

The Witches of Eriadne: Cauldron Bubble - Part 1: Preparations

by [The Space Witches](#)

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John, Matthew and Max preparing a little surprise.

Chapter 1

Late August 2269

Gideon stood by the bed, watching Deborah sleep. He hadn't let her know he was coming and had conspired with the guards on the gate to keep his visit a surprise. By using the new shuttle that had almost silent engines, he'd been able to arrive with Matheson and Eilerson in the first light of dawn, without awakening the inhabitants of the castle. It had been over four months since his last visit and the birth of his son, Marcus. Gideon was looking forward to seeing his son, but had come to Deborah's bedroom first, hoping the child would be asleep in the nursery and that he could spend a little time alone with his lover. He'd missed her every day since he'd left and just wanted to be with her and make love to her.

Deborah slept in her untidy sprawl, with the quilt only covering her to the waist, lying on her stomach. Gideon realized that he had no idea whether this was usual or not. Most of the time he'd spent sleeping with her, she'd been pregnant and would have been uncomfortable lying in that position. Perhaps this was how she usually slept. The tall blonde hadn't stirred as he'd quietly entered her room, allowing him to watch her in the dawn light filtering through the door.

He stripped quickly and slid into the bed beside her, trying not to disturb her sleep. Deborah didn't move as Gideon leaned over her and kissed her shoulder, then pushed her long, pale golden hair to one side and started gently kissing her neck. She stirred and then froze in place, obviously aware of his presence, but not moving.

Gideon whispered into her ear, "I've heard that Captains get an excellent service at this establishment, and that rates are very reasonable." He pushed the quilt down, exposing Deborah's buttocks and legs, then started to caress her back, moving his hand slowly downwards while he nibbled on her ear.

Her response was twofold. First, Deborah's projected wave of joy and desire swept over him, leaving Gideon in no doubt that she was pleased he was back. Then she gave a throaty chuckle, and said, "Well, none of the Captains I've had in my bed have complained." Her deep, sultry voice was enough to send shivers down Gideon's spine.

As his hand wandered over the cheeks of her butt, Gideon whispered again. "Slut."

Deborah laughed, but still didn't move, whispering into the pillow. "Now that's unkind. My sisters may be sluts; they'll sleep with anyone, junior officers, even civilians, but I reserve my services for Captains. What kind of service are you interested in, Captain?"

The Captain moved his hand to Deborah's hip and pulled gently, encouraging her to roll onto her back. He looked down the length of her body, seeing that she'd regained her spectacular figure. The full, round breasts stood out from her ribcage, and her stomach was totally flat again, with the soft, oval dimple of her navel accentuating that flatness. As Gideon looked down at her, now lying on his side with his head propped on one arm while his other hand stroked her belly, he smiled. "I'm used to a very high standard of service. We're very demanding in the military, you know."

Deborah smiled back up at him and lifted her hand to the back of his neck, softly caressing his hair. "Can you afford the price, Captain?"

Gideon lowered his head to kiss her, gently moving his tongue along her lips, then pressing her mouth open so he could enter. Deborah responded passionately, darting her tongue to meet his, deepening the kiss, until he broke away to take a deep breath. His hand had moved to her breast, and he was gently massaging her nipple, feeling it harden under his touch. "How much?" Gideon looked deep into her eyes and saw the passion and longing there.

Deborah smiled again as she said, "Oh, a minimum of a week changing diapers for your son, I think."

He laughed as he responded. "Ouch! No, I think that price is too high." Gideon moved to kiss her again, but she rolled away from him, onto her side, with her back turned toward him.

She spoke into the pillow. "OK. Goodnight, Captain. I hope you can find a decent service elsewhere."

Gideon slid his hand down Deborah's back until it rested on her ribcage where he could feel the vibration from her laughter. He leaned forward and moved his hand around until it cupped her breast, then whispered into her ear. "If you're going to try a bluff like that, you need to do two things. First, don't laugh." This time he could hear her chuckle as well as feel it. "Second, you're going to have to find a way to stop your nipples from responding like this." He continued to massage the now erect nipple as he spoke.

Deborah rolled over onto her back again and smiled up at him. "I suppose I shouldn't try to bluff a

gambler like you, should I? Why didn't you tell me you were coming?" She pulled his head down into another deep kiss, the full extent of her desire for him apparent in her every move.

After another breathtaking moment, Gideon pulled away to look down at his lover. "Well, I'm not planning on coming just yet. I thought I'd play with you for a while and see who comes first." He moved his hand down to her waist then over her hip, resting it on her thigh. He smiled again, "I thought you might like a surprise."

Deborah pulled him back into a kiss as her other hand moved down his chest, over his stomach, and found his already-stiff cock and started to stroke with the softest of touches. When she released his mouth, her voice was low and rough with desire.

"I love surprises, Matthew. Especially ones that involve waking up to find you in my bed. Now shut up and make love to me."

"Yes, ma'am."

Gideon moved his mouth to her breast and started gently sucking at her nipple, then moved his hand to stroke her inner thigh. Her legs parted to allow him access and he felt her hips rise to meet his hand, all while continuing to stroke his cock, teasing it into swelling further. He slipped a finger inside her and began to caress the soft wetness inside. As always, Deborah responded quickly and eagerly, her vagina closing around his finger, pulling him deeper. She moaned as he slipped a second finger into her and began to push harder, finding her clitoris with his thumb and stroking it. He could feel it swell beneath his touch as the moisture and heat inside her increased.

