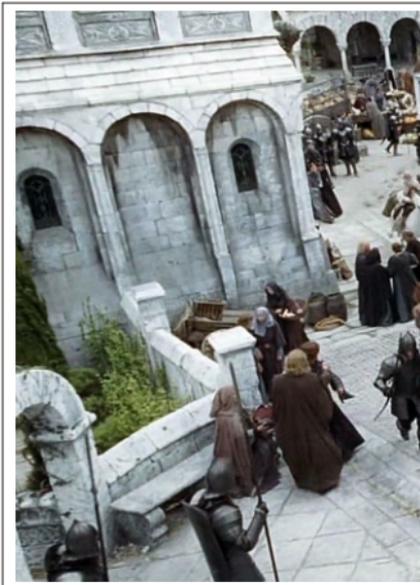
- Aldarion and Erendis

The next quote provides insight into the exact location of the Guild:

“[Aldarion] had a ship built that should serve as his dwelling-place; he named it therefore Eämbar, and at times he would sail in it from haven to haven of Númenor, but for the most part it lay at anchor off Tol Uinen: and that was a little isle in the bay of Rómenna... Upon Eämbar was the guildhouse of the Venturers, and there were kept the records of their voyages ...”

- 'Unfinished Tales'

- Aldarion and Erendis





2.5 Númenórean Tradition

It would be most obvious that showing such dedication towards the sea, the people of Númenor would have formed certain traditions to give farewell to the mariners. We find such instance, once again, in the chapter of 'Aldarion and Erendis':

“when a ship departed from Númenor over the Great Sea to Middle-earth a woman, most often of the captain's kin, should set upon the vessel's prow the Green Bough of Return”

This phrase gives us an interesting insight into how these people used to look at sea-faring and the prospect of seeing the return of their ships safely back to their shores.

3.0 Aldarion the Great Captain

As I said in the introduction, a large section of this article will be dedicated to the work and voyages of Aldarion since a discussion on the Númenórean voyages would not be complete without analyzing this most fascinating character. From his adventures in the 'Unfinished Tales' we are able to find quite a substantial amount of information on the ships of Númenor.

3.1 His Character

Reading his story in the 'Unfinished Tales', one soon understands that Aldarion was born with a strong desire for the sea. Unlike his father (Tar-Meneldur) he longed to sail upon the oceans of the world and explore new lands (all quotes are taken from the chapter 'Aldarion and Erendis'):

“From the first he loved the Sea, and his mind was turned to the craft of ship-building... and spent all the time ... by the shores of the sea, especially near Rómenna, where was the chief haven of Númenor, the greatest shipyards, and the most skilled shipwrights... Before he was full grown he could captain a ship of many men, sailing from haven to haven.”

During his stay at the haven he would have learnt much about the way ships were built and how they would sail across the water. All this would prove of much use when Aldarion would captain more than one ship at once and sail upon long voyages in unknown seas.

3.2 His Voyages

Already we had been told that he used to sail from haven to haven around the island but, Aldarion's first voyage outside the borders of Númenor, took him to the shores of Mithlond with the renowned mariner Uëantur:

“in the bright spring of the seven hundred and twenty-fifth year of the Second Age ... [Aldarion] sailed from the land [of Númenor]...”

We get to know also the name of the ship upon which Aldarion sailed to Middle-Earth:

“There was joy in Rómenna and Armenelos when men saw the great ship Númerrámar (which signifies 'West-wings') coming up from the sea...”

Slowly, we can see Aldarion's character becoming restless and this resulted into two more voyages:

“Within three years Aldarion begged leave to go again, and he set sail for Lindon. He was three years abroad; and not long after another voyage he made, that lasted for four years, for it is said that he was no longer content to sail to Mithlond, but began to explore the coasts southwards, past the mouths of Baranduin and Gwathló and Angren, and he rounded the dark cape of Ras Morthil and beheld the great Bay of Belfalas, and the mountains of the country of Amroth where the Nandor Elves still dwell.”

As one can see, the second voyage took Aldarion further than ever before - exploring along the coasts of Middle Earth and to the South. Up till now his voyages took him to Elf colonies around situated at various Havens and regions to the east of Beleriand, but as we shall see later on, Aldarion would travel much farther than anyone else.

3.3 Knowledge Obtained

Since we are mainly focused on the Númenórean fleet, it would be interesting to mention an important factor that helped Aldarion devise better and faster ships, which would ultimately lead the way to becoming one of the best fleets in history.

After Aldarion's (at age 39) return from the above-mentioned voyage, Tar-Meneldur became King. We are told that his son:

“... in those days he put forth his knowledge he had gained of Círdan concerning the making of ships, devising much anew of his own thought, and he began also to set men to the improvement of the havens and the quays, for he was ever eager to build greater vessels.”

Aldarion gained much knowledge on the sailing ways of the Teleri. It is a known fact that out of all the Elven Kindred, the Teleri were the most skilled and accustomed in sea-affairs, therefore, knowledge obtained from such people would have been of critical importance to Aldarion and his ship-building plans. Had this not been the case, Númenor certainly wouldn't have technologically evolved their naval power as is told to us.

3.4 New Voyages

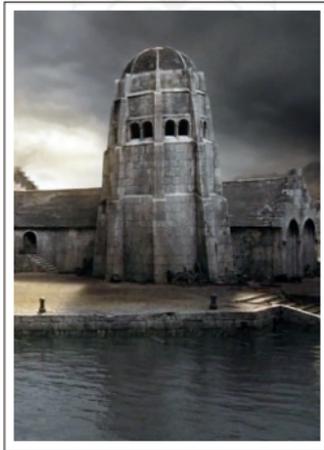
Aldarion's heart was always tied to the sea and in fact, soon, he would be ready to depart again:

“But the sea-longing came upon him anew, and he departed again and yet again from Númenor; and his mind turned now to ventures that might not be compassed with one vessel's company.”

This is the instance were multiple ships came in use. The sheer distance of certain voyages wouldn't have been successful with a single vessel. The amount of stored provisions needed for maintaining the men on landless waters would have had to be mounted on other ships. And this is where we begin to see the might and power of Númenor's fleet growing.

“The ships of the Númenóreans became ever larger and of greater draught & those days, until they could make far voyages, carrying many men and great cargoes...”

The size of the ships and the amount would have allowed for long voyages on vast distances, allowing the men on board to stay afloat for months and months without need to come to shore. This further helped in the exploration of new territories and lands far beyond what was previously explored.



“Seven years passed before Aldarion came back ... [he] passed his days upon the ship Eäambar in the company of the Venturers, and in the building of a vessel greater than any made before: that ship he named Palarran, the Far-Wanderer.”

At this point we can see the Aldarion's strong desire to return to the sea cannot be quenched. He begins building a greater ship than his current one to allow for even longer voyages.

As the chapter proceeds with the story, at a certain point, Aldarion has a feud with his father and therefore sets sails. He then, does not return back after 14 years. The following quote gives a clear explanation of the whereabouts of this character during his long voyage at sea:

“He had sailed first to the haven of Vinyalonde, and thence he had made a great coastwise journey southwards, far beyond any place yet reached by the ships of the Númenóreans; but returning northwards he had met contrary winds and great storms ... Three times he was driven back from the crossing of the Great Sea by high winds out of the West, and his own ship was struck by lightning and dismanted; and only with labour and hardship in the deep waters did he come at last to haven in Númenor.”

Although over a decade would have passed since leaving the Island, one has to take into consideration the time spent fighting against the wind and the heavy storms (obvious reference to 'The Odyssey'). Still, such a long span of years would have allowed Aldarion to travel far, around the coasts of Middle-Earth and most probably east towards the vast continent of the Dark Land itself.

But there are other times when Aldarion took years to return home. In one of his voyages, we are told, it took him “six years and more”:

“for he had found the haven of Vinyalondë now wholly ruined, and great seas had brought to nothing all his labours ... Then when he would turn for home a great wind came out of the south, and he was borne far to the north. He tarried a while at Mithlond, but when his ships stood out to sea once more they were again swept away north, and driven into wastes perilous with ice, and they suffered cold.”

One would be tempted to say that Aldarion might have traveled into the Helcaraxë itself but such a statement cannot be wholly proved. One cannot deny the importance of Aldarion and his contributions to the Númenórean fleet. His

voyages, while not clearly stated, would have stemmed far and wide around Arda (mostly to the East) and reaching lands where no one else had ever dared to venture.

4.0 Of later Kings

We know that the rulers who succeeded Aldarion still made incredibly long voyages around Arda and achieved high, sea-faring statuses. Not surprisingly, therefore, were kings like Tar-Ciryatan given the name of “the Shipbuilder”. Unfortunately, the Ban of the Valar soon became a strong hold on the Kings of Númenor, and as Tolkien describes in the 'Akallabêth':

“The first sign of the shadow that was to fall upon them appeared in the days of Tar-Minastir, eleventh King.”

We find another quote, further explaining the above situation in Appendix A of 'The Lord of the Rings' (Annals of the Kings and Rulers):

“The Númenóreans had now become great mariners, exploring all the seas eastward, and they began to yearn for the West ... ”

What happened next is history. The Ban of the Valar was broken and the Númenóreans, being proud of their surmounting power, lost everything. Still, their legacy remains for their numerous voyages and their gathering of knowledge on the vast seas and unknown lands that roamed around Arda during the Second Age.

5.0 A List of the named Ships of Númenor

The following is a short list of the names of some of the ships that were built by the Númenóreans in the Second Age. Note that all of them are in Quenya (the High Elven Language) as it was tradition to name them in this tongue:

- **Entulesse** (“Return”) - achieved the first voyage to Middle-Earth under the command of Vëantur
- **Númerrámar** (“West-wings”) - carried Aldarion to his first voyage outside Númenor
- **Eäambar** - the dwelling place for Aldarion and meeting place for the 'Guild of Venturers'
- **Palarran** (“Far-Wanderer”) - built by Aldarion for his voyages
- **Hirilondë** (“Haven-finder”) - also built by Aldarion and used for voyages after marrying Erendis



character profile: Faramir

by Lossendiliel

Even though he doesn't enter the story until halfway in, Faramir takes over for Boromir in more than one way. As his younger brother, he suddenly becomes the heir to the Stewardship of Gondor, and has the same noble ancestry and background. But we also see the differences between the two brothers, and in the end it is Faramir, who is the sole survivor in the family and takes part of the world after the War of the Ring.

Appearance and Personality

Sam and Frodo are captured by Faramir and his men as they are making their way through Ithilien. The only description we get at first is their clothing. They are all wearing brown and green clothes, gloves and masks. This is to camouflage them, as they are living in the forest and are the last outpost of Gondor towards Mordor.

Later we discover that Faramir looks very much like Boromir. He has the same body posture and same grey, but sharp eyes. He has the same noble feeling about him, and a facial expression that demands the same kind of respect, although in a different way. This is not surprising, considering they are brothers and therefore come from the same noble bloodline.

But there are also differences. Frodo sees wisdom in Faramir's eyes, even though it is mixed with doubt when he is looking at Frodo. Throughout his appearances in the story, he smiles several times as well. Many times these are "bitter smiles", but compared to Boromir, where we are never told he smiles, it shows something about his personality.

The wisdom is a noteworthy feature. The difference between Boromir and Faramir was that Faramir loved to study History and learn from Gandalf whenever he was in Minas Tirith. He took a great interest in the past, and mourns the loss of Númenor. An example of this is the tradition to look west before they eat, to remember the island country and what is beyond it. He talks a lot about the past, of ancient kings and customs, and the traditions they had.

Faramir is different from Boromir in one crucial way: He has a very different view on glory, war and power.

'I would see the White Tree in flower again in the courts of the kings, and the Silver Crown return, and Minas Tirith in peace: Minas Anor again as of old, full of light, high and fair, beautiful as a queen among other queens: not a mistress of many slaves, nay, not even a kind mistress of willing slaves. War must be, while we defend our lives against a destroyer who would devour all; but I do not love the bright sword for its sharpness, nor the arrow for its swiftness, nor the warrior for his glory. I love only that which they defend: the city of the Men of Númenor; and I would have her loved for her memory, her ancestry, her beauty, and her present wisdom. Not feared, save as men may fear the dignity of a man, old and wise.'

- The Two Towers



He is a trained and skilled warrior, but he does not find joy in it. To him it is a necessity, only to be used to protect what is worth protecting. And Faramir has a very high respect and love for his people and especially the city and its history. He sees the beauty in the city and loves her for her ancestry and wisdom. He is more of a romantic and poetic type, which the descriptions given in this quotation show.

As mentioned he learned a lot from Gandalf and has a high respect for him. Consequently it grieves him a lot to hear he has fallen in the Mines of Moria. But until Frodo tells him of his part in the Fellowship it seems as if Faramir didn't know he was a wizard, at least not the full meaning of it. He calls him a "lore-master" and says he did great many things. Considering Faramir's personality, the few visits from Gandalf, or Mithrandir as he calls him, must have been a breath of fresh air compared to his brother's love for warfare and his father's dislike of him. He must have enjoyed being around him and learned as much as possible whenever he could. No wonder he loves History and cherishes wisdom, when he has had Gandalf as his teacher or mentor.

In the appendices, Tolkien writes that Faramir inherited Denethor's skill of reading people and understand what was not said out loud. But instead of using it to his advantage or against the people, as Denethor seems to do mostly, it moves Faramir and he feels compassion or understanding towards the person instead of despise. Faramir guesses a lot from what Frodo does not say, but it does not make him feel any different. He judges the knowledge and says what he can guess must be true.

Faramir is very different from his father and his brother, and that is probably what saves him in the end. Some would probably argue that he is more noble and worthy of power than they are, as he is more likely to use it not for his own gain, but to help his people.

Encounter with the Ring

Faramir is the last person that isn't in alliance with Sauron to meet Frodo and Sam while Frodo are carrying the Ring. It is right before they enter Mordor and the final stage of their journey toward Mount Doom. They are not so far away from Sauron and his tower, therefore the Ring should be feeling heavier and have a stronger allurements, according to the idea of it wanting to get to its master. Yet Faramir seems to resist the temptation of it almost all together. Of course he is not close to it for as long as most of the other persons it has tempted.

Frodo tells Faramir of their quest, and Faramir seems very interested in it, in more than one way. He asks Frodo to tell of their dealings, but he also asks him a lot about Isildur's Bane and what dealings he has had with it. He doesn't know what sort of thing it is, but again he uses his perception to guess from what Frodo says and what he doesn't say. Nevertheless, he doesn't press Frodo to telling too much and he respects his silence. And he swears never to take or use it.



