
The Dunadan: Bilbo's Friend

A Monthly Reflection on Tolkien's Lord of the Rings

On this happy day, we make the third and final name change to our newsletter. No doubt, you have noticed the new title above: "The Dunadan: Bilbo's Friend." The change is to get us closer to our original intent and to emphasize the role of friendship in the Quest. Last year's name, *The Dunedain* (doon-uh-dine; accent on the first syllable) actually is the plural form of "Dunadan" (pronounced doon-uh-dan). The Dunedain were the great Men from across the sea, the Numenorean Rangers, who protected Middle-earth from evil. The word "Dunadan" denotes the head of the Dunedain (or Rangers); Aragorn son of Arathorn is in fact the Dunadan. So our newsletter is now called "The Dunadan" because we want to hold up Aragorn, Tolkien's royal Christ-figure, as a model for men and boys of all ages.

At the Council of Elrond, Boromir addressed Aragorn, and as he looked at him "doubt was in his eyes."¹ This caused Bilbo to become annoyed on behalf of his friend the Dunadan (Aragorn). Then he suddenly stood up and spoke:



*All that is gold does not glitter,
Not all those who wander are lost;
The old that is strong does not wither,
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.*

*From the ashes a fire shall be woken,
A light from the shadows shall spring;
Renewed shall be blade that was broken:*

The crownless again shall be king.²



Aragorn is pleased with his friend's apologetic on his behalf, and the Dunadan shows his manly virtue in his understanding and forgiveness of Boromir.

Aragorn smiled at him; then he turned to Boromir again. 'For my part I forgive your doubt,' he said. 'Little do I resemble the figures of Elendil and Isildur as they stand carven in their majesty in the halls of Denethor. I am the heir of Isildur, not Isildur himself. . . .'³

Yet Aragorn became King and restored the royal line of Isildur.

¹ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994) 241.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*