With his free hand, Gideon pushed her legs further apart, then shifted to lie between them, never stopping the movement of his fingers as he slipped further down her body, kissing her belly, before moving his head between her legs. He kissed the outsides of her labia, then moving his thumb from her clitoris, licked, then sucked it slowly. Deborah's hips lifted to meet his mouth, and he could feel her whole body tensing with her arousal. He continued to probe deeper with his fingers as he sucked harder on her clitoris, feeling her rising towards climax, hearing her moan with pleasure. Gideon slowly withdrew his fingers and lifted his mouth from her clit. He looked up the length of her body to see her head rolling from side to side on the pillows and her nipples standing out hard from her breasts. He put his head back to her vagina and blew a soft breath of air into her, then kissed her gently before pulling himself back up her body until his hips were level with hers.

Deborah opened her eyes as she sensed him above her and he could see that her eyes were dark with passion, the irises almost lost in the dilation of her pupils. He positioned himself carefully, then gently thrust into her. Her back arched and her hips lifted as she tried to take him deeper, but he withdrew before he had gone far. Gideon could feel that she was wet and ready for him, but the tightness of her vagina made him go slowly. He had wondered whether childbirth would have stretched her at all, but based on the present sensations, he was sure she was as tight and narrow as ever. He slowly pushed down again and again, entering Deborah further with each thrust, gradually opening her and stretching her to meet his needs. Each time, she thrust back, trying to take more, trying to take him deeper, until he could feel the tip of his cock pressing against her cervix. Gideon lifted her right leg until her thigh was pressed to her side, then shifted his position so that each thrust into her was from a slightly different angle, varying the depth of his stroke each time, producing a constantly shifting pattern of pressures on his cock and her vagina.

Deborah started to move her hips faster, circling and thrusting to meet him, panting with her exertions as they lifted toward climax. Gideon's breathing accelerated as he brought them closer, matching hers,

in time with the increasing rhythm of their movements. He felt Deborah lift beneath him, and her vagina clamped tightly on his cock as she came. He kept thrusting into her, feeling her come again with each stroke, until she was screaming in ecstasy. The waves of her orgasms rolled over him, driving him into climax. He could feel himself coming, ejaculating deep inside her in an apparently never-ending stream of heat.

Deborah took his orgasm deep into herself then projected it back again, creating a feedback loop, where each climax built and fed into the next. Gideon knew he was long since drained, but the orgasms continued, almost painful now in their intensity and duration. He knew he was feeling what a woman felt when she came again and again, something he'd never thought to experience. Just when Gideon thought he couldn't stand the sensations any longer and would have to withdraw or pass out, the feelings started to diminish. Each wave of pleasure was less than that before, but several minutes elapsed before they finally passed.

Gideon collapsed on top of Deborah, still buried deep inside her, panting desperately for every breath, feeling her lungs straining beneath him, but unable to summon the energy to lift himself off her. He felt her hand shift to his head, and she gently stroked his hair as they both regained their breath. When he finally felt able to move and started to lift away from her, Deborah pressed him back down and whispered. "Don't. I like to feel you inside me, and it's been such a long time."

Gideon lifted his head to look down at her, kissed her gently, then smiled. "I've missed you, and I've missed this, but that was completely different than anything we've done before. You're sending again, and if that was anything to go by, I'd say you're stronger than ever."

He watched as Deborah smiled and nodded, "I've been saving that one up for quite a while now." He laughed and kissed her, watching as she frowned, then she said, "Shit! We woke the baby."

He stood there like an apparition, unmoving, just inside the door of the dawn-lit room. Eyes closed, he took a deep breath, inhaling the familiar scents along with some new ones. A feeling of peace and quiet, of completion, flowed through him as he stretched his senses--all except one--and smiled when he heard the deep regular breathing of sleep. His eyes opened again, and with fluid movements, he strode almost soundlessly towards its source. For several seconds, he stood next to the bed, looking down at the two bodies occupying it, lightly entwined beneath the sheets.

A soft smile spread on John Matheson's lips as he opened himself, eyes half-lidded, and reached out with his mind to softly touch theirs, reaching through his lovers' dreams, letting them know he was here. He felt them stir and rise towards awakening, their minds questioning.

[[No, this isn't a dream. I'm here. I'm finally here again.]] He felt Lily surface from sleep, and a moment later, her eyelids flew open, her eyes looking straight up into his over Luke's shoulder.

"John?" she whispered, tears welling up in her eyes as she sat up and reached out to him, as if to assure herself that he wasn't a product of her imagination.

"Hi, Lily," John whispered, taking her hand into his and bowing down slightly to kiss it.

The softest whimper escaped Lily's throat, and her hand squeezed his tightly. "I can't believe it. John!" Her voice was barely audible.

Luke had turned onto his back, his eyes opening to see Lily's hand held by another. His eyes followed the arm up to the shoulder, then up and to the right, finally meeting the dark eyes gazing down at him. He blinked, then swallowed. "Hello, stranger," he finally murmured, a smile spreading on his face.

"Hello," John answered, then frowned. "I seem to have come to the wrong room. The people I wanted to visit would have been happy to see me. So I beg your pardon for disturbing your sleep." He started to pull his hand away from Lily's but didn't get very far as both Lily and Luke pounced, tugging and dragging him down into the bed, ridding him of his leather jacket and the rest of his clothes at record speed. John soon found himself lying on his back, naked, as his lovers tried outdoing each other in showing him just how happy they were to see him again.