'But fear no more! I would not take this thing, if it lay by the highway. Not were Minas Tirith falling in ruin and I alone could save her, so, using the weapon of the Dark Lord for her good and my glory. No. I do not wish for such triumphs, Frodo son of Drogo.'

- The Two Towers

Here we also see the differences between Faramir and Boromir. Faramir "do not wish for such triumphs". He does not want to be the hero and the saviour of his city, especially not at any price. And it is this reflection that saves him from the Rings alluring powers.

But he is not entirely unaffected by the Ring...



'So it seems,' said Faramir, slowly and very softly, with a strange smile. 'So that is the answer to all the riddles! The One Ring that was thought to have perished from the world. And Boromir tried to take it by force? And you escaped? And ran all the way -- to me! And here in the wild I have you: two halflings, and a host of men at my call, and the Ring of Rings. A pretty stroke of fortune! A chance for Faramir, Captain of Gondor, to show his quality! Ha!' He stood up, very tall and stern, his grey eyes glinting.

- The Two Towers

He is told it is a ring, and not only any ring. He knows of the One Ring, the Ring of Sauron, and he knows of its powers. Even though he has made Frodo a promise and do not seek its powers, he can still see the irony in it escaping from Boromir and comes right to him, the overlooked son. It would be an incredible chance for him to show his father that he is worth something, and to prove himself as the true heir to the Stewardship.

However, he resists the temptation almost immediately. There is no great desire in him for power and glory that the Ring can twist, and so his faith and belief in what he deems the true virtues keeps him safe from harm. He shows his quality, as Sam says shortly after, and he lets the Ring escape his grasp. Instead he helps and advises Frodo and Sam on their further journey, so they may accomplish their task.

Faramir, Denethor and the people of Gondor

One of the themes in Return of the King is the relationship between Faramir and Denethor. What goes on between them has an affect on the rest of the happenings.

There is clearly not much love between them. Or rather, Denethor is so consumed by his grief for Boromir and his focus on politics and power that he never shows any love towards Faramir. He

mistrusts him and does not give him credit for any of his actions. He expects the world of him, and now when Boromir is dead, he has to do what he can in both their places. One of the reasons for this mistrust is the time Faramir spent with Gandalf, and all the things he learned from him. Denethor believes Faramir has abandoned his father and his family to become a wizard's pupil, and consequently a traitor. It hurts his pride tremendously.

Faramir, for his part, probably loves his father, but because of all the ill-treatment he has received from him, he does not expect any show of affection in return. He is used to being overlooked by him and judged to be not good enough. Aragorn later proclaims that he grieves for his father's bad mood. He sees his father is sad and withdrawn, and it grieves him and fills him with compassion. But one can only imagine how difficult it must have been for him as a son not to feel loved by his father, especially when Denethor proclaims he had wished Boromir and Faramir had switched places, so it would have been Faramir that died.

Denethor is so blinded by his disappointment and despair that he asks Faramir to go on a suicide mission, even though he does not realize it will kill his only son. It is only when he returns from this, close to death from the Black Breath that Denethor realises what has happened. His love blossoms forth, but in a twisted way, as he believes Faramir is practically dead. In his mind full of despair there is no saving him or the city, so he tries to burn Faramir together with himself so they will escape any further losses.



Opposite Denethor are the people of Minas Tirith and Gondor. Several times we are told they weep for Faramir and his harsh destiny. They grieve when he leaves for Osgiliath once again, and they grieve when he is lying in the Houses of Healing, on the brink of death. He has their love, as they have his. When Beregond talks about him with Pippin, there is nothing but respect and love in his words, and sorrow for the lack of love he receives from his father.

Relationship with Eowyn

Faramir and Eowyn meet in the Houses of Healing in the end of the War of the Ring. Immediately they both have a great respect for each other.



He looked at her, and being a man whom pity deeply stirred, it seemed to him that her loveliness amid her grief would pierce his heart. And she looked at him and saw the grave tenderness in his eyes, and yet knew, for she was bred among men of war, that here was one whom no Rider of the Mark would outmatch in battle.

- The Return of the King

Faramir is very polite towards Eowyn from the beginning, and Eowyn melts slowly as they spend time together. They are drawn to each other immediately, possibly by the shared feeling of grief, even though it is caused by different things. Especially Faramir is affected by their meeting and he is not late to compliment her. And he is obviously very interested in Eowyn, as Merry has to oblige him in telling everything he knows about her as well.

They spend quite a lot of time together after their first meeting. Even though they are both regaining health and strength, Eowyn is still affected by the darkness, and she says so several times. The shadow is still over her and even after they learn of Sauron's fall she stays in Minas Tirith and wanders around alone. So in the end Faramir becomes her knight in shining armour, and delivers her from the darkness. He becomes her saviour from eternal winter by continued show of affection, the one thing he himself missed from his father.

This is a love and affection that grows quickly and ends in a proposal in no more than a few weeks. The reason why this is possible, as Tolkien explains it in Letter 244, is because of their situations, as they are now completely changed. They have both been through a great trial, close to death and have now been brought back to life. Faramir is now the Steward of Gondor, and no family left (that we know of), and Eowyn is the sister of the King of Rohan, and the man she loves is in love with another woman and will probably marry her. It is in this situation they find support and comfort in each other. They are simple persons, having stood in the shadow of someone else their whole lives and now have to face up to the tasks at hand.

Faramir in the movies

David Wenham was given the task of playing Faramir in the movies. The one thing that comes to mind when thinking of his portrait of him is the sadness in his eyes. It is clearly Faramir's role as the victim of his father's grief for his older brother that has been one of the most inspiring things. Most times we see him in a sad moment, remembering his brother or facing his father's displeasure with his actions.

“Faramir nearly is...the ideal person, the ideal man. In a way. There is wonderful stuff in the book about the fact that he'd never killed a creature without a good reason. He's a man that is very easy to respect.”

- Caltanet, 2002



As he said himself, he is very close to being an ideal person. His virtues and feelings closely resemble the listings of a perfect, compassionate man, and his behaviour, especially towards his father, is simply touching. It gets to a point where your heart breaks every time he gets on screen with his sad eyes. He closely resembles the male equivalent of a Mary Sue, ready to sacrifice himself for his people on the command of his father, giving up hope for himself. Maybe even a bit too much, for some people.

The relationship with Eowyn is only showed completely in the extended version of The Return of the King, where we get the scene Houses of Healing. Here we see another side of the compassionate Faramir, and the development of their love for each other. Faramir in the movie is just as polite and understanding towards Eowyn as Faramir in the books, but he does not become the actual saviour of her in the same way.

In the end...

This is the Return of the King, as Faramir himself proclaims when he meets Aragorn after the battle. Therefore, the role as ruling Steward of Gondor is not needed anymore, but Aragorn gives back the right to be Steward to Faramir and his heirs, when Faramir tries to offer it to him. He is also declared Prince of Ithilien, and marries Eowyn. They settle in Eryn Arnem, and their son Elboron becomes the Second Prince of Ithilien, and so they have continued the line from Húrin, while creating their own.

One noteworthy comment when talking about Faramir is what Tolkien wrote in a note to Letter 180: “I am not Gandalf, being a transcendent sub-creator in this little world. As far as any character is 'like me' it is Faramir”. Even though Faramir was not the identical copy of Tolkien, or personification of him in the books, there is at least a vague according to Mr. Tolkien.

character profile: Boromir

Boromir must be one of the most complex characters in all of Tolkien's writings. As one of the members of the Fellowship, he is one of the more important supporting characters. He is the only member who gets killed during the adventure, and yet he lives on through his actions and relations until the end of the story.



Ancestry and background

According to Tolkien's genealogy of the descendants of Dol Amroth, Boromir was born in 2978 T.A. He was the son of Denethor III, Steward of Gondor, and Finduilas, descendant of Dol Amroth and sister to Imrahil. Accordingly, both his parents were of noble, Númenórean blood. On his father's side, he came from a long line of ruling Stewards, all the way back to Húrin of Eryn Arnem. Húrin had been the steward to King Minardil, who ruled 1621-1634 T.A. Even though the stewards at first were appointed by the king, the role soon became hereditary, and went to a member of the House of Húrin. So when Denethor became Steward of Gondor in 2984, his family had served as stewards for over 1300 years. For almost 1000 years it had been as de facto rulers.

Finduilas also gave her sons noble ancestry. She was the daughter of Lord Adrahil of Dol Amroth, also from a line of princes, who ruled this fortress by the ocean. In her marriage to Denethor III, the two greatest houses in Gondor were connected. Sadly, Finduilas died in 2987 T.A., when Boromir was only 9 years old.

We don't know much about Boromir's childhood or upbringing, except that he never took any interest in the past and learning from the stories.

Appearance

We first meet Boromir at the Council of Elrond, where Tolkien describes his appearance thoroughly:

“And seated a little apart was a tall man with a fair and noble face, dark-haired and grey-eyed, proud and stern of glance.

He was cloaked and booted as if for a journey on horseback; and indeed though his garments were rich, and his cloak was lined with fur, they were stained with long travel. He had a collar of silver in which a single white stone was set; his locks were shorn about his shoulders. On a baldric he wore a great horn tipped with silver that now was laid upon his knees.”

- Fellowship of the Ring

From this we can tell he is the image of nobility; tall, strong features and expensive clothing, even though it is travelling clothes. Considering his position

position as the heir to the Stewardship of Gondor, one could not be surprised. It is the classic image of a ruler or person with ambition.

There is something Númenórean about him, being tall with dark hair and grey eyes, noble features and stern look. We are told he has inherited his face features from his father, which explains the strong, noble look of him. No doubt he must have had a frightening and awe-inspiring affect on people when they saw him. Compared to Aragorn he is not as tall, but with more muscles and broader shoulders, making him appear stronger and tougher.

He is equipped with a horn, covered in silver. This is of course the Horn of Gondor, an heirloom passed down from Steward to Steward. Boromir says himself he blows in it before every battle. When they leave Rivendell, he is also carrying a shield and a sword described to be similar to Andúril, but not with the same noble inheritance or appearance.

In every way, his appearance is that of a noble and strong warrior.

Personality

Boromir's personality goes very well with his appearance. He is proud and with a strong belief in his people and Gondor. At the Council of Elrond he tells the attending of the battles and sufferings the people of Gondor have been through, mixed with the feeling of pride and determination of a leader in battle. Pride is one of his strongest features in general, and several times during his time in the Fellowship he talks of Minas Tirith and the people of Gondor, and especially his own abilities.

He believes in honour and bravery, and doesn't like to walk around as thieves, as he describes their travelling south from Rivendell. He is described to be very brave, both by Tolkien, and by Frodo when he talks with Faramir about him. He is never afraid to go into battle, and even when they were few fighting the orcs at Osgiliath, he took his stand and protected the people there. His honour is also important, as he proclaims in Lóthlorien. He could never break his word or be tempted by Galadriel's promises.



His pride and honour affects his humility, as he is not afraid to put himself forth and tell of his actions and strong character. Most of the stories of his dealings are told by himself, and he always put himself forth and talks of all the hardship he has endured and can endure. He tells the council about the prophecy from dreams his brother and he himself have had, and how eager his brother was to seek council to be better able to understand the prophecy. But he takes on the task himself, because it was a dangerous journey. That is what he says, but one could wonder if there wasn't an element of desire to gain the glory instead of his brother. I will return to this question later.

Boromir is a man of honour. He is strong, brave, very proud and an excellent fighter. Admired by his people and respected for his great skills when it comes to fighting and warfare. But there is also another side to him. He has a great love for his city and country. There is nothing he wants more than to see its glory continue. He believes completely in his people, although he also realises they are not gods and cannot fight of Sauron forever by themselves. His last words concern the welfare of Minas Tirith and his people, and he dies with a smile on his lips as Aragorn promises him that the city will not fall. In the end, that is all Boromir cared about, both as a leader and a servant to Gondor.

Relationship with Faramir and Denethor

I wrote earlier that it would seem as if Boromir would like to go forth to Rivendell instead of his brother to win glory for himself. I do not believe that to be correct, as Tolkien himself stresses how good the relationship between them was. In the appendices Tolkien tells us of the lack of competition between the two. They never sought to compete with each other over positions, or for their father's love. Boromir always protected and helped Faramir when needed. In Letter 244 from The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien, Tolkien describes Boromir as the "bossy" brother" of Faramir. It is clear he was the leader of the two of them, and used from an early age to take command, but it doesn't seem to have affected their relationship. They took care of each other and let each other grow into the roles they were given.



It is clear that Boromir was always his father's favourite son, and Denethor loved him very much. But it does not seem as if it was a good relationship between them beside that fact. Denethor must have expected a great deal of Boromir, being the oldest son. Tolkien does not tell us much about their relationship, except from the comments Denethor gives when Faramir returns to Minas Tirith. He was absolutely sure that Boromir would have supported him and given him the Ring to fight of their enemies. He had every faith in him, but if it was returned by Boromir we do not know.

Boromir and the Ring

The prophecy from Boromir and Faramir's dream speaks of Isildur's Bane. Of course this is something Boromir will have heard tales about, but when the Ring is presented before the Council, his "eyes glinted". Throughout the council he is full of doubt and asks a lot of questions about the Ring's history and how they could be sure it was the right one. Even with Elrond's and others explanations and warnings, he will not let go of the idea of using the Ring for themselves instead of destroying it. Already from the beginning we see that spark of doubt and will to conquer that interferes with his reason and understanding for how the Ring works.

Later on, when they are talking about their options in Ithilien, Frodo catches a strange glimpse in his eyes. Boromir has once again revealed his doubts about their cause. Several times he tries to convince the Fellowship to follow him back to Minas Tirith and get help there, but each time they go another way. Pippin notices a strange look in Boromir's eyes when he looks as Frodo as they are sailing down Anduin.

It is clear Boromir does not agree with the assessment by the others that the Ring must be destroyed. He believes it is possible to use it for one's own purpose, and it would be a foolish mistake to simply destroy this weapon.

The crucial point comes as Boromir confronts Frodo. Here we see he is completely taken in by the powers of the Ring. He goes mad and partly tries to convince Frodo to give him the Ring, partly threatens.



