



"I am the lawful master of the Stone, and I had both the right and the strength to use it."
-Aragorn

The Dunedain Rings

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

In the book *The Return of the King*, we receive a marvelous glimpse of the love of the Rangers for the Hobbits, and of the courage of Aragorn in facing down Sauron through the *Palantir*, which he, as king, had every right to use. In this month's issue, *The Dunedain* tells this story in all its glory and beauty.

"A little people, but of great worth are the Shire-folk," said Halbarad.¹ "Little do they know of our long labour for the safekeeping of their borders, and yet I grudge it not."

"And now our fates are woven together," said Aragorn. "And yet, alas! Here we must part. Well, I must eat a little, and then we also must hasten away. Come, Legolas and Gimli! I must speak with you as I eat."

Together they went back into the Burg; yet for some time Aragorn sat silent at the table in the hall, and the others waited for him to speak. "Come!" said Legolas at last. "Speak and be comforted, and shake off the shadow! What has happened since we came back to this grim place in the grey morning?"

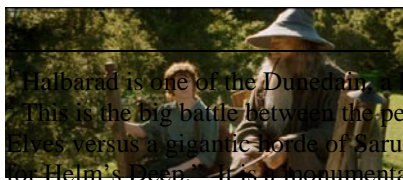
"A struggle somewhat grimmer for my part than the battle at the Hornburg,"² answered Aragorn. "I have looked in the Stone of Orthanc, my friends."

"You have looked in that accursed stone of wizardry!" exclaimed Gimli with fear and astonishment in his face. "Did you say aught to - him? Even Gandalf feared that encounter."

"You forget to whom you speak," said Aragorn sternly, and his eyes glinted. "What do you fear that I should say to him? Did I not openly proclaim my title before the doors at Edoras? Nay, Gimli," he said in a softer voice, and the grimness left his face, and he looked like one who has laboured in sleepless pain for many nights. "Nay, my friends, I am the lawful master of the Stone, and I had both the right and the strength to use it, or so I judged. The right cannot be doubted. The strength was enough - barely."

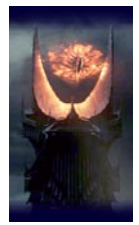
He drew a deep breath. "It was a bitter struggle, and the weariness is slow to pass. I spoke no word to him, and in the end I wrenched the Stone to my own will. That alone he will find hard to endure. And he beheld me.

... To know that I lived and walked the earth was



Halbarad is one of the Dunedain, kinsfolk of Aragorn.

This is the big battle between the people of Rohan, aided by Aragorn, Gimli, Legolas, and a battalion of Elves versus a gigantic horde of Saruman's Uruk-Hai. In *The Two Towers* movie, it is called "The Battle for Helm's Deep." It is a monumental battle.



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a blow to his heart, I deem; for he knew it not until now."³

³ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994) 762-763.