Max flung the door open with such force that it bounced into the wall with a loud crash that reverberated around the room. Ilas and Dureena both sat bolt upright in bed, then Dureena was half out of bed, naked except for the knife in her hand. Max thought, [Where the hell was she hiding that?] before shouting loudly, "I'm back!"

He flung himself across the room, trying to strip his clothes off as he went, but had only gotten his jacket off, his shirt half undone, and his belt unbuckled before he was hit from both sides and knocked over backwards.

The linguist found himself lying on his back on the floor, looking up into a pair of large red cat's eyes that sparkled with delight. "Max!" Ilas dropped her head to kiss him passionately, while he could feel four hands working all over him to remove his clothing. When they had stripped him, Ilas released his mouth and pulled back, and suddenly he was looking into a pair of golden eyes instead.

Dureena glared down at him and hissed, "Why didn't you tell us you were on your way? I could have killed you!" before her mouth clamped down on his. As he returned her passionate kiss, he felt Ilas' mouth close around his engorged cock and his last coherent thought was, [There's no place like home, Toto.]

Gideon rolled onto his back and watched as Deborah rose from the bed and headed for the bathroom. He lay back into the pillows, enjoying the relaxation that came after release. There were two robes hanging from a hook on the back of the bedroom door, which made him smile. She'd kept his robe there, even when she had no idea when he would return, just as she now slept on one side of the bed, rather than the center, always hoping that he would fill the empty space beside her.

When she emerged from the bathroom, Deborah took both robes and threw one across at him. "Do you want to come and see your son?"

Gideon got up quickly and pulled on the robe, following Deborah out of her rooms. As they walked to the nursery, he wrapped his arm around her waist and asked how she knew the baby was awake.

"You remember when he was born, I told you that I could feel a link to him? Similar to what I have with my sisters, but not the same. Well, over the last few months it's grown and strengthened. Now I can feel what he's feeling, not just when I'm with him as I can with most people, but from anywhere. I don't know whether I'll be able to exchange thoughts with him as I can with my sisters. I guess I'll find out when he learns to talk, but four months is a little young for first words even for your son,

Matthew."

She grinned at him, and he stopped to kiss her, knowing she would be able to feel the pleasure and joy she'd given him in his son.

The Captain asked, "So how's he feeling about us having woken him up?"

Deborah laughed. "He's pretty pissed off. He got woken up from a nice sleep by some very strange feelings, and he's now found that he's wet and hungry. He's working very hard at letting me know that I'm a cruel and horrible mother, who should have been right there when he woke, ready to feed him. Manipulative little monster!"

Gideon grinned. "Is this going to happen every time we make love? Could be damned inconvenient."

"No. Now that I know what happens, I can block the link when we're together. There are some things that a child really shouldn't know about his parents at quite this young an age."

Gideon looked at the corridor they had entered and said, "Isn't this the way to Lily's rooms? I thought we were going to the nursery?"

Deborah nodded. "We are. The nursery connects to Lily's rooms. She doesn't like to be far from the twins--unlike me." She grinned at him. "If Marcus is going to scream all night, then he can do it as far from me as I can get him. It's bad enough being able to feel him having a tantrum, I don't see why I should have to hear him as well. Kirrin's much better with him than I am when he's in a bad mood. See what a lousy mother I am?"

Gideon laughed again. "Sounds sensible to me."

They arrived at the nursery to find that Kirrin had changed Marcus, and he was now quietly whimpering his discontent at being kept waiting for his food. The other babies were still asleep.

Gideon watched as the Brakiri nurse handed his son to Deborah. He was stunned by how much the baby had grown in the months he'd been away. The pictures included with Deborah's daily messages hadn't made him look so big. "He's enormous! Is he walking yet? He looks as if he should be."

Deborah laughed quietly as she held the baby against her shoulder. "He's bigger than his cousins, that's for sure, but he's not much above average for his age. But keep your voice down, the door to Lily's room isn't that thick. She likes to be able to hear if either of the twins cry." They moved toward a large easy chair in the corner of the nursery, obviously placed there for the purpose of nursing the babies.

"Hold on a minute," Gideon whispered as he moved ahead of Deborah and sat in the chair, then patted his leg. "Come and sit on my knee, little girl." She laughed softly at his leering grin and sat sideways across him, leaning her back against the arm of the chair. Gideon let out a small grunt as she settled. "Well, maybe not so little." He moved her slightly until they were both comfortable, then placed his right arm around her shoulders. He looked down as she opened her robe and carefully held the baby's mouth to her nipple, then watched as the child eagerly grasped the nipple with his mouth and started to suck.

Deborah looked at him watching her and grinned. "Like father, like son. Put a nipple anywhere near him, and it goes straight in his mouth."

Gideon gave a quiet snort of laughter, "Now that's not fair. I'm very choosy about whose nipples I suck."

"Which is more than I can say for your son. He'll latch onto anything he thinks might feed him. He's even tried to nuzzle up to Luke a couple of times. We're still trying to explain to him why that won't work." She gazed down at the baby and smiled.

They sat quietly for a few moments, both content just to watch their son feeding. The silence was interrupted by a loud groan. Gideon looked at Deborah quizzically. She bit her lip, trying not to laugh as another moan sounded and the words 'Oh, Lily! Yes! Oh God! Yes!' could be heard.