“True-hearted Men, they will not be corrupted. We of Minas Tirith have been staunch through long years of trial. We do not desire the power of wizard-lords, only strength to defend ourselves, strength in a just cause. And behold! In our need chance brings to light the Ring of Power. It is a gift, I say; a gift to the foes of Mordor. It is mad not to use it, to use the power of the Enemy against him. The fearless, the ruthless, these alone will achieve victory. What could not a warrior do in this hour, a great leader? What could not Aragorn do? Or if he refuses, why not Boromir? The Ring would give me power of Command. How I would drive the hosts of Mordor, and all men would flock to my banner!”

- Fellowship of the Ring

His mind is twisted by his desire for glory and faith in the honour of the men of Minas Tirith, and he is ready to use the Ring to bring them back to their former glory.

Boromir becomes victim for the Ring's corrupting power. He is not a bad man, as Tolkien himself states in Letters. In Letter 154 he is talking of critics who have deemed the book to be a fight between Good and Evil only, and how these critics at least must have overlooked Boromir. He is neither good nor evil, and yet he is both. In some respect Boromir becomes the personification of the battle going on through the books. His feeling of honour and love for his city becomes corrupted and twisted into matching his pride and belief in Man's power. It is a test put to all who gets near the Ring, and all are affected by it. But because of Boromir's personality, he has a deeper struggle, and in the end he is blinded by his own ambition and will to serve his city.

But when Frodo puts on the Ring and runs away, Boromir turns back to normal and he realises what he has done. It was a twisted version of him that was trying to take the Ring from Frodo. He lost the fight against the Ring, and he is well aware of it. It is likely this event makes him realize what and who he is, and as a result he sacrifices himself to try and save Merry and Pippin. The pain of what he has done prevents him from telling the others what has happened until just before he dies. He knows he has let himself and everyone down, and for that he is left with humiliation and a growing humility.



Boromir in the Movies

Boromir was played by Sean Bean in the movies. Bean has stated in several interviews about the role that he wanted to show the fight going on inside Boromir. How he tries to ignore and fight down his own desire to use the Ring to help his people. He is depicted as being a real fighter and a servant of his city, maybe more so than in the books.

“He was a complicated and complex man. I found that really interesting to get to grips with. He's very mixed up, trying to do what's best for his people – a gentleman really, but he's in an environment where he's been on the forefront of war so he's had to be strong. But within there is a gentleman of very good quality.”

- Nando Times (12/11/01)

Here we get a more in-depth version of him. Bean seems to have seen Boromir as a more gentle man than Tolkien did. He focused more on the struggle inside him and his lack of understanding. Boromir was the result of the environment he grew up in. In the extended edition of *The Two Towers* we get a better picture of Boromir's relationship with his brother and his father, and his sense of duty towards his city. Boromir's sense of responsibility towards his brother and the strong relationship between the two of them is apparent, as is the lack of same towards his father. But his sense of duty is strong enough to follow his father's bidding.

Alas, Boromir did not get to see the end of the War, but his partaking in the quest of the Fellowship had a significant influence on the passing of events, if you ask me. His role as a representative from Gondor, his skill as a warrior and his defeat by the Ring is not to be underestimated. He was a “Faithful Jewel”, just as his name describes, although his fate and pride was easy features to corrupt.

by Tossendiliel



Aragorn and Archetypes

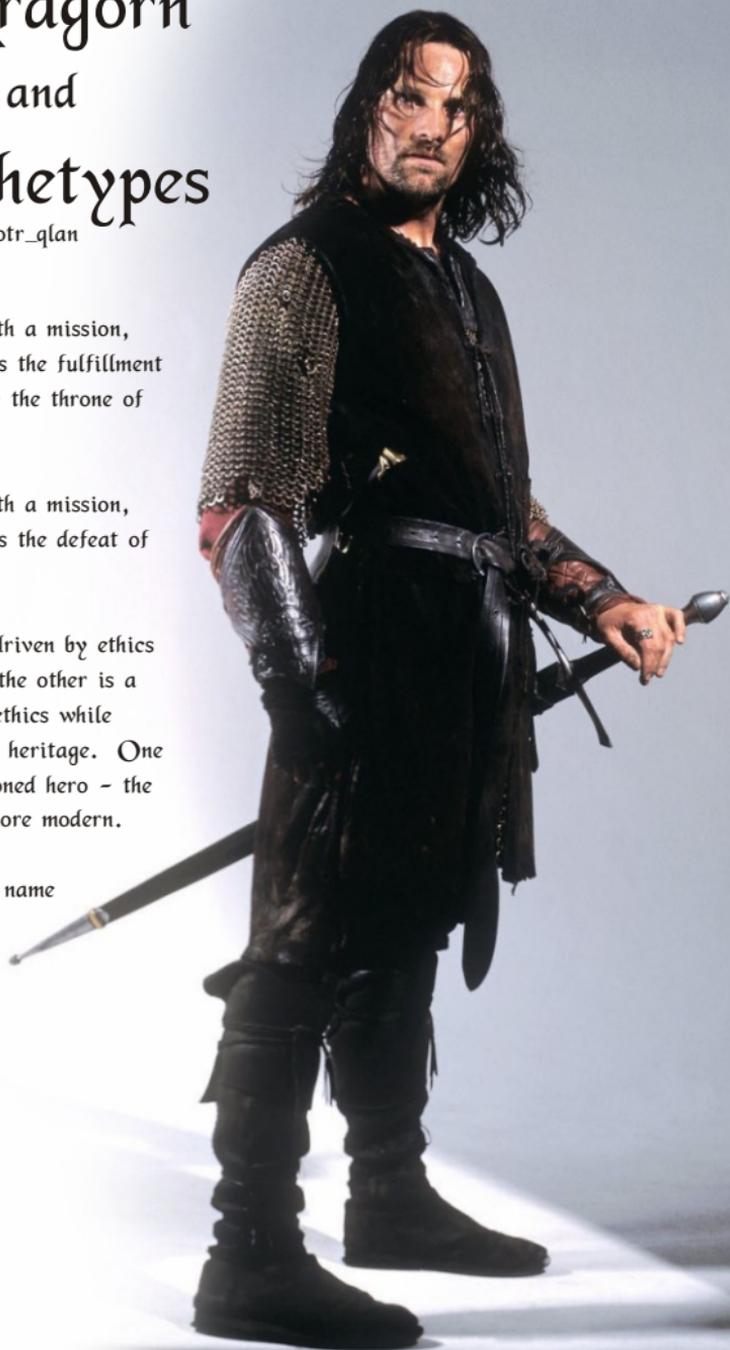
by lotr_qlan

He's a man with a mission, working towards the fulfillment of his destiny - the throne of Gondor.

He's a man with a mission, working towards the defeat of Sauron.

One is a man driven by ethics and heritage - the other is a man driven by ethics while trying to forget heritage. One is an old-fashioned hero - the other is much more modern.

They share the name Aragorn.



There's no doubt that Viggo Mortensen does a spectacular job portraying Aragorn in the films. Dig through the behind-the-scenes material, and you'll find that he spent many hours improving his already-good horsemanship and that sword instructor Bob Anderson was impressed the most with Viggo out of all the cast. And when Viggo's on-screen, he portrays a man that people can relate to, because that man fears, hopes, loves, and doubts himself.

But it's that last characteristic that takes Aragorn out of his original role. Tolkien made Aragorn a man who indeed had his doubts, but the important difference is that, by the time of the War of the Ring, Aragorn has already overcome all that. All the character development you see on-screen has actually been dealt with already, long before the war begins. Aragorn understands his duty to his people and accepts it, and all that's left is to bring it to pass - a job that will be far from easy.

There's a certain old archetype of hero that Aragorn fits into: that of a hero who knows what he has to do and does it. Perhaps not so much character development along the way, but that development might have already occurred before we open the book or press "play" on the DVD machine. The advantage to such a character is that you don't need to see him go through his issues - you just watch him do his job. He's all grown up.

Viggo Mortensen's Aragorn is of the modern batch of heroes, in which there are tragic heroes, reluctant heroes, questionable heroes... These archetypes are not actually new - tragic heroes are as old as Ancient Greece - but they are very popular nowadays. Viggo's Aragorn falls into the "reluctant hero" type - not a bad thing, in and of itself, but a little too common in modern fiction



and just not what Tolkien had envisioned for his character. The good thing about reluctant heroes is that we can identify with them more readily - the bad thing is that they can sometimes drive us to insanity with their reluctance.

Not to mention the fact that The Lord of the Rings already has its reluctant hero. Yep, that's right: Frodo.

Tolkien probably understood the reader's inherent need to identify with a character, and of the Nine Walkers, Frodo fits the bill for reader identification. He's a normal person flung into an incredible situation, and it shows.

Frodo is the reluctant hero of The Lord of the Rings, not Aragorn.

We can still enjoy Viggo in the films and identify with his portrayal. But it is important to realize that the original Aragorn and the film Aragorn are two very different people. One spends most of the story running from his destiny - the other spends most of the story running to his destiny. One still has self-doubt - the other has already overcome his self-doubt.

Long live the true Aragorn.



Prince Imrahil is another of the characters who had been left out of the movies, for one reason or another. The Prince of Dol Amroth dwells in the fief of Belfalas, and he and his men are of 'high blood'. Prince Imrahil was only present in *The Return of the King*. He first has a part in the book in the first chapter, *Minas Tirith*, bringing aid to Gondor.

“And last and proudest,
Imrahil, Prince of Dol
Amroth, kinsman of the Lord,
with gilded banners bearing his
token of the Ship and Silver
Swan, and a company of
knights in full harness riding
grey horses; and behind them
seven hundreds of men at arms,
tall as lords, grey-eyed, dark-
haired, singing as they came.”



He next is mentioned in council with Gandalf and Denethor, and then speaks in council, saying if Osgiliath is to be defended, Cair Andros must be held, because:

“The Rohirrim may come, and they may not. But Faramir has told us of strength drawing ever to the Black Gate. More than one host may issue from it, and strike for more than one passage.”

Faramir was sent to hold Osgiliath, and when it is lost, he remained with the rearguard, and Gandalf rode back with the injured to advise a sortie to help them, preferably of mounted men, for Mordor had few horsemen. When the sortie is sent out, it is Prince Imrahil and the knights of Dol Amroth who ride at the head of all the cavalry in the city.

“Foremost on the field rode the swan-knights of Dol Amroth, with their Prince and his blue banner at their head. “Amroth for Gondor,” they cried, “Amroth to Faramir””

Faramir came in last, his body born by his kinsman Imrahil, Prince of Dol Amroth, who brought him to the White Tower. Imrahil is a prince, kinsman to Denethor and Faramir; he brings more men than any other to the aid of Gondor. He is also in council with Gandalf and the Steward of Gondor, and Denethor listens to his advice. The blood of Numenor still runs in his line, and when all other men in the besieged city lost hope, he went with Gandalf passing through the city.

“Tirelessly he [Gandalf] strode from citadel to gate, from north to south around the wall, and with him went the Prince of Dol Amroth in his shining mail. For he and his knights still held themselves like lords in whom the race of Numenor ran true. Men that saw them whispered, saying: ‘Belike the old tales spoke well; there is Elvish blood in the veins of that folk, for the people of Nimrodel dwelt in that land long ago.’”

Then the Rohirrim arrived, and Theoden King of the Mark was slain, and the men of the city rode down to meet Theoden’s knights bearing his body and Eowyn’s. Imrahil riding with them knelt in honor and sorrow for the King’s death, and looked in surprise upon Eowyn, White Lady of Rohan. He wondered aloud at it, that a woman of Rohan should ride to their aid, and it was Prince Imrahil who saw that she was badly hurt, but not yet dead. He sent for a healer, then rode to the battle.

Aragorn enters into the city to heal Eowyn, Faramir, and Pippin, because Gandalf asked it of him. He refuses to take his place in the city, however, and would remain outside, handing the rule of the city to Prince Imrahil in the Steward’s absence. And so after Aragorn leaves the city the banner of Dol Amroth, a white swan-ship on blue water, blows from the tower. In the matter of Faramir’s healing, the Prince was also involved. It had been he who removed the arrow from the wound, and he who identified it merely as a Southron arrow and threw it away.

Another characteristic of the Prince’s heritage is shown in the meeting with Legolas and Gimli when they first enter the White City.

“Legolas looked at him and bowed low, for he saw that here indeed was one who had elven-blood in his veins. ‘Hail lord!’ he said. ‘It is long since the people of Nimrodel left the woodlands of Lorien, and yet still one may see that not all sailed from Amroth’s havens west over water.’”

Then Imrahil receives a summons to council with Aragorn, and goes to take counsel with Mithrandir and Eomer.

“As for me,’ said Imrahil, ‘the Lord Aragorn I hold to be my liege-lord, whether he claim it or no. His wish is to me a command. Yet for a while I stand in the place of the Steward of Gondor, and it is mine to think first of it’s people. To prudence some heed must still be given. For we must prepare against all chances, good as well as evil. Now, it may be that we shall triumph, and while there is any hope of this, Gondor must be protected. I would not have us return with victory to a city in ruins and a land ravaged behind us. And yet we learn from the Rohirrim that there is an army still unfought upon our northern flank.’”

Imrahil’s wisdom and sense of duty is clearly shown. He will not leave the city unprotected, but as he holds Aragorn as his liege-lord he will follow his command. And so they set out to attack Mordor.

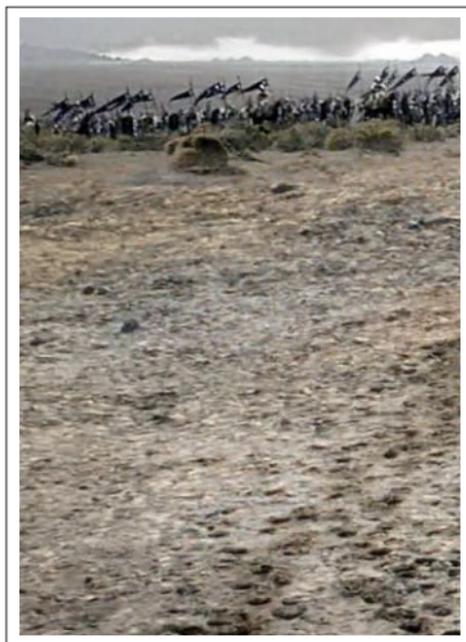


“Imrahil suddenly laughed aloud. ‘Surely,’ cried he, ‘this is the greatest jest in all the history of Gondor: that we should ride with seven thousands, scarce as many of the vanguard of its army in the days of its power, to assail the mountains and the impenetrable gate of the Black Land! SO might a child threaten a mail-clad knight with a bow of string and green willow! If the Dark Lord knows as much as you say, Mithrandir, will he not rather smile than fear, and with his little finger crush us like a fly that tries to sting him?’”

