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"Then it is forfeit. Release them!" -Faramir

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The Dunadin
Rings

A Monthly Reflection on Tolkien's *Lord of the*

As stated in last month's issue, the favorite character of the Editor of "The Dunadin" is Aragorn son of Arathorn. He is the chief of the exiles of Numenor, who ages ago founded the now-lost city of Arnor. Since he is the chief of the Dunedain (Men of the West), he therefore is *the* Dunedain. Yet, the *Dunedain* are not found exclusively in the North. The Men of the West also founded a city in the southern part of Middle-earth and this city is called "Gondor". One would be remiss if he ignored the two great *Dunedain* from that city: Faramir and Boromir. For now, let us take a look at Faramir.

Faramir is the son of Denethor, steward of Gondor. He is a brave and noble *Dunedain* and a Captain of Gondor as well. In his trilogy, Tolkien has portrayed him as such. However, there seems to be some question over the movie's portrayal of Faramir. In *The Philosophy of Tolkien*, Peter Kreeft claims the moviemakers did "gratuitously change Faramir from heroic, honorable medieval knight to suspicious uncertain fool who kidnaps Frodo and the Ring (at least temporarily)."¹ Be that as it may, after having Faramir kidnap Frodo and try to get the Ring for Gondor, the moviemakers do then have Faramir act in a noble and courageous manner.

Faramir is holding Frodo, Samwise, and Smeagol as prisoners in the deserted outpost of Osgiliath. After getting an earful from Samwise and seeing him save Frodo from surrendering the Ring of Power to Sauron through an awful Nazgul, Faramir changes his mind and decides to release Frodo to continue the Quest. Faramir says to Frodo, "I think at last we understand one another, Frodo Baggins." Then, the second-in-command officer reminds Captain Faramir, "You know the laws of our country - the laws of your father. If you let him go, your life will be forfeit. To this, Faramir nobly and courageously replies, "Then it is forfeit. Release them!"

Now, Faramir is doing what he knows to be right and for the common good of all Middle-earth despite any perceived danger to himself. Furthermore, when Faramir makes his decision, he has no reason to believe the sentence will not be carried out. Courage is a noble virtue - a virtue most befitting a *Dunedain* and a Captain of Gondor. Fortitude is a noble virtue - a virtue most befitting a Christian.

¹ Peter Kreeft, *The Philosophy of Tolkien: The Worldview Behind The Lord of the Rings* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005) 168.