Gideon raised his eyebrows and hissed, "That's John! Deborah, we can't stay here and listen to them! I mean, it's not..." He ran down as the moans increased and John's voice could be heard again, this time calling Luke's name. He whispered, "What are they doing to him in there?" and started to chuckle softly as the tempo of the groans increased.

"I'll ask Lily, shall I?" Gideon was horrified when Deborah closed her eyes and her face took on the soft, unfocussed look she wore when talking through her link to her sisters.

"NO!" He tried to shout and whisper at the same time, nearly strangling himself in the process. Gideon started to cough, trying to do it quietly, as she returned her attention to him and grinned.

"Seems like John is piggy in the middle tonight." Deborah leaned back and whispered in his ear exactly what Lily and Luke were doing to John. Gideon found himself blushing.

"I really didn't need to know that. And before you say it--yes, I know I asked. I just wish I hadn't." He paused while he thought about it, then grinned at her. "Sounds like fun, though. Are we being old-fashioned and boring, do you think? Just sticking to the two of us?"

Deborah smiled lasciviously at him. "I don't think what we did on the fly bike could be considered boring. Or with the ice cream. Or in the lake, or the kitchen, or up against the wall, or in the tub or..." Gideon held his hand to her lips to stop her.

"You made your point. We're not boring. Let me rephrase that, we're not dull." He kissed her gently, then looked down at his son, still sucking contentedly. They both then did their best to ignore the sounds that continued to come from Lily's room.

Gideon brought his left hand up to gently stroke the top of his son's head. "He looks a lot better than he did when I first saw him. When he was born, I wondered if between us we'd created the ugliest child in the galaxy. I'd never seen anything that red and crumpled. I know Alwyn kept telling us he was beautiful, but I had my doubts."

Deborah smiled and kissed him. "He was pretty disgusting, wasn't he? Thank God Alwyn was right, and he's improved with age. Of course, he looks too much like his father to be anything other than ruggedly handsome."

Gideon smiled back and raised his hand to her cheek, gently rubbing his thumb along her cheekbone as she closed her eyes and turned her head into his touch. "Does he look like me? I can't see it myself."

They sat silently watching the baby suckle for a while, until Deborah decided it was time to change

sides. "Now this is always a bit tricky. He really doesn't like letting go."

Gideon watched as she gently pushed the tip of her little finger alongside her nipple into the baby's mouth, getting him to transfer to her finger and release the nipple. She then turned him carefully, and placed him to her other breast, withdrawing the finger from his mouth as he found her other nipple.

Gideon pursed his lips, then spoke. "It may work with him, but you'll never fool me that way." He watched as she reached to pick up a towel placed over the arm of the chair, realizing that she was going to use it to wipe away the remaining drops of milk that still leaked from her breast. He stopped her. "Let me."

He gently ran his finger under the nipple, collecting the last few drops, then carried them to his mouth. Gideon licked his finger and closed his eyes as he savored the taste. This was something he'd wanted to do since he first found out that she was pregnant. He wanted to know what it tasted like. He found that it tasted of Deborah, uniquely her. Gideon opened his eyes and saw that she was watching him carefully. He asked, "Do you mind?"

She shook her head. "No. Actually, I get rather turned on at the thought of it. Is that weird?" He laughed quietly and caressed her face again.

"Well, if it is, we're both weird, which I think makes it OK. Consenting adults and all that."

Deborah moved her head to whisper in his ear. "When we get back to our rooms where we won't be interrupted, maybe you'd like another taste?" Gideon felt himself stiffening in response to her words, then felt her tongue running along the edge of his ear. He pulled his head away.

"Stop it. Or you'll find yourself bent over my knee and spanked." He knew he'd said the wrong thing when she started to squirm on his lap, arousing him even more. "Stop it! Wait until we get back." Gideon used his sternest voice and knew it had absolutely no effect on her. Deborah would do exactly what she wanted, and he'd just have to live with it.

She stopped moving and grinned at him. "Only if you promise to spank me later." Gideon watched as Deborah looked down at the baby again. Marcus had released his mother's nipple from his mouth and his head had slipped to rest on her breast. He was deeply asleep again.

Deborah twisted around and stood, then turned and held the child out to Gideon. "Will you hold him for a bit? I'll ask Kirrin to give him a bottle for his next meal, then we can have more time together before I have to come back."

Gideon took the baby from her and held him close. He looked down at the tiny head, remembering when Marcus had been born. Alwyn had made damned sure he never forgot that experience; it had been as close as a man could get to giving birth himself. The image of the first time he'd seen Marcus, still attached by the umbilical cord, resting on Deborah's belly, was burned into his brain forever. Gideon gently stroked the blond curls on the baby's head and whispered, "I think you look a lot more like your mother, which is a damned good thing as far as I'm concerned."

Deborah came back out of the small room in the corner of the nursery. She bent and took the child from him, so Gideon could stand, then gave him back. "Do you want to put him to bed?"

They walked to the cot, and Gideon laid him gently on his back, then pulled the cover up over him. He smiled as he saw the small teddy bear they'd called Half-Ted sitting in the corner of the cot,

remembering when he'd brought that gift for his unborn son. Putting his arm around Deborah's waist as she stood next to him, they looked down at their sleeping child. Gideon turned his head and kissed her cheek. "I think we did good, don't you?"