So Imrahil doubts that their venture to attack the black gate could succeed, though it is only to give Frodo a chance. And as they came, Imrahil commanded the trumpeters and heralds to say not, “The Lords of Gondor are come!”, but to say instead the King Elessar, as they proclaimed their challenge on the way to the black gate. Pippin, Gandalf, Legolas, Aragorn, the sons of Elrond, Eomer, and Imrahil rode forward to the black gate.

And then the part of the Prince of Dol Amroth in the War of the Ring is over. The Prince of Dol Amroth has elven blood, and the line of Numenor is in him; he is of the people of Nimrodel. He is brave and respected, kin to Denethor and the line of stewards. When the Steward cannot do his duty, it goes to Imrahil to rule the city in the King's absence. He is wise and respected in council, and has a strong sense of duty and love for Aragorn, whom he holds to be his liege-lord whether he's claimed the kingship yet or no. He is a great lord, and heartens his men when they are losing hope in the battle at Minas Tirith. He's not seen as a main character, but in the Return of the King he has as great a part as many, including Eomer, Pippin, and even Legolas and Gimli.

by arwen1300



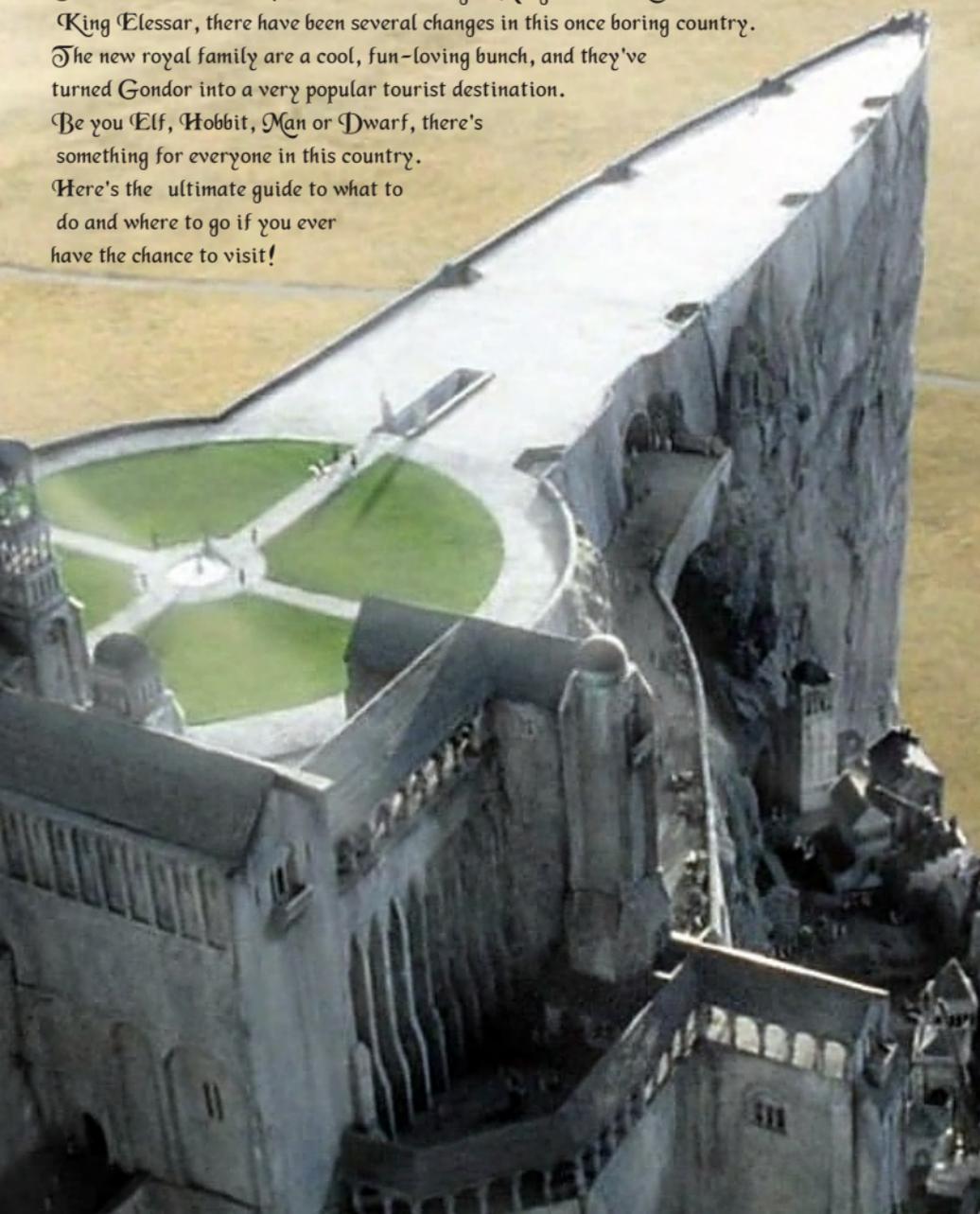
Step Aboard the Fourth Age Gondor by Seen3

Can't decide where to take the family for your annual vacation? Look no further, Gondor is where it's at! With the crowning of Aragorn a.k.a. Strider a.k.a. King Elessar, there have been several changes in this once boring country.

The new royal family are a cool, fun-loving bunch, and they've turned Gondor into a very popular tourist destination.

Be you Elf, Hobbit, Man or Dwarf, there's something for everyone in this country.

Here's the ultimate guide to what to do and where to go if you ever have the chance to visit!



Take the Fell Beast flying lessons

Yes, the rumors are true. The Fell Beasts were not killed in the War, but were caught by King Elessar, supposedly with a stun gun and a really big net. Anyway, he took them back to Gondor and the newly established Flight Academy of Gondor offers Fell Beast flying lessons at very good rates. Imagine going back home and watching your friends turn green with envy when you tell them you rode on the back of a Fell Beast!

I'd advise you to read the Flight Academy's Terms and Conditions carefully before enrolling though, since it has some very good points about whose fault it is if you die.

Fun fact: The Flight Academy has a secret lair for the baby Fell Beasts. If you can find it, toss in some food for the little ones. They love that.

Keep a safe distance though.

And don't take your kids along. Just some sheep will do.



Get into the fun at Elfworld

This aptly named amusement park is the brainchild of Queen Arwen, who missed her home Rivendell so much (but was too lazy to make the trip there every time she did) that she wanted an Elvish place nearby. Elfworld started off as a forest “with an Elf-like quality”, but once the Prince Eldarion got wind of it, the whole thing changed.



Elfworld is now a 40,000-acre wide amusement park, with some not-to-be-missed attractions such as “Galadriel’s Mirror House” and “Elrond’s Eyebrows of Doom” (be careful of this one, it shoots you right up into the sky). A favorite of many visitors is the “Mini Mordor Haunted Realm” complete with Mount Doom and an Eye of Sauron.

Elfworld also has a wide choice of cafes and pubs where you can unwind after a long day at the park. Be sure to check out “The Yellow Dragon”, an exact duplicate of The Green Dragon in the Shire. It was started by the King’s close friend Peregrin Took, affectionately called Pippin, and was at first called The Green Dragon, but he was forced to change the name due to copyright issues.



Fun fact: It is widely believed by the locals in Gondor that Pippin chose the color yellow as a nod to his friend Merry, who is always seen wearing a yellow vest.

Visit the set of Gondor Idol

Singing is all the rage in Gondor right now thanks to King Elessar's incredible vocal performance at his coronation. Owned by the King and co-produced by the hobbits Pippin and Merry, Gondor Idol is the now world famous singing competition, which has produced talents such as Rose Proudfoot of the Shire Proudfoots, Gimli the Dwarf, and of course, the winner of last year's Gondor Idol, the very controversial and insanely talented Mouth of Sauron II.

For a small entry fee, visitors are allowed a tour of the sets of Gondor Idol, and can even meet the host, the very beautiful and slightly irritating feminist, Eowyn. For another small fee (this one is more appropriately called a bribe), this meeting, along with the subsequent lecture on women's rights, can be avoided.

Fun fact: The original host for the show was Eowyn's husband Faramir. Eowyn got the job after she held a demonstration outside the palace gates, accusing the King, Pippin, Merry, Faramir... and pretty much every male living thing in Gondor of being sexist pigs.



Get your freak on at Club Denethor

Dedicated to the late steward of Gondor, Club Denethor is an experience you have to experience to fully appreciate it. Or depreciate it. With its moody lighting, dark music and portraits of Denethor sneering down at you from the walls, this nightclub (also referred to as a cult by some people) is the perfect hangout for anyone goth. The specials include "The Hallucination Room" and "The Séance".

Drinks are free for ladies before midnight, unless you're a Hobbit or a Dwarf. And don't forget to buy your very own Palantir souvenir when you leave.



Fun fact: A constant visitor to this club is Denethor's son Faramir, who suffers from some serious depression problems. What with his family being dead and... Eowyn... well, you really can't blame him.

Visit the Museum of Truth

Yet another brainwave of King Elessar, the Museum of Truth is a place every skeptic has to visit. The Museum of Truth houses just that the truth. Pictures and scrolls line the walls, depicting various hard-to-believe stories, and there's always a famous guest speaker ready to enthral you with real-life sagas of the not-so-heroic nature.

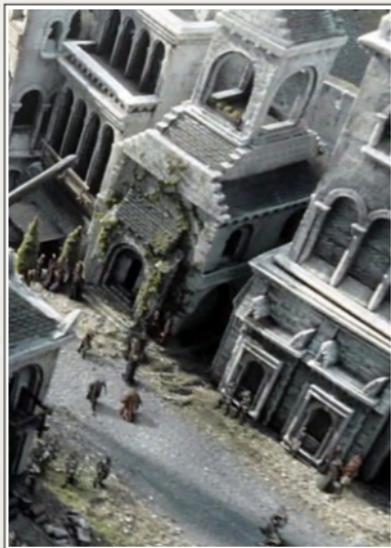
If you harbor any doubt about the histories of Middle Earth, all will be made clear to you here. You can see picture proofs of Lord Elrond of Rivendell in a dress, Lady Galadriel without her makeup, Samwise Gamgee kissing the Ring of Power, and even a picture of a Dwarf woman!

Make no mistake; this museum will open your eyes to the truth.

Fun fact: The picture titled “Unlikely Friends”, depicting the Dwarf Gimli and the Elf Legolas getting a manicure together, has been the object of art thieves for years. Interestingly, all the thieves were either Elves or Dwarves, and all were apprehended at the crime scene. All the dwarves caught in the act admitted Gimli paid them to steal or destroy the picture, while the Elves claimed they were sent by Prince Legolas, who wanted it for his tearoom. Apparently, King Elessar refused to sell it to him. It is now protected with state-of-the-art technology, a couple of trolls, and a wizard.

Well there you have it. Do **NOT** miss out on any of these fun stuff when you go to Gondor. And if you can, stop by the Forbidden Pool in Ithilien. It's quite a lovely place for a quick dip, if... you know, those Rangers don't kill you for it.

Bon Voyage!



“Father”

a short story



“Daddy, I’m scared.”

Tulia looked up at her father, who was holding her right hand.

“There is nothing to be afraid of, I am right here. I will not let you fall.” Her father sat down to be on eye level with her. His look was stern, but comforting, holding her eyes bound to his until she smiled happily at him. She looked away again, and turned her focus to the log. Her grasp around her father’s arm tightened as she climbed up on top of it. Her eyes quickly turned towards him, making sure he was still there. His steady smile led her on, and soon she was standing on top of it.

A victorious look changed her face, and her father’s smile automatically grew wider as she took a few unsecure steps, holding his hand very tight. Slowly, as her steps grew more secure and her body stopped waving from side to side, he loosened her hand from his. After a while it was only their fingertips touching, hers balancing on his like on the edge of a knife.

Tulia didn’t notice. Her focus was on her success of conquering her fear of falling by climbing the log behind her father’s house. Her dress flowed around her body as she became more daring and tried to walk as fast as she could. But suddenly her foot slipped, and she fell towards her father. For a moment she was ready to scream, her arms reaching out for someone to hold on to as her eyes was drawn to the ground she was about to hit.

With the speed of a father he was there to catch her, holding her tight while she wept a few tears of shock. Her arms around his neck, and her head towards his chest. He closed his eyes, softly rocking her from side to side, singing her a soft lullaby. Her tears stopped flowing, but the safety of her father's arms was not something she experienced as often since she had turned 4 years old. Consequently she sobbed now and then to keep his arms around her.

Eventually her father sat down and loosened her arms around his neck.

“You have to learn before you can run that fast.” Tula dared not look at her father, because she knew he was right. She glanced quickly at the log once more, then back at her father. He smiled reassuringly, and Tula went to the end of the log. She pressed her lips together, determined to try once again and make her father proud. He stood up and walked to her side, giving her a meaningful look. Tula's face was soft of a child's determination as she climbed up and raised herself carefully. Her arms went out, the right hand grabbing her father's hand, and she started to walk.

This time she just walked, slowly, her eyes on the log in front of her feet. Her father let go of her hand gradually until their hands separated a couple of steps from the end of the log. By the final step Tula looked up at him and a huge smile entered her face as quickly as the sunlight from behind a cloud. It radiated onto her father, who couldn't hide his growing smile, and especially not the awarding look of pride in his eyes.

Tula jumped down, full of new courage, and quickly hugged her father. He closed his eyes and felt the warmth of her body and smile in his heart. But this time it was different, and he didn't make her let go of her. There was something different in her way of embracing him, something had changed in her.

”Sire, your father is requesting your presence.”

Boromir opened his eyes and looked up at the servant, standing still in respectful alert. He sighed as he slowly raised himself up. He smiled at Tula, the last strength of his self control, feeling the comfort and safety of his Tula slip away as he turned around to walk away. Tula smiled back, but soon returned to the nanny with her doll, telling her all about her conquest of the log. Full of happiness and safety, she quickly forgot his lack of presence.

He looked at her one more time, now with a flickering in his eyes, and a small hint of anxiety started to show.



The Gondorian Story

by Rebecca_C

CHAPTER 1

The lingering light of the setting sun blazed in a splendour of colour for a final moment before dropping out of sight below the western horizon. A peal of bells rang out to signal the hour to those on duty in the White City, causing the three young women to look up from their baking for a moment.