Luke and Lily lay snuggled up against John, the three of them contentedly watching the room brighten with the dawning day and sharing each other's physical and mental company.

[[Could you do that more often?]]

John looked down at Lily, who was gazing up at him lovingly, her astonishing green eyes sparkling. *[[What?]]* He teased her, giving her his best innocent smile.

She grinned at him. *[[Come.]]*

John smiled, feeling Luke's amusement through their link. *[[Well...]]*

Lily's eyes widened, and Luke propped his head up on his left hand to study John's face carefully as he asked, *[[You have something on your mind, don't you?]]*

John grinned at him, then at Lily, who'd turned onto her stomach and pushed herself up on her elbows. *[[What is it?]]* She was barely able to contain her excitement.

John couldn't help but chuckle. *[[I'll explain it to you later.]]*

"Why not now?" Lily exclaimed, abruptly sitting back onto her heels and bouncing up and down on the mattress like an impatient child, throwing back the covers in the process.

John laughed out loud, and despite being curious himself, Luke couldn't help but join in. Lily pouted at them, but then started giggling despite her effort to suppress it.

John sat up and got onto his knees, mirroring Lily, then leaned towards her, still grinning, and took her face into his hands, whispering, "Because." He kissed her softly, then let his right hand wander down her throat toward her breast, softly rubbing her nipple with his palm, "Right now I want to spend as much time as possible," another kiss as his hand let go of her hardening nipple and glided lower still, "using my mouth for something other than talking."

He gave Lily a hungry look as his hand slid between her legs, diving into her red curls, making her gasp as his fingers spread her labia and started stroking her folds with his thumb, gently rubbing against her clitoris. Despite her recent orgasm, he could feel wetness starting to pour from her immediately. Her eyes, never leaving his, were burning with undisguised hunger, and her breathing was becoming faster with every passing second. John could feel her building excitement through their link--as well as Luke's, who was still lying on his side, watching his lovers intently.

[[Enjoying the view?]]

Luke grinned at John's question. *[[Very much so.]]* He let his eyes rake over their bodies, letting them know exactly how much. *[[I may even be tempted to join in later.]]*

Both John and Lily looked back at him, smiling seductively and sending in unison, *[[Feel free,]]* then

concentrated on each other again.

Lily's hands slowly wandered up John's muscular arms, stopping to hold onto his shoulders, and she got up onto her knees just as slowly, moving to straddle his knees and offering him her breasts. She'd fed her twins shortly before he'd arrived, but in the meantime they'd started filling with milk again, and were leaking the slightest bit, due to her excitement. John licked up the tiny droplets with his tongue, then buried his face between her breasts, breathing in her unique scent, before kissing his way towards her left nipple. He heard her sharp intake of breath when his lips closed around it, and the wetness between her thighs increased even more around his fingers, which were still stroking her center while his hand closed around her right breast, kneading it softly. Her hands were in his hair now, pressing his face against her breast. She was panting slightly.

They felt Luke shift on the mattress and moments later, he was kneeling behind John, stroking the sensitive skin around his anus, then sliding a lubricated finger inside him, while his mouth grazed on John's neck and shoulder, making him moan.

Lily tugged at John's hair to pull his head back and covered his mouth with hers in a passionate kiss, at the same time slowly lowering herself onto his rigid shaft. She broke her kiss as she took its head in, her eyes fixed on his, and smiled when a loud groan escaped his throat. She sank lower, slowly still, tightening the muscles inside her, sending shivers of pleasure through his whole body.

"Oh, Lily! Yes! Oh God! Yes!"

What made it even more intense for John was that through their link, he could feel the sensations Lily felt through this technique, as well as his own.

Luke nudged John to lift his ass a little, and when he did, John could feel the tip of Luke's cock enter his ass, making him moan again. "Luke." Once Luke had entered him completely, Lily brought her legs around so they were wrapped around Luke's back, holding the two men together tightly, while she was completely impaled on John's cock. Luke enclosed them both with his arms, and as the two men started rocking up and down in a slow rhythm, the room soon filled with groans and gasps.

Suddenly, Lily's mind went 'on hold', but she never ceased to move her hips in John's lap, and when she was back in their link her amusement was obvious.

[[What?]] John and Luke asked as one.

Lily's giggle seemed to ripple right through them.

[[Oh nothing. Matthew was curious about what we were doing to his first officer.]] She covered John's mouth with hers, kissing him passionately, while at the same time squeezing her muscles even tighter around his cock, sending new ripples of pleasure through his body and into their link.

Luke gently bit John's neck, smiling against his skin when he heard his gasp. *[[I hope you told Demon that we don't take prisoners.]]*

[[I told her that he'd be dead once we were finished ravishing him.]] Lily's eyes bored into John's, an excited smile playing around her lips.

[[Then I'll die gladly.]] John was panting heavily, barely able to form a coherent thought now, and he knew his lovers were as close to climax as he was.

Suddenly Lily leaned her hips back as far as possible inside her lovers' embrace, feeling John's cock touch that most sensitive part of her vagina, setting her off like a magic button. Her pulsing muscles sent John over the edge, taking Luke with them as their orgasm ripped through them and out into their link again and again, until it finally ebbed and they remained still, leaning their heads on each other's shoulders, panting.

Somehow they managed to untangle their limbs and fell down onto the mattress. Lily concentrated for a moment, then sighed. "It's a good thing Faylinn and Dasha are heavy sleepers," she murmured into John's chest.