Hands covered in flour, Tina adjusted the neckline of her dress as she spoke. “We should get these cooking, Seen \mathfrak{Z} will be back soon.” Sindae nodded and lifted her balls of dough into the clay oven sitting above the smouldering fire as Becky lit the lantern then set it on the rough-hewn wooden table in the back corner of the room they were staying in.

The four friends had refused to leave the city despite the near certainty of imminent battle and now lived in an abandoned house on the second level. Seen \mathfrak{Z} worked in the Houses of Healing, learning quickly under the watchful eye of Toreth. Sindae, Tina and Becky baked bread to feed themselves and to sell the surplus to soldiers who inevitably had too little to eat. Now, near the end of the day, the last batch was to be ready by the time Seen \mathfrak{Z} returned from the fifth circle of the city.

Darkness fell as the house once again filled with the smell of freshly baked bread. Oppressive and heavy, it felt unnatural, even for a clouded evening. Lanterns in the streets flared into life but the windows of too many houses were shaded. Few now besides armsmen and guards remained save the wardens in the Houses, whose skill would surely be sorely tested in days to come.

Seen \mathfrak{Z} heard the tolling of the bell as she bent over a wooden pallet on which a farmer lay, breathing heavily whilst she sewed closed a deep tear in the muscle of his calf. Ignoring the sound, the slim, dark young lady finished her work, then offered the man some herbs he could brew into a tea to help prevent the wound from festering. Only after she was certain the farmer had received enough care did she pack the

needle and twine away, place the dirtied linen in a basket to be washed and wave goodnight to the other wardens as she left.



Toreth, Sun, Mags and Rose acknowledged SeenZ's goodbye in their own ways before falling back to their conversation. The four ladies, each a warden for most of her life, lived in their own cottages off a courtyard near the Houses themselves, yet preferred to spend their evenings together on the days their men had duties away from the home. This night, as the deep darkness crept over Minas Tirith, the four were glad of the company. The tense atmosphere was stretched almost to breaking point, though the hosts of Mordor were not yet to be seen.

A little older than her friends, Toreth walked with a slight limp and bent back when the four made their way across the courtyard to where the injured would sleep. Few enough people were laid down for the night, but still there were not many pallets for more. Sun picked up the day's washing baskets by the rope handles and took them away whilst Mags and Rose assessed each patient by the light of Toreth's candle. Several minutes later, the three crossed again to their houses, wishing each other a good night's sleep as they went.

OrangeBlossom waited impatiently inside the dim kitchen. She paced up and down as she boiled water to brew a pot of tea then resumed pacing, sipping from a chipped clay mug as she went, after the leaves had steeped. She had drunk more than half the tea and been sitting down for a short while when the battered stone door swung open. So excited that she dropped the mug and spilled the drink inside, OrangeBlossom leaped up and ran to hug Toreth.

'Cousin!' she said, voice trembling slightly. 'It must be near on five years since I last saw you. What a time I chose, I had only been travelling a week when I started to hear rumours of war. Now I find the city half empty,' here OrangeBlossom paused for a moment before continuing, 'it's as bad as I heard, then?' A silence fell between the two; heavy with unspoken words, it gave OrangeBlossom the answer she feared.

CHAPTER 2



Iggý woke before the first bell of the morning, as he did every day, to give himself a quick wash and shave before donning the well-shined breastplate and helmet he kept by the side of his bed. This morning, no dawn could be seen through the windows of the barracks; a dull haze, obscuring the little light that was barely enough to see by at the early hour, surrounded the city the way a thick fog blankets a river.

Once dressed and ready to walk to the citadel to take up his duty, Iggý glanced out the door to see the sun, wanting to judge if he had enough time to eat his bread roll before leaving the house. Far from being

able to tell the time from the sun's position, though, he could not see it at all. The heavy cloud of the night before had not lifted; it seemed to be darker than previously and worse to the East. Iggý could make out the shapes of the buildings on the opposite side of the street, but several of the nearby street lanterns were still lit.

Slightly worried by the unnatural clouded darkness, Iggý decided not to waste time with breakfast, deciding instead to eat the white crisp-bread cakes offered at the start of duty to guards of the citadel, assuming he arrived before his shift started.

Gwallyra awoke to an insistent thumping on the warped wooden door that separated his house from the elements. With legs a little stiff from lying still all night, he forced himself out of bed and through the living area to the door. Pulling it open, he noticed that the visitor was clothed in well-maintained uniform, but showing a rank considerably less than he himself had once held.

'Gwallyra Maethor?' barked the young man, looking at the parchment in his hand as if to check he had spoken the correct name. Gwallyra nodded then asked, slightly grumpy at being woken so early, what the soldier wanted. 'You've been drafted back into the army. You know the drill. Fetch what weapons and armour you no longer possess from the armoury and report to the barracks of the Seventh Company by the first bell.'

Satisfied with having delivered this message to yet another ex-soldier, the messenger slammed the door and strode off, checking the next name and address as he did so. Gwallyra swore loudly before tramping back to his bedroom to locate his sword.

Iggý arrived at the citadel with time to spare before the ringing of the first bell, but did not get a chance to avail himself of the offered food before he was intercepted by his Captain. The grizzled old man, one of few words and fewer smiles, peered intently at Iggý before giving one of the longest speeches the soldier had ever heard him make.

'Igor, you're promoted to the rank of Captain. You will report to the barracks of the Seventh Company by the first bell. A division is being prepared to reclaim Osgiliath. I hereby relieve you of any and all duties relating to the Twelfth Company. Get gone!'



Despite the harsh words of the last few sentences, Iggý felt sure he heard a slight note of pride in the Captain's voice. Not sure he was doing the right thing, he called after the man, who was now limping away down the corridor. 'Sir, why was I chosen?'

Without stopping or looking back, the First Guard raised his voice to be heard as he left. 'Because of your skill in field medicine and because you can ride a horse. Now be gone!'

Iggý turned quickly and left; he had very little time before the ringing of the bell and the barracks of the Seventh were two levels below the citadel where he now stood. He jogged through streets dim and empty, though they should have been lit by the sun at this hour, and filled with people walking from their homes to their places of work.

The evacuation of the White City would be the reason for the lack of craftsmen and other non-military personnel, but the heavy cloud was just wrong. There was a little light now, enough that Iggý could read the street names carved into the stone at intersections, but still it should have been brighter, even on an overcast day.



Gwallyra arrived at the great stone building housing the Seventh Company a few moments before the first bell of the day rang out across the city. There was a queue of men, all dressed in polished armour of some type, some barely older than boyhood, some who looked, as he had, to have been called back into service, all waiting to enter. A few, however, appeared to be of the age a soldier should be; young enough to be fit and strong, but no so young as to be enticed by ideas of glory on the battlefield.

Groaning to himself, Gwallyra limped to the back of the queue behind a man dressed in the uniform of the Guard of the Citadel. His sword-belt felt awkward and poorly fitted, causing the crossguard of the weapon to put pressure on the bone of his hip and the top of the hilt to dig into the bottom of his ribs. Today, he could tell, was not going to be a good day.

In some ways, Gwallyra wished he had left the city with the women, children and the elderly. Though his days in the army of Gondor had passed, he had known, as the vulnerable were leaving, that he was not too old to be drafted back to fight again. He had considered going with them, walking with nothing but a pack on his back until he reached somewhere to settle, but had decided to stay, though he could not explain his reasons even to himself.

The queue moved steadily forward as each recruit had his name checked against the list. Many were sent to the armoury to procure armour or weapons, but most were allowed inside. Iggy was sent to exchange his uniform for the helmet, breastplate and gauntlets issued as standard to Captains in the field, but Gwallyra was waved in with a curt gesture.

Toreth, Sun, Mags and Rose spent the day inside the Houses of Healing, persuading as many of the less gravely sick or injured patients as possible that they were healthy enough to leave. OrangeBlossom, wanting to help but with no experience of healing, washed the bedclothes that had covered the pallet of anyone who vacated the Houses.

The ladies ignored the darkness that, by midday, had still not abated enough for

lamp flames to be doused or fires to be quenched. Used to working at all hours of the night, the poor visibility did not concern them. Still, each woman was a little unsettled by the clouds still spreading from the east. Seen³ tried her best to follow their example and remain calm enough to reassure the patients under her care, but it was not easy. Every now and then a harsh cry could be heard, sounding from somewhere in the skies above, always accompanied by a gripping terror that caused at least half the people nearby to cower, weeping, until it had passed.

The wardens felt the fear and heard the cries of the winged beasts in the same way that their patients did, yet as they passed, the wardens would be the first to recover, ready to calm the people under their care. By the middle of the afternoon, they could force themselves to their feet within moments of these occurrences passing. They had also cleared all but a few beds ready for those injured in the battles and sieges sure to be coming. The darkness deepened as the afternoon drew on, but OrangeBlossom, the only one of the ladies to venture outside as she carried the washing, was the only one of the group to notice.



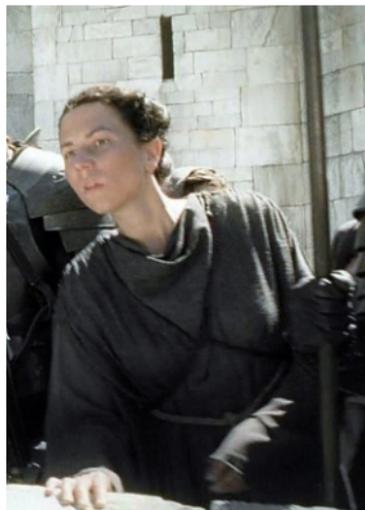
CHAPTER 3

Becky, Sindae and Tina spent the morning inside the house they were using, constantly kneading dough, baking rolls of bread in the clay oven and placing the cooled rolls in wicker baskets. As close to midday as they could guess in the darkness, they placed the last balls of dough into the oven, tipped the previous batch into the baskets and settled down to eat a roll with cheese.

The mid afternoon bell rang as they left the house with their produce; ready to sell it, the three walked up onto the city walls where there were sure to be plenty of men, both on duty and off, looking out over the fields of the Pelennor. There was enough light, barely, to make out about half the distance to the Rammas at the outer walls and the girls kept glancing as they went.

The horrific cries of the flying beasts and their associated terror also affected everyone on the walls, though here some of the men were able to remain standing, if they had some kind of support to hold on to. The three young ladies dropped to the

floor as they felt the crushing fear once again, expecting to hear at any second the bone-chilling cries. This time, though, just before the shrieks of the winged terrors, the sound of hooves rang out and a weak cheer was raised from the people off to the left.



Becky ran to look over the parapet, closely followed by Sindae and Tina. A small group of riders, seated on exhausted horses, was visible in the distance, about as far as the darkness would allow the friends to see. As they drew closer and became clearer in the haze, the four shapes became more distinct. Two bay horses and a dark grey followed a small, lightweight chestnut, all cantering over the grassy Pelennor. Of the riders, little could be seen other than the armour, which seemed to be in the Gondorian style

The reason why the riders were not resting their mounts on the last stretch of a long ride became apparent at about the same time as the name Faramir was shouted along the walls in both directions. The heir to the Steward of Gondor was the only one of the men to remain in the saddle as five great beasts dropped from out of the clouds, wings folded in a steep dive. Obviously terrified of the enormous bat-like creatures, the two bay horses and the grey reared, span in circles, bucked and bolted, leaving their riders in the dirt.

Faramir, reins in one hand as he tried to prevent his mount from following its fellows to the city gates, drew his sword. He encouraged the animal with gentle words and firm leg aids to turn back to his fallen comrades, but it was plain to those watching on the walls that he could not save them, or himself, from the beasts that were rapidly closing the distance towards the group.

The three girls dropped their baskets of bread, leaning over the edge of the walls. Tina shouted, 'over there! Look!' as she pointed to the north. A lone rider, robed in white and mounted on a horse of dappled silver, flew towards the fray with more speed than any farm horse or cavalry mount could ever hope to achieve. The pair raced towards the fleeing men, three running as fast as their legs would carry them and Faramir riding at a steady canter so as not to leave them behind.

The group converged with the single rider close to the gate, but still the winged beasts dropped to attack. A sudden clarity in the thick air seemed to surround the man in the dimness, and as he raised both hands, the staff clasped within them sent out a streak of white light. ‘Gandalf!’ men called. ‘Gandalf! Faramir!’

The flying creatures unfurled their wings, rising in tight circles until they were lost to view in the clouds above. The group on the Pelennor seemed to slow a little, and the light surrounding Gandalf faded as they disappeared from sight under the city walls.

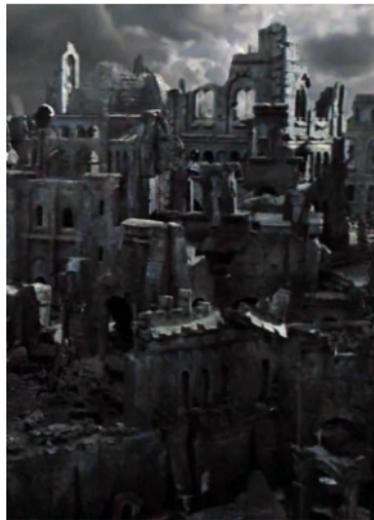
Both Iggy and Gwallyra reported to the barracks of the Seventh Company before the first bell rang the next morning, as they had been instructed after hours of training the previous day. The ten Captains and thousand men under their command would not fit inside the buildings; as they arrived each man received the command to assemble outside the Great Gate of the city. Iggy and his hundred men were sent first to the stables on the lower level to fetch their mounts, but as the third bell rang, the last of the cavalry formed rank in front of the foot soldiers.

A lone rider, long fair hair tied by a leather cord underneath the back of his helmet and mounted on a striking bay with a slightly offset white blaze and two white socks on his hind legs, was the last to pass the gate before it was closed behind him. The horse seemed ready to explode with excitement in much the same manner as boiling water confined in a lidded pot, yet Faramir was unconcerned by this as he trotted smoothly to the head of the small army.

Iggy sat aboard a stocky chestnut mare, the mount handed to him by a groom at the stables. She tossed her head a little but did not move as Faramir stood in his stirrups, raised his sword and lowered it forwards to signal the move-off. They stepped forward at a walk, the foot soldiers and a handful of oxen following. The mare needed no command; she began moving a moment after Faramir’s bay did. Faramir dropped back a little into the first line of horses, keeping a watch for anything moving ahead as he did so. It would take several hours to reach the ruined city on the river Anduin, until around midday for an army of the size he led. As his horse began to settle a little, Faramir let his mind wander whilst they walked.