John lifted his head slightly. "You should have chosen a thicker door."

Luke chuckled. "Then I'd have to sleep here alone 'cause Lily would move into the nursery with the twins, to make sure she hears them when they cry." He smiled at her affectionately. Lily wasn't an over-anxious mother--quite the contrary--but she didn't want to just rely on her link to tell her how her babies felt and what they needed.

"What happened to Angel made me realize that our link can be broken permanently. And what will I do then, if I don't know if my children cry from hunger or pain or cold or fear, because I relied on our link too much?" she had told him.

"Want to see them?" Raven asked John, nodding towards the connecting door, then grinned. "I guess Demon and Matthew will be gone, now the show is over."

John groaned. "He'll exploit that somehow, some day. I just know he will!"

Gideon lay back in the tub with Deborah kneeling above him, still impaled on his cock. They'd returned to her rooms and played while the tub filled, bringing each other back to a state of arousal, before sliding into the hot water and making love. The tub was deep and wide and surrounded by dozens of candles on different levels of shelves and units. Gideon couldn't remember the last time he'd felt this good. Completely spent but totally satisfied, he gazed up into Deborah's face as she smiled down at him.

He lifted his hand to gently stroke her face as he spoke. "Have I told you how much I love you? And how beautiful you are? And smart? And funny?"

Deborah grinned at him. "Not today, but feel free."

Gideon sat upright to kiss her, feeling his softened cock slip out of her as he moved. Deborah frowned and pouted, as he said, "I'm sorry, love. I can't stay up all the time, you've worn me out."

She pushed him back down until his head lay against the water pillow she'd placed behind him earlier. Then she leaned forward and kissed him gently on the lips, whispering, "Poor baby, have I been too demanding?"

Gideon pulled her head down into a bruising and passionate kiss, then released her. "Damned right you have. You're insatiable. It's you who needs two men to keep up with you, not your sister."

Deborah grinned at him again. "But Lily is *much* more demanding than I am. Anyway, I don't want two men, I just want you." She lifted herself off Gideon and curled up alongside him, the hot water now reaching both their shoulders. She had set the tub so that it recycled regularly, replacing cooler water with hot. As she laid her head against Gideon's shoulder and he put his arm around her, Deborah spoke again. "You know if we stay in here much longer, we'll prune."

"Fine by me. It's been four months since I've had the pleasure," Gideon twisted his head round to kiss her, "that is the pleasure of you, *and* the pleasure of this much hot water. And this will have to last me for a while, so I'm going to make the most of it." He felt Deborah tense beside him and turned to look at her. Her eyes were wide and liquid as she looked back. "What? What's the matter?"

"Why will this have to last you a while? Do you have to go so soon?"

Gideon pulled her close against him and she buried her head in his neck. Stroking her hair, he replied. "Yes. I can only stay for one day this time."

Deborah didn't speak, but kept her head against his shoulder and a moment later, he felt the wet heat of her tears against his skin. Gideon continued to stroke her hair and kissed the top of her head, before he spoke again. "But I'll be back soon, and I have a plan. If it works, then soon we can be together all the time."

She sat up abruptly, sending the water washing over the sides of the tub. "What plan?"

"OK, let's get dry and I'll tell you about it." Gideon reached up and wiped the tears from her face, then pushed himself from the tub, pulling her with him.

A few moments later, they were sitting in their robes on the sofa in her living room, in their favorite position. Gideon's legs were spread wide, as Demon sat across him with her butt resting between his legs and his right arm curled around her back. His left hand had worked its way through the gap in her robe and was fondling her breasts.

Before they had sat, he'd taken a small black velvet bag from his uniform jacket pocket and lain it on the table in front of them. Demon eyed it curiously. "Does that have something to do with your plan?"

Matthew nodded, then spoke. "I've told you that since we finally found the permanent screen we needed to block the Drakh plague, Earthforce have been trying to think of something for us to do."

Demon nodded and watched him carefully as he continued. "The problem is that the Excalibur doesn't belong to Earthforce, it was loaned to them by Sheridan and the Interstellar Alliance. So Earthforce didn't have a ship for me. They offered me a promotion and a desk job back on Earth, but I said no."

Demon felt her heart turn within her. If Matthew had accepted a job on Earth, she might never have seen him again. She could never leave Eriadne--could never leave her sisters. The loss of one sister had almost killed her, and she still felt as if there was an open wound in her soul where Angel had been ripped away. She swallowed hard and remembered his words, 'soon we can be together all the time.' Matthew wouldn't have said it if it he didn't mean it.

He carried on speaking. "Well, now they've come up with an alternative. Sheridan wants to turn the Excalibur into a top-of-the-line Explorer-class ship, searching for new members for the Alliance. She'll

go further and for longer than any ship has before and be crewed by a mix of every race in the Alliance. Sheridan said that as I'd obviously enjoyed riding herd on a mixed bunch of military, contractors, and IPX employees, not to mention the odd Technomage and Thief, I'd be ideal for this new mission. So he offered me the command."

Demon watched him smile. Matthew was obviously pleased with this outcome, but she couldn't see how this would help. Surely, he'd just told her that he was going to leave her for longer than ever before. [Hang on, let him finish, don't lose it.] She clamped down on her emotions, determined that she wouldn't project the sense of pain and loss she was feeling.

She had to ask, "How does this help, Matthew? How can we be together, if you're still commanding a star-ship?" Demon was ashamed when her voice trembled as she spoke.