CHAPTER 4



It was indeed around the middle of the day when the vanguard of Faramir's forces arrived at the western half of the city of Osgiliath. Iggy and a handful of his cavalry were sent to scout the rubble, looking for any signs that orcs had been staying among the ruins. At first no hint of fire, food or other indications of habitation could be seen, but as the soldiers made their way deeper into the abandoned city, it became plain that large groups had indeed been living in the buildings closest to the river.

This was not unexpected news, but Iggy sent a report back to Faramir immediately by means of an errand boy not much older than childhood. Orcs were visible in the dim light across the river on the eastern shore, evidently where most of their army was gathered. Every so often a black feathered arrow would hiss from the bow of one of the creatures, but Iggy would not allow his men to waste ammunition by firing back with the visibility so limited.

Iggy returned to Faramir with his final conclusions. Fire pits, waste and a multitude of other signs made it clear that the orcs had indeed started living in the western half of the city since the time they had overrun it months before. Iggy mentioned the arrows, suggesting that the orcs had crossed back to the east bank to prepare an assault.

Gwallyra arrived a little ahead of the foot soldiers to find the greater part of the cavalry setting up camp near the garrison of 500 men already attempting to defend their shore against the orcs. In the early spring no tents had been thought necessary, so the work consisted mainly of organising stores of food, digging waste pits and collecting what fuel could be found for fire. Each man knew also that he must maintain himself and his horse, so before he so much as opened his saddlebags, Gwallyra removed the tack from his horse and ran his hand down its forelegs to check for problems.

By the time the swordsmen, longbows and pikes had arrived Gwallyra estimated that the sun should be just past her peak, though it was not possible to tell through the

obscuring cloud. No attack came from across the river, save only the odd arrow, which Gwallyra found strange. It seemed folly to him that the orcs were allowing a thousand more of their enemies to dig into the west bank, to get to know the area, to fortify it as far as possible. All afternoon Gwallyra kept glancing to the east, across the river, expecting each time to see the dim shapes massing for an attack.



Evening passed without incident in the ruined city of Osgiliath, then nightfall, then the deepest part of night. Faramir's men kept a close watch of the opposite shore by the light of torches, but still they could see little across the Anduin. Daybreak came with neither dawn nor daylight, but as the men began rousing themselves from sleep, horns began to blow and harsh, guttural voices began to fill the air with curses in the language of the orcs.

Each man not already awake on watch hastily pulled on gauntlets and helmet; most had slept wearing his breastplate. The hundred and fifty horses kept at the garrison or part of the newly arrived cavalry were bridled in moments, but it was not quickly enough. As the first men were swinging up into their saddles, volley after volley of arrows fell among the defenders.

Gwallyra rose from the ground and snatched up his sword belt in one practiced movement. He fastened the buckle with one hand whilst picking up his helmet with the other. Gauntlets followed then, ready for battle, he drew his sword into a two handed grip.

Iggy, already awake before the threatening sounds and deadly arrows, managed to don his armour and bridle his horse. He was tightening the girth on the mare's saddle as he heard the hiss of the first flight; ducking, he trotted the mare behind the shelter of a taller piece of wall still somehow standing amid the rubble before vaulting quickly onto the saddle.

The river seemed to be seething, moving in the darkness, seemed to be spilling over onto the shore like when the foam of an ale runs over the top of the mug.



The Gondorian soldiers saw with horror that the illusion was in fact orcs were pouring off barges, small boats, rafts and loose pieces of floating wood so that the river was thick with them and the shore was four and five deep already.



Swearing loudly, Gwallyra pointed the blade of his sword down and touched the tip to the ground as he leaned forward so that the top of the hilt touched the metal over his heart in the same gesture he had used before every practice bout and genuine battle he had ever fought. He looked up and raised the honed edge of the blade directly into the throat of a twisted, hideous creature, causing it to drop to the ground and lay, gurgling, as black blood ran down to pollute Gwallyra's gauntlets.

Iggý spurred his horse forwards towards the fray, not allowing himself to fear stray arrows as he went. The young man could see Faramir's standard off to the left; raising his sword one-handed into the air he cried aloud for men to rally to him as he turned towards his Captain. Iggý used his horse to force his way to Faramir, heedless of his own safety and not pausing to wound the enemy, he focused only on reaching his destination.

CHAPTER 5

Dawn broke over the White City with none of the usual splendour as the orcs launched their assault on the west bank of Osgiliath. Sindae, Tina, Becky and Seenÿ woke, washed and donned clean dresses as usual then Seenÿ left on the short walk to the Houses of Healing.

Sun, busy rubbing salve into a bad lantern burn on a young man's hand, barely glanced up as Seenÿ entered. They both knew Sun wasn't being rude or unfriendly with the lack of greeting; the burn looked like it could easily become infected or prevent the man from being able to use his hand again unless it was properly cared for.

SeenꞤ wrapped the treated burn in clean linen and gave the injured man instructions on how long to clean the wound and how long to keep it covered for. Sun walked briskly into the next room where, on the pallet closest to the door, sat the same farmer SeenꞤ had stitched the three days before. Satisfied that the leg was healing well, Sun used the small knife in the pouch attached to her belt to remove the twine. Once sure the farmer still had enough of the herbs SeenꞤ had given him before, Sun dismissed the man with instructions to return if the wound did not continue to heal satisfactorily.



OrangeBlossom looked critically at the covers on the pallet where the farmer had rested but could not see any blood spilled on them. They had been freshly washed before the farmer had returned to have his stitches removed; she could see no reason why they would need washing again after being sat on for no longer than ten minutes so did not lift them into the wash basket.

Rose and Mags were working further down the room, Mags reassuring an errand boy as Rose studied his foot, which had been trapped under a horse's hoof the previous day and had swollen hugely. Though it was painful and looked horrific in the candlelight, Rose didn't think any of the bones were broken. The ladies sent the boy home with some herbs to dull the pain then moved on, wanting to clear as much space as possible before the inevitable influx of wounded soldiers arrived.

CHAPTER 6

Iggy and Gwallyra continued to fight as the morning wore on, neither grievously wounded but both coved in scrapes, bruises and aches. Faramir had set one group to burning the orcs' transport but as fast as the boats and rafts were destroyed, more were launched from the east bank. Side by side with the Steward's son, Iggy and Gwallyra fought as part of a tight knot of resistance against the unstoppable black tide of foul creatures flooding over the Anduin.

Gwallyra's sword swung relentlessly; trusting to the rest of the group to guard his back and sides he concentrated on taking down as many of the enemy as he could as

quickly as possible. There was certainly no shortage of targets directly in front of him and the experienced man wasted no energy on weakening the enemy as he dealt blows intended to ensure the recipient would never again be able to strike back.

Though several of the men in the small group were mounted, Gwallyra wished for no horse. His style of combat was face to face, both feet planted firmly on the ground, not raised above others as a target to enemy archers. The tight spaces among the rubble and uncoordinated defence meant that the cavalry could not form rank or charge; the biggest advantage the mounted men would usually give the army could not be used.

Iggy found the chestnut mare to be a decent mount who turned and stopped at the slightest touch of his legs and reins, though he did not have the freedom to rear her and use her forelegs as a weapon. He ignored the possibility of being targeted by archers; if an arrow was to be aimed directly for him, he knew there was no chance of getting out the way even if he saw it coming. Beside him on the left Faramir stood firm against the onslaught, though Iggy could see in his eyes that Faramir despised what he had to do and had not been caught up in the heat of battle.

Still the orcs came, yet the number visible on the far shore in the slightly increased light of late morning did not seem to be decreasing. Faramir could see no let-up, no end to the flood of enemies crossing the river. He ripped the horn off his belt and blew three short sharp notes to sound a retreat. Iggy turned his mare, using his heels to urge her closer to the Anduin, shouting the command with as much breath as he could spare.

Men everywhere began to disengage; slipping between the ruined buildings they fought only when orcs were blocking their path or were within easy reach. Iggy cantered the mare steadily along the shore to the left, shouting as he jumped over debris on the ground. Faramir rode to the right, sounding the horn and heedless of the danger to himself as he ordered his men to fall back.



Gwallyra ran to where the provisions and carts had been stored; not in any immediate danger, he hitched several oxen to carts as men came dragging wounded comrades behind them. After loading each cart with as many injured as it could hold, Gwallyra allowed it to leave with an escort of foot soldiers. Within minutes of

Faramir first ordering the retreat, the carts with the wounded, their escort and the greater part of the unmounted men were walking at a steady pace away from the abandoned city.



Faramir, Iggy and the rest of the men still aboard their horses covered the fleeing men from the pursuing orcs, riding a short distance then turning to engage their foes for a short time. The last of the rearguard passed the furthest of the ruined buildings and rubble on their way out of the fallen city a little after the foot soldiers; by midday the entire army had reached the open fields, the ordered retreat moving back to the shelter of Minas Tirith.

CHAPTER 7

The wardens in the Houses of Healing did not notice evening drawing on as they worked tirelessly to help the seriously injured or ill whilst sending home anyone they could. The passing time, usually measured by the movement of the sun and the onset of darkness, was today only quantifiable by the ringing of the bell to mark the hour, though how the bell-ringers knew the time the ladies neither knew nor cared.

With the elderly and children having left the White City, there was very little illness, so Sun, Rose and Mags moved these people together into one room so they would not be spreading infection among the wounded soldiers once these arrived. Seen $\bar{3}$ and OrangeBlossom were once again collecting linens for washing when the last bell rang out, signalling the end of Seen $\bar{3}$'s working day. As usual she ignored it, but OrangeBlossom said she and Toreth could finish up and it was Rose and Mags' turn to remain inside the Houses to help as necessary for the night. Thanking the friendly countrywoman, Seen $\bar{3}$ turned out of the courtyard as OrangeBlossom walked into the laundry.

Toreth was folding clean linens when her cousin entered. The two women smiled at each other but didn't speak for a minute, each busy with the work she was doing. Pausing before she left to take the clean cloths and pallet covers away, Toreth asked, 'Do you regret coming here? I can offer you nothing to do other than this, unless you change your mind and decide to train as a warden. I fear you must be bored of washing, but I would not suggest it is safe for you to leave, either.'



OrangeBlossom did not need to think before answering. 'I still have no intention of becoming a warden and I know I can be of no use in the Houses. Someone needs to keep these clean, though, and you're right that I can't leave now. Do not worry yourself over me, my only regret is that I did not come sooner.' She rested her hand on her cousin's shoulder for a moment before pulling it back to immerse her pile of linens into the large metal container full of water suspended over smouldering coals.

Tina, Sindae and Becky had finished selling the day's bread by the time Seen \int returned to the little house and were relighting the fire as she walked in. Becky left to fill the kettle with water from the closest well whilst Tina blew gently on the tiny flame, encouraging it to grow, leaving Sindae to pass Seen \int the last of the bread and a slice of beef.

Seen \int nodded her thanks as she accepted the cracked clay plate and sat cross-legged on the floor. Sindae joined her, then a moment later Tina also sat, nibbling at the crusty end of her roll. Becky returned with the water before Seen \int had finished eating and set the kettle over the heat; waiting for it to boil, they sat talking quietly by the light of the lantern.

Not long after the four had drunk their tea, they settled down to sleep. There was no energy these days for staying up late into the night as they had used to years before, not when every waking hour was filled with work and the city was under imminent threat of attack. Sindae lay awake long after her friends had dropped off, as usual unable to sleep until late.



Sindae was riding across a grassy meadow on a pretty grey mare, coat as white as fresh snow. In front of her a river bubbled gently and she walked the horse down the bank so the mare's hooves touched the water. Turning, Sindae cantered along the edge, the spray flying up and cooling her face on the warm day.

Suddenly beside them, laughing as he bent low over his horse's neck, urging it to catch up, rode Boromir, the Steward's younger son, on a gleaming dark bay. There was something about him, it took Sindae a moment to realise that he looked younger than he had the last time she had seen him. But of course he was younger; he had to be for the two of them to be together, which they hadn't been when he had spent his days doing his father's bidding.

The two riders stopped their horses and jumped to the ground. Letting the animals go free, they clasped hands and sat down on the bank of the river, dipping their toes into the water. Boromir reached across and ran his free fingers through Sindae's windswept hair, brushing it back out of her face. He left his palm gently cupping her cheekbone whilst his fingertips untangled the hair at her temple; Sindae could feel the heat of his hand on her face.

Then Boromir was shaking Sindae's shoulder, he was going fuzzy as her head began to lift away from him. Sindae opened her eyes to near total darkness and realised Becky was crouched next to her, saying, 'wake up, it's time to get up. The first batch is in the oven, Seen \bar{S} 's gone already and the first bell already rung.' Sindae groaned, rolled over and closed her eyes.



CHAPTER 8

Gwallyra arrived at the forts on the causeway, over ten miles from Osgiliath, about the time the sun should be setting. The darkness seemed to deepen further into night as he and the rest of the foot soldiers who had survived the rout at the ruined city set about making camp and throwing up hasty defensive banks of earth around the perimeter. The forts were not large and the orcs had not spread out to sweep past the cavalry during the course of the afternoon, so with nearly a thousand soldiers left,

including those who had been stationed at Osgiliath, the work was almost before the last of the mounted men arrived.

Immediately after the final group of horses passed through the breach, a group of carts was backed into the last space in the circle of dyke and bank and the axles broken so they could not be moved. Orcs were still following closely behind but as the sound of hooves quietened, it seemed that they were preparing for a siege instead of a direct attack.

Iggy thought as he cared for his mare, thought about the stores of food, the availability of water. It took him only moments to see that they would not survive a week trapped inside the forts, but before he could dwell on this, he felt something tap his shoulder. Iggy turned to see a teenage soldier, dry blood on his temple but not looking unsteady on his feet, armour dull with nicks and dents. Thinking that he himself probably looked no better, Iggy had to ask the messenger to repeat what he had just said.

'Captain Faramir wants to talk to all the Captains. Over there,' here the young man pointed off to the right, 'as soon as you can get there.' Iggy thanked the lad as he glanced over and saw Faramir's face lit in profile by the firelight, there was no mistaking that nose from sideways on. Pausing only to check the hobbles on his mare's front legs, Iggy walked over to where the Captains were gathering.

Faramir counted his Captains as they arrived; of the ten men of rank they had started with and the two more they had joined with in Osgiliath, there remained only five, not including himself. Of the seven hundred swordsmen, only four hundred survived. Faramir believed he had lost as many as half of the three hundred pikes but only one in ten of the three hundred archers. Most the two hundred cavalry had survived, but Faramir knew that an estimate of a thousand, most injured, all weary and no few unable to fight, was an optimistic number. He had lost around a third of the combined forces in a single skirmish, injured many more and had dug into a place that was ultimately indefensible due to the lack of food. Not at all pleased with the day's work, Faramir turned to address the five surviving captains.