Matthew pulled her head towards him and kissed her gently. "Because senior staff on Explorer class ships are allowed to take family with them. You and Marcus can join me. The Excalibur is due for a minor refit to change around some of the crew quarters, then I can come and get you."

Demon dropped her head to his shoulder and bit her lip, controlling her voice as she replied. "But I can't leave Eriadne. I can't come with you."

"Yes, you can--as long as your sisters come, too."

She sat up abruptly and stared at him. "How? How can we all come with you?"

Matthew explained that John would be his first officer, while Raven and Max were to be offered positions as civilian consultants. As such, they could write their own contracts and specify who they wished to have accompany them. "So Luke can have Lily and the twins along, while Max can get it written into his terms that Ilas and Dureena are his partners and they get to come, too."

Demon was working hard at not getting over-excited. This sounded too easy.

"There's just one catch." She knew it. Life couldn't be that kind. Demon waited to hear what the problem was as Matthew continued. "Earthforce are pretty picky about who they allow to accompany their officers. There has to be a legally binding contract in place. So we have to get married. Is that OK with you?"

Demon blinked several times, then nodded, then found she couldn't stop. She just sat there nodding, aware that her mouth was open and she probably looked like a complete idiot. Matthew lifted his hand to her chin and closed her mouth.

"Can I take that as a 'yes'?"

Demon nodded again and lost control of her emotions. A wave of complete happiness escaped her and washed over him. She projected pure joy, knowing that everyone in the castle would know how she was feeling, but for the first time in her life, she didn't care.

Gideon laughed out loud as he felt the wave pass through him. He hugged her tightly, then kissed her passionately before releasing her and looking into her eyes. "There are certainly advantages to loving an empath. I can't have much doubt about the way you feel, can I?"

This time Demon shook her head. He laughed at her again. "Cat got your tongue? Shall we try for

coherent speech sometime soon?"

She swallowed hard and whispered. "Yes."

He leaned over her and picked up the black velvet bag from the table. "Now I know that you never wear jewelry, but I hope you'll make an exception for this. It's traditional."

Matthew tipped the bag up and a ring fell into his hand. He took her left hand in his and slid the ring over her finger. Demon looked down at it. It was a gold band inset with five diamonds. The two outer stones were small but the next two were larger and the center stone was biggest.

"It's beautiful, Matthew." Demon looked up into his eyes and saw the love there. But she could also sense some concern he was carrying, something that lay beneath the love and the pleasure he felt in giving her the ring. She kissed him gently, then whispered, "It's the most beautiful thing anyone has ever given me. I wish I could give you something as precious."

Gideon pulled her close to his chest and kissed her forehead. She felt the concern he carried increase. Demon lifted her head and looked at him closely. "What's the matter? Something's bothering you."

"And that's the disadvantage of loving an empath. No secrets." She watched as he considered and decided to tell her. "OK, you said you wished there was something you could give me. Well you did, you gave me that book. And I loved it. But I sold it."

Demon's eyes widened in surprise. She waited for him to continue, confident that he would have had a good reason for selling the gift she had given him. Matthew explained that since the Drakh plague had hit Earth, the economy had collapsed. There had been little credit off-planet, which meant that Earthforce staff hadn't been paid in a long time. Small amounts had gotten through on occasion, but he'd always made sure that the crew got paid first, so both he and John were owed nearly three years pay.

"And I haven't managed to get into a decent high stakes poker game for a couple of years now. Seems that my reputation has preceded me." He grinned. "So John and I are both broke, which isn't a problem most of the time. When we're on the Excalibur, we don't need credits. But I needed some to buy this for you and the only thing I had of value was the book you gave me. I'm sorry, if there had been any other way..." Matthew's voice trailed off as he looked at her, his sense of loss at giving up her gift evident to her.

Demon leaned forward to kiss him. Matthew carried on speaking. "Well, if I'm confessing, I might as well get it all over with. I didn't use all the credits I got for the book to buy your ring. John is even worse off than I am. I at least had some credits off Earth when the plague hit; John had nothing. He was with me when I was looking for a ring for you. I saw him looking at an emerald ring and realized that he wanted to get it for Lily as much as I wanted to get something for you. So you didn't get the ring I wanted to buy, which had bigger stones, because I ended up buying both rings, so John could give the emerald to Lily. Do you mind?"

Demon gazed at him and let some of her love escape her control, allowing her feelings to wash over him. "Mind? I love my ring, Matthew, and I love you." She pulled his head down to her and kissed him passionately.

Luke's head came up abruptly as a wave of pure happiness washed over him. "Whoa! What was that?"

He and Lily had been listening to John update them on the progress with the cure, while lying in bed beside him.

"Demon!" Lily looked at John questioningly, seeing a beaming smile on his face.

He sighed, then said, "I think Demon just agreed."

"Agreed?" Lily propped herself up on her elbows. "Agreed to what?"

John grinned at her. "To marry Matthew."

Lily could only stare at him, mouth open, a happy gleam in her eyes.

"That's wonderful!" Luke exclaimed. "But I'm sure that's not the only reason why you came here, is it?"