'Each of you will choose one man you believe suitable for promotion and bring him to me. We will have need of strong leadership when the morning comes; I want no man who is young and reckless. Rather a veteran past his prime but whom inspires loyalty in his followers than a child so used to taking orders that he cannot give them, even though his skill with a sword is exceptional. I will stay here; return quickly,

say nothing to these men and be ready to break free of these beasts with the first hint of light.'



Gwallyra had removed helmet, sword-belt and gauntlets but was not finished wiping off the worst of the blood when he was interrupted by a man whom he recognised and had fought alongside many years before, but whose name he could not remember. The two shook hands briefly and exchanged brief questions about each other's health, but Gwallyra was certain this was no chance meeting. His suspicions were confirmed when the other man said, 'I think you'd best come with me. Faramir wishes to speak with you.'

Biting back a sharp response about preferring to get some sleep, Gwallyra buckled on his sword belt and followed his comrade through the camp without speaking.

The battlefield had never been a place for idle chatter and Gwallyra was not one to waste effort on unnecessary words in any situation. The two arrived after a brief walk; Faramir greeted the man by the rank and title of Captain Windermir. Gwallyra's feeling that he should have remembered the name, if not known the rank, was eclipsed almost immediately as Windermir gave Faramir Gwallyra's name.

'This is my man, Captain. I believe you will find him suitable. Swordsman Gwallyra Maethor. He rejoined the army for this venture but was well respected as an armsman and a leader in the days a little before you first ventured onto the battlefield, sir.'

Faramir looked intently at Gwallyra, at the breastplate and sword he still wore and at the strength shown in the set of his jaw and the way he held his head. After a moment he nodded, then dismissed Windermir. 'Swordsman Maethor, you are now to become Captain Maethor. Of course you will lack the proper dress until we reach Minas Tirith, but you are hereby raised to the rank of Captain and will have such privileges and responsibilities as befit the role. Your first task is to prepare the men for an assault in the first light of the morning. Weak though it is, still the orcs will despise it after a night of darkness. Fires are to be doused and the men are to rest. Only the men on watch are to be exempt. Go spread the word of the instructions but not the attack. If you have any questions, ask them now.'

(to be continued...)





WHEN IN NEW ZEALAND DO AS THE HOBBITS DO

by littlegreenwoman

Basically all of New Zealand is Middle-Earth. You can drive through the South Island and see Rohan everywhere. You drive past Mount Cook and you can see the Fellowship crossing the mountains. You drive through Tongariro National Park and you see Mount Doom. Peter Jackson used over 100 locations on both islands to film his movies. Sometimes you will drive past a rocky outcrop and your guide book (number 5 on the NZ bestseller list) will tell you that this is where Sam and Gollum talked about cooking. Well, ok ... if you say so ... I also may add that a lot of locations are not accessible unless you are with a tour because they are on private property. So here is my account of the three Lord of the Rings tours I did in New Zealand:

Queenstown

When we (my boyfriend and me) got on the car, there were a few older Canadians and our driver really asked us: "So, do you like Lord of the Rings?" Like? Like?! Why the heck do you think I booked this tour?! Our elderly Canadian friends had seen the film once upon a time but were more interested in our guide's hunting stories. The guide wasn't that great either. He told stories from the DVD extras and sometimes got facts wrong. Maybe they have other guides, but this one was clearly not a fan.

Anyway, with a 4WD we went up a mountain opposite Queenstown and saw the plain where the Rohan refugees were walking towards Helm's Deep and where the warg attack happened. Quite unspectacular. Next we drove to the River Anduin, actually Waikato River, which really looks as blue and beautiful as in the film. We were at the spot where they pasted the Argonath in, so the doorway to the lands of Gondor. It's possible to bungee jump from a bridge over the river and if I ever wanted to bungee jump it would be there.

The next stop was Arrowtown, a small town that was built during the NZ gold rush. The interesting thing about that is that the river they found gold in is the Bruinen Ford. We literally drove through the river with the 4WD as it is a public road (Kiwis are a bit weird) and then parked right next to where Arwen protected the halfling. We also had tea there and tried to prospect some gold, but suffice it to say, we didn't get rich. After that, our guide took us on another public road, a small track to the "hinterlands" of Queenstown. No idea where we really were but there were steep mountains. Not ringsy but it was interesting to see two cars passing each other on a road that was barely 2 metres wide. Believe it or not, 4 hours were over and we were taken back to the hotel.

This tour gets 2 stars out of 5 because the guide didn't know what he was talking about and because we did not see a lot of Rings locations. It was scenic though.

What else to do in Queenstown:

Just look out across Lake Wakatipu and you will see the Remarkables, a mountain range that was used as the backdrop for Mordor. They can look quite eerie when the sun goes down. If you don't want to bungee jump into the Anduin but prefer a quiet walk, you can drive to Glenorchy (about 1h 30 min) where you will find the woods of Iothlórien. I am not sure if you can drive to the exact spot where they filmed it but you can walk through the surrounding beech woods to a small lake and it really feels elvish. Don't forget to hug a tree!





The second tour I forced my boyfriend to “enjoy” started in Wellington:

It was the full-day tour though, to be honest, the half-day would have been enough. Our guide started again by asking us if we knew the films and out of 10 people only 2 really loved the movies (including me). Others said: “Sure, I saw the movies. Both.” No comment.

We started out on Mount Victoria in Wellington where they shot some scenes from the very beginning: get off the road, shortcut to mushrooms, the Hobbits running breathlessly through the woods and the Nazgûl standing on top of the mountain and looking menacing? Our guide had screencaps from the movie and he showed us exactly which trees featured in the film. This made it more palpable, you could really see where the sets used to be. On our way out of Wellington we parked near the highway and were treated to the industrial site where they built Helm's Deep and Minas Tirith. Nothing much there to see anymore but a quarry.

The next stop was Rivendell. It's really a shame that they took this set down. Our guide again explained where exactly things had been (e.g. the Council of Elrond). A fun fact: Peter Jackson wanted Rivendell to look autumnal which is why in the film it always has a brownish-gold tinge. The trouble was that trees in New Zealand are evergreen so he got people to rake up leaves, paint them and staple them to the trees. Wouldn't we all have loved to do this job? We also got to play with Sting and our guide handed out elf ears. The last stop of the half-day tour was Isengard, or rather the gardens of it. We drove to the park where Gandalf and Saruman discussed the side-effects of Hobbit weed. We then dropped off a few people and drove to the river where they did Anduin close-ups. The actual river near Queenstown is too deep and was too far away from the studio, so they shot some scenes close-by. Our guide then took us to the sea where we had lunch and also a look of the mountainside Sam and Frodo tumbled down in front of the Black Gates. Next was a school playground which used to be Bree. Again nothing much to see there anymore. But this site used to be a military camp and before they demolished it, they put Bree facades up in front of the barracks.



Last but sadly least we visited Weta cave. I was excited to go there but apart from a life-size Gollum and Quetz, there was not much to see. They had a museum of all the collectible LOTR busts and the one ring for sale (of course). Also collectibles from other movies they did. We saw a short film about how Weta is the best place to work and that was it. So my summary: The first part of the tour was fun and new, but you actually don't see that much. If no one pointed out that this was an actual film site, you would miss it. Also, you can actually go to the Weta Cave for free, so don't bother going there with the tour.

This tour gets 3 ½ stars out of 5.

<http://www.wellingtonrover.co.nz/>



What else to do when you're in Wellington:

Go and visit the Paths of the Dead. We drove to Putangirua Pinnacles which is southwest of Wellington and took a nice walk/hike there. I don't know where the actual cave entrance is we see Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli walk towards but the whole area looks like it and it's quite impressive. A nice walk up a riverbed and through weird plant life.



The third tour: Hobbiton

(<http://www.hobbitontours.com/>)

The set is built right into a sheep farm so that's your starting point: the Alexander farm and Shire's Rest Inn. A bus drove us past a few thousand sheep to the actual set. Now this guide was the most knowledgeable. She could spew out trivia and quote from the film ("I don't know half of you half as well as I should like; and I like less than half of you half as well as you deserve.") without blinking. I think we picked a bad time to go to Hobbiton because as you can see from the photos, it does not look as pretty as in the films. One reason is that most of the facades are styrofoam and the sheep would eat it. The second reason is that they were renovating the set, tearing out Hobbit holes and building new ones because they are going to film *The Hobbit* soon. At least Bag End was still pretty and we got some nice pics of it and also of the party tree. When the bus took us back to the farm we were treated to some sheep-shearing and were allowed to bottle-feed lambs. I'm a city-girl so this really impressed me ;).

This tour gets 4 ½ stars because it was really fun and interesting and you could actually see the set. Why not 5 stars? Because the Hobbit holes were not pretty with their white facades and big numbers sprayed on them.

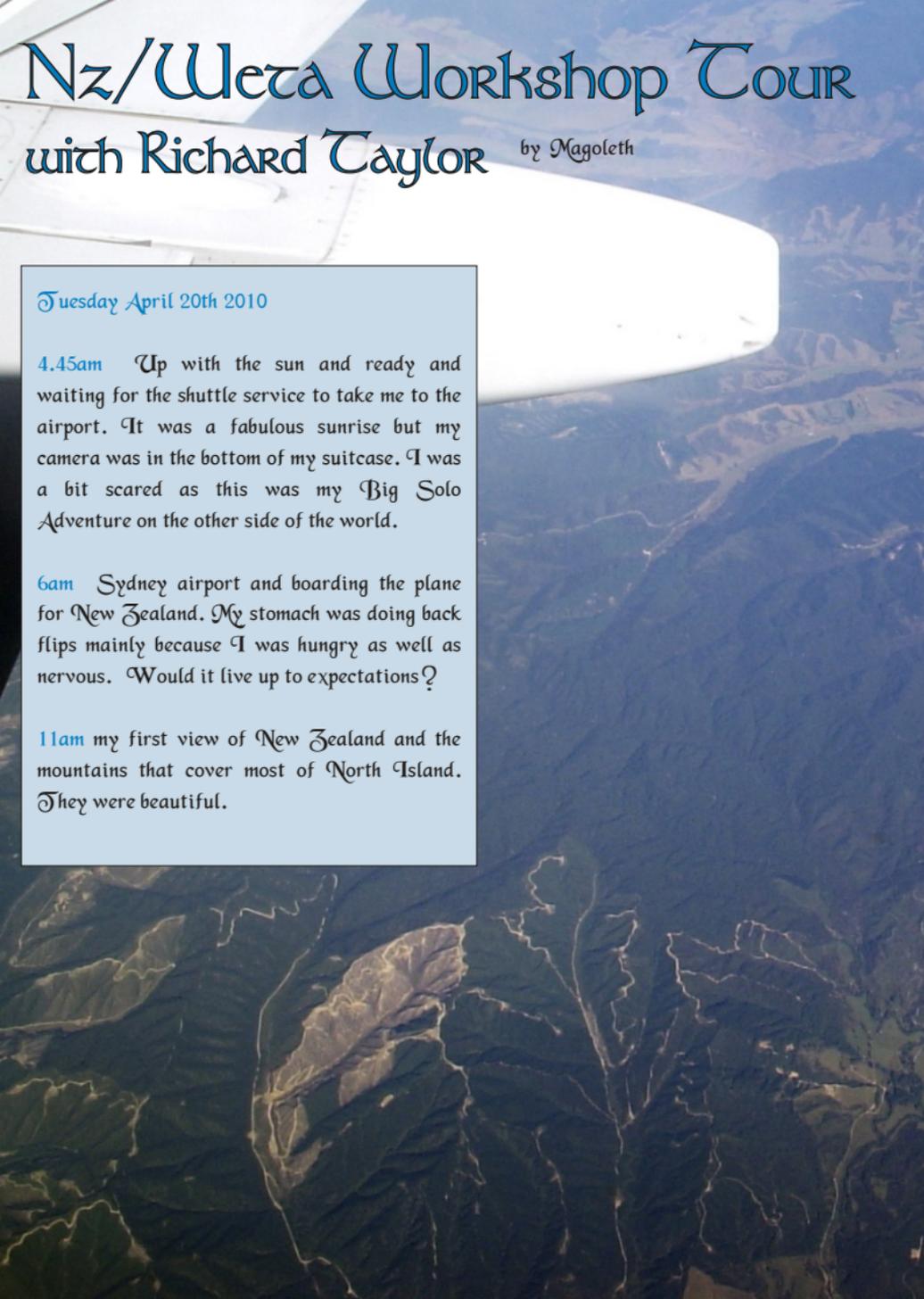
There are a lot more tours out there and I think we could have visited even more places but then again I did not want to torture my significant other any more. New Zealand is certainly worth the trip and a must for every Rings fan.



Now as we make our way up north to the last tour, let's stop in Tongariro National Park. This is where Mount Doom lies! The National Park has 3 volcanoes: Mount Tongariro, Mount Ruapehu (an active volcano with a ski resort, I kid you not) and Mount Ngauruhoe (Mount Doom). Now the whole area looks pretty impressive and if you like hiking, this should be fun. We took the easy way and took a scenic flight that brought us right above the craters.







Nz/Weta Workshop Tour

with Richard Taylor by Magoleth

Tuesday April 20th 2010

4.45am Up with the sun and ready and waiting for the shuttle service to take me to the airport. It was a fabulous sunrise but my camera was in the bottom of my suitcase. I was a bit scared as this was my Big Solo Adventure on the other side of the world.

6am Sydney airport and boarding the plane for New Zealand. My stomach was doing back flips mainly because I was hungry as well as nervous. Would it live up to expectations?

11am my first view of New Zealand and the mountains that cover most of North Island. They were beautiful.



12.30pm Landed in Wellington and noticed that it was appreciably colder than Sydney of course it was a bit further south and winter would soon be setting in. Signed in to my hotel and unpacked. Found somewhere to lunch and then set out for a little exploration of Wellington.

The first thing I saw was the bridge designed like a Maori Warship spanning the main road and as I wandered over it I found all of this wonderful native artwork.



Community Square had pyramids and the artificial trees were wonderful shapes.



Back to the hotel for dinner and see if I can find someone to talk to before going to bed and getting ready for another little adventure tomorrow.

Wednesday 21st - Woke up bright and early and headed out for breakfast after first booking my place for a morning trip around Miramar.



Dean, my tour guide for the morning, sent word he was running a little late but I did not mind. I was the only taker for that morning's trip so I really got the special treatment with a one to one chat with the guide. His name is Dean Knowsley and he has his own page on IMDb. He was one of the pilots in the movie Avatar and said how much he had enjoyed working with James Cameron and he was now waiting to see if he had managed to get a part in the Hobbit movie. We had a little quiz going for the morning as to what part he was going for. He refused to confirm or deny any question I put to him but I think I got close when, after eliminating Dwarfs, Hobbits and Elves, I was extremely puzzled until I remembered Dale and

Bard the Bowman. Ah well maybe my guess is right I shall have to keep looking. Dean was a mine of information and took me around Oriental Bay where his grandparents had lived. It had been a poorer part of Wellington in those days but boy you should see it now. The houses up on the hillsides do not have roads up to them, they park their cars in lay bys and then climb into pods and go up the hillside on their own little railways. hat a good way to keep unwanted callers from your door!

I was driven around Miramar and we stopped at the Post Production building where Dean pointed out that Peter Jackson was inside the building as that was his car! Snap went the camera

I wanted to go knock on the door but was sure I would not be welcome. Ah well! So off we went to the Weta Cave.





Here I am at last – a dream come true!

As Dean was taking this picture of me a lady walked over and started talking to him. I noticed she was wearing Narya and she said she had worn it since the day it was first made. It turns out the lady Anna was in charge of publicity for Weta. Well I was tickled pink but I was green with envy when I finally got inside Weta. I wanted everything in there.

This is the riding dummy that was used in the Fellowship when Arwen is racing with Frodo to Bruinin. Apparently it was a good job that they used a dummy and not a body double as the dummy fell off the horse four times and in the end had to be stitched onto “Arwen’s” dress.





This is the dummy of Gimli that was used in the boats going down the Anduin.



The shelves were lined with models



Next I went into see movie put together by Richard Taylor which told the story of Weta but no photographs were allowed.

When I came out I had my picture taken with the lovely Gollum and also Urtz.



Then Steve, the Weta man in the cave, told me that if I went to a certain place at a certain time I might just see PJ and co having coffee. Off I went outside to tell Dean and he said that we had time so he would take me to see Peter Jackson's houses. Yep plural! He has five but only lives in one and the rest are corporate hospitality ones, one of which had contained Tom Cruise just two weeks before. So off we went and soon came to this lovely house right on the corner of the road overlooking the sea.



As I was busy taking this picture my guide told me to turn left immediately and point and shoot and hands shaking I did as I was told and there was... Peter Jackson driving his car turning into his home!



My hand shook for about five minutes. I wish I had had time to put zoom on but by then he would have been inside and lost to the lens!

My tour continued still with me shaking like a jelly! I was shown the sound stages and the costume warehouses and the weapons stores and taken past a large building which contains Peter's "toys." He has a full sized Lancaster Bomber and also a Sopwith Camel and several other planes which I believe he used some to make a movie for the War Museum in Canberra and also when he does the remake of The Dambusters.



My guide then took me to the sea shore and showed me the rocks upon which the ship was wrecked in King Kong. Very beautiful and 6000 kilometres away was the Antarctic.

My adventure with Dean came to an end back in Wellington and, after obtaining his autograph and a kiss, I went to have a late lunch and a stiff drink.

Now I had to get ready for Auckland and Matamata tomorrow.

The road goes ever on.....

5.30am Thursday 22nd April.

Bright eyed and bushy tailed I waited for my shuttle to the airport and my flight up to Auckland. One hour later I landed and was met by Vic from Red Carpet tours for my two hour ride to Hobbiton.

We drove down Buckland Road, yes that is what it was called and always had been, coincidence or what! We had arrived and so had many others. We were given a lovely lunch with all fresh homemade food and fruit juice and had a lovely chat. Then it was time for the coach.

We drove through the gates and we were then on a movie set and yes the Hobbit holes are being rebuilt and so is the village of Hobbiton. There is building work all over and replanting of fields and hedgerows etc. I can understand why the farm was picked but mainly we are told that it had a lake and a large tree. Yep the party tree!

Here I am dancing on the Party field and that is the tree!



Here I am at the front door of Bag End. You can actually go inside it as it is quite large but most of the other Hobbit holes are just frontages. I have many other photos of Hobbiton but cannot put them on here due to the building work going on and the document I signed. Things are going on apace with building work all over the place but most of it is covered up with tarpaulins I suppose mainly to stop the sheep from getting in. The sheep were every where but not the ones in the movie. Peter Jackson apparently brought in a herd of English sheep to keep with authenticity as the New Zealand sheep are quite different.

I could go on about Hobbiton but you will see it when the movie is made as now I'm off back to Wellington on the 7.30pm flight. Supper and bed ready for my new day.

Friday 23rd April 9.00am

Waiting at the bus stop for my tour guide for the day.

Well here was the bus and off we went on a tour of lots of places where the movies had been shot. Sometimes you had to use your imagination to picture it as nothing is now left of the sets etc as they were all returned to their original state after filming. I stood on the road where the Hobbits fell down after plundering Farmer Maggot's field. One of the first scenes shot.

The slope, on the left of the picture, was so steep that they had to put up a barrier as one stunt man just kept going and broke a leg.



There were many places we were taken to but the coup de grace came for me when we got to Weta Cave (again!). Yep, I had been there two days before and as the sun was shining I stayed outside and sat on the wall just watching the world go by when out of Weta came - Oh Crickey it's Richard Taylor!

I tiptoed around and took this picture of him and then sat down again. Imagine my surprise when he walked up to me and said "Hello I'm Richard Taylor - what's your name?" I stammered "Brenda!" He must have thought he had found a blithering idiot on his doorstep! "Where are you from?" says he "Mimmanchester England" says I. "Wow my home town, that's where my parents came from!" "Have you got a few minutes to spare?" he asked. "Yes I have" I replied. "Then come with me" he said and turned on his heel and marched away up a flight of stairs.



The next thing I knew I was in the Boardroom of Weta Digital Studios and just burst into tears. I gazed at the cabinets full of all the priceless treasures and the Baftas and the Oscars whilst he went off and found me a box of hankies!

Then to compound my tears he opened up one of the cabinets and gave me an Oscar to hold.

This was the second one he lifted out saying "You can't hold that one Fran dropped it!" As if I could care less! Oh dear all my birthdays, as they say, had come at once.



He showed me the room where all the prosthetics were made and the gallery of all the masks lined up on the walls. Fantastic!

"If you want to see something to blow your mind," says he, "come with me" and proceeded to whisk me on a whirlwind tour of the prosthetics department and various other workshops, introducing me all along the way as "This lady is from my home town!". I can't remember anyone else's names



as I was numb with shock and then we got to the weapons workshop.

There was Gimli's double Axe hanging on the wall. "We have been offered enough money for this that we could build a mansion" Said Richard as he encouraged me to take **STING** out of its sheath and the tears almost started again.



I was then escorted out to the picnic area where the staff go for fresh air “We spend too much time working!” said Richard “sometimes we need to unwind!”

And what a nice little place to unwind! Of course it is all behind high fences! A final farewell photograph and my lightning tour was over!



What a man! So very nice and I was so flustered I did not even remember to ask for his autograph!

Ah well! Tomorrow was back to Sydney and in a few days I would be meeting up with another Niennan, Adonniel down in her home town.

This has been one trip I shall never forget and I'm sure my family and friends will get tired of me talking about it, but I shall always remember.



Sauron cookie jar

Did you know that the word cookie comes from the Dutch "Koekje", meaning small cake? Yes? Ah but did you know that there's a place now where you can stash your small cakes without the fear of having your sibling go through them like a pre-school Hobbit. The Sauron cookie jar will combine the best of what the Dark Lord has to offer, the frightening horse skull look-alike helmet and the ever watchful eye. Produced in a limited edition of 2000.



Where to get it: Amazon Marketplace, used for £49.99
(hope you'll have some money left to buy cookies)

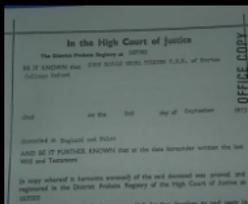
Flag of Rohan

If you find the national holidays boring with the same old Union Jacks or Stars and Stripes hanging from every damn house you walk by then why not be the wind of change (or at least the odd one) by hanging your very own flag of Rohan. This licensed movie prop will turn your house into a Golden Hall or a Rohan hut that gets burned by the angry men of Dunland (neighbor) when they find your level of patriotism doesn't rise to the expected level.



Get it at: <http://www.moviepropshopuk.com> for £28.95

Tolkien's last will



Lord of the Rings, The Hobbit, Unfinished Tales... you probably read of all those. So, if you're on the lookout for new Tolkien writings to entertain yourself why not pick up his will (a copy of it of course). Slightly morbid? Well maybe, but fandom knows no limit.

Get it at <http://www.tolkien-shop.com> for €9.95

Plush Gandalf



Most parents secretly hope that their children will pick up their interests. In Trekkies we saw parents dress their newborns in tiny trek jumpsuits and now there's finally something for a Tolkien fan to throw on his child. A collection of plush dolls have recently been made by Sideshow, very cute and apparently very fluffy. So toss that copy/paste teddy in the garbage and present a Gandalf plush to your aspiring physicist, a Frodo plush for a jewelry designer, a Moria Orc to a potential martial arts master or a Legolas plush to... well, better not that one.

Get the toys at <http://www.sideshowtoy.com/> for \$9.99 each.

White tree pendant

They say that every drop of water dreams of becoming Heineken beer (or some other beer, no beer company pays us provision so it doesn't matter) and equally every stone in New Zealand dreams of becoming a LotR themed stone pendant. This newest fashion addition from Weta will punch those stereotype "ring on a chain around the neck" in a place most unpleasant to bring a fresh new nerdness display option. Superbly made and available with the White tree insignia, Arwen's crown or Gandalf's rune.



Find them at <http://www.wetanz.com/lotr/> for \$32 each.

Bag End environment

Now for a real kick ass collectible, and one that will kick your wallet's ass as well, there is still a chance to pre-order the Bag End environment. This wonderful little polystone statue will bring a refreshing piece of Hobbiton in your house most likely annoying your spouse and causing her/him to take revenge with buying a new pair of shoes/golf clubs.



Available at <http://www.wetanz.com/lotr/> for \$125 or \$250

Little Red Riding Hood

and Nimrodel

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, a young elf maid was sitting by her stream when Amroth, king of Lothlorien, approached.

“Nimrodel,” said the king, “I want you to go to Gondor. There are ships there that can take us to Valinor, where we can be peaceful and happy all the days of our lives.”

So Nimrodel went with King Amroth and Little Red Riding Hood to Gondor. Along the way, Nimrodel and Little Red were separated from King Amroth. They didn't know where to go. They were lost.

“I think we're lost,” Nimrodel said.

They wandered in the mountains.

“I'm so tired,” Nimrodel said. “How long have we been wandering?”

“Well,” said Little Red, “in exactly one hour, it will have been an hour and ten minutes.”

Nimrodel quoted Shakespeare. “O spite! O hell!”

Hearing Nimrodel's cries, a Werewolf, a descendant of Tol-in-Gaurhoth, approached. He had wandered alone for decades and was pretty hungry after all that time.

“Hello, elves,” he said. “Where are you heading?”



Nimrodel, eager to ask directions because she was not a man, answered, “We seek the Gondorian sea, where we will meet up with my betrothed, King Amroth! We are lost and defenseless”

Little Red face-palmed.

“So can you show us the way?”

“Sure,” said the wolf. “Follow me.”

Nimrodel followed him and Little Red had no choice but to follow her.

The wolf led the girls to his home. “You can rest here for the night,” the wolf said, padlocking the door.

“But it’s noon,” Little Red pointed out.

“Just go to sleep,” the wolf said.

“Okay,” Nimrodel said, and promptly fell asleep. Little Red closed her eyes. Then she started feeling her teeth with her tongue. They felt fuzzy. She tried to fall asleep, but her teeth kept getting fuzzier and fuzzier. Finally she opened her eyes, and saw the wolf sprinkling salt and pepper over Nimrodel.

“Run, Nimrodel!” Little Red cried, and dove out the window. But since Nimrodel always took Ambien to fall sleep, she never woke again.

Little Red fled to a village on an island, and there she married a local man and had children. These children grew up to become the Almost-Elven Princes of Dol-Amroth. Little Red lived there for many years. She loved her husband and her children, but she eventually realized that Nimrodel hadn’t followed her.

Little Red went back for her friend, but this time she brought her toothbrush, so she was fast asleep when the wolf ate her. Her husband, who happened to be a lumberjack, came and cut open the wolf to retrieve his wife, but since this isn’t a fairy tale, she did not come out to greet him.

Captions and Captives



Size matters!

by Sunstar



Aragorn made a vain attempt to hide his feelings when he heard that Éowyn was doing the catering for his wedding reception.

by Rosearielven



Boromir: Woah... Has anyone ever told you that you look kinda like Jesus?

Aragorn: Anyone ever told you that you look kinda like Judas?

by Reasonably_Crazy



Boromir (pondering): boxers or briefs ... or maybe speedos ...

by [atalante_star](#)



“What to do you mean!!! There's *no* oil!!!”

by [Rosearialelven](#)



Boromir: It sounds like a party... They keep repeating something... Bullfrog... No, that doesn't sound quite right... Ah yes... Balrog... What's a Balrog, Gandalf?

Gandalf: *Faint*

by [jerazm](#)

Tolkien Trivia

by lotr_qfan

Did you know that the Kings of Gondor were of Anarion's line, not Isildur's?
----Isildur's son Valandil remained in Rivendell, while Anarion's son Meneldil took the throne. Gondor was Anarion's kingdom, not Isildur's.

Did you know that Sauron instituted the worship of Morgoth in the Numenorian temple to Iluvatar?
----Soon after that, Numenor fell into the sea.

Did you know that there were only SIX beacons of Gondor?
----And they only went as far as the border of Gondor, not into Rohan and all the way to Edoras. But the film scene is still spectacular.

Did you know that Rohan was once Calenardhon, a Gondorian land, and was granted to Eorl the Young by Cirion the Steward?
----Eorl's people, later known as the Rohirrim, came from the North to help Gondor against a horde of Orcs from the Misty Mountains.

Did you know that Theoden was born in Gondor?
----His father married a lady of Gondor, and Theoden was born in the same land he died in.





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Disclaimer:

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