"No it isn't." John sat up and leaned against the headboard, looking at Luke, then at Lily, grinning as he saw he had their full attention. "I told you I'd explain later what was on my mind." He went on to tell them about the Excalibur's new assignment, and that he would stay with Gideon as his first officer, and explained the rule as to senior officer's spouses. He smiled at Lily. "That's why Matthew asked Demon to marry him. And yes, I know that you're not very fond of the idea of marriage, and in our case it would be difficult, anyway." He smiled at Luke, then looked at Lily again, "But there's another solution. Civilian consultants can put in their contracts who accompanies them. Max has been offered such a position," he turned to look at Luke, studying his face carefully as he continued, "and so have you."

Luke blinked, overwhelmed by the sudden turn of events. What John was offering him was the chance to be with him and Lily and their children, to discover new worlds, new challenges--but then he thought about his home on Deneb IV and of his sister Sara, and a feeling of guilt crept up on him. She was still there, and while she seemed happy with her new job at Dr. Robert's practice and their relationship--she'd told him about that with a sheepish grin a few weeks before when he'd called her--that didn't change the fact that he'd promised always to be there for her after their parents' death. Instead, he'd left her for a two-week vacation eight months ago and never returned since.

He became aware of John and Lily watching him and sat up on the edge of the bed. "...I have to think about this. How much time do I have?"

"We have to leave again tomorrow morning," John said softly. Lily gasped, while Luke turned back to study his face, trying not to look as stricken as he was by John's announcement.

"Already?" Lily asked in a tiny voice, leaning against John, trying hard not to cry.

John smiled and cupped her face. "We'll be back soon. And hopefully..." He smiled at Luke very gently.

Luke took a deep breath and stood. "I have to go to the village. There are patients waiting for me." He dressed and kissed them, then turned and left quickly, bag in hand.

Before John could ask, Lily said, "It's his sister, Sara. The last few times they talked, he was very distraught and absent-minded when he got back. He never said anything, but I think he feels that by

staying here, he abandoned her."

John could hear Lily's concern in her voice as well as feel it and softly touched her mind. "I'm afraid we can't do anything. He has to work this out for himself."

Lily looked up at him. "I know. And I hope," she stretched, her lips touching his softly, then leaned her forehead on his shoulder and whispered, "if it was the only way for us all to be together, I'd gladly marry you or Luke or both--but to be with one, and only see the other every few years..."

John closed his eyes, fighting down the sense of loss that swept over him. "We'll work it out. Whatever Luke's decision will be, I swear we'll be together."

"You look torn." Kirrin's dark eyes were watching Luke closely as he looked up from his bag, surprised by her words. Their last patient, a pregnant villager, had just left. In this case, it had been Kirrin leading the checkup and explaining Brakiri pregnancy to him, since he didn't have any experience in that area.

Luke sat down hard on the examination table and sighed, rubbing his eyes. "I don't think..."

"That I can understand you?" Kirrin interrupted him, a smile on her lips. "Why don't you try to explain?"

Raven looked into her eyes, seeing warmth, compassion, and a genuine wish to help. Before he knew it, he'd poured his heart out to her.

When Luke got back, brunch was ready. Lily and John were sitting in two adjoining chairs at her table, Faylinn and Dasha in their arms.

Luke sat down in the chair next to John, taking a deep breath as he looked at the young Asian. [Well, not that much younger than me.] "OK."

Lily stopped rocking Dasha, eyes wide, and John stared at him, then swallowed. "Are you sure? I mean..."

Luke smiled and answered firmly, "Yes."

John exhaled a breath he hadn't been aware he'd been holding and slumped back in his chair, lifting Faylinn above his head and laughing up at her. "Did you hear that? We'll finally be together!" She gurgled in answer to his laughter.

Lily was too overwhelmed to say anything as tears of joy rolled down her face.

Lily had left the twins to lie in the lounging pit while she, John, and Luke ate brunch, calling to them from time to time as they babbled contentedly.

They were talking about their future life on the Excalibur, fantasizing about the worlds they would see on their trip, but also musing about what they--Lily in particular--would have to give up or leave behind. They agreed that they'd live in two adjacent quarters with a connecting door.

"Oh, I just know it will be wonderful! I've always been fascinated by the stars, and now I get a chance to visit them!" Lily exclaimed. She looked at her surroundings. "Of course I'll miss all this but I have you and my babies, we'll finally all be together! A door closes, and another one opens." Her eyes lit up. "Speaking of which..."

She jumped up from her chair and glided towards her bed with light steps, followed by Luke's and John's gaze. Lily knelt down at the side of the bed and leaned forward, stretching out her hand under it. When she pulled it back, she tugged a box out. Sitting up, she lifted it onto the mattress, smiling as she opened it. It was full of neatly ordered data crystals, and Lily took one of them out, then closed it but left it on the bed.

She got up and went over to the player, inserted the crystal and chose the last recording on it, then listened with an expectant look on her face until the first soft, hesitant notes emerged from the speakers. "I haven't listened to this for quite a while," she said while swaying from side to side, a faraway look on her face. To the rhythm of the cymbals, she strode to the lounging pit, singing along with the soft voice of the male singer as she knelt down at its edge, looking down at her babies lying on their backs among the cushions, their eyes searching for her as they heard her voice.

This is the end, beautiful friend. / This is the end, my only friend, / the end of our elaborate plans, / the end...

When their eyes found her, they gurgled happily, and Lily wrinkled her nose at them, beaming.

Luke put down the glass he'd been holding and John leaned forward, propping his elbows up on his knees. Both men were smiling.

"Who's singing this?" John asked after hearing a bit more of the song, "I like it."

Lily looked up at him. "Never heard of The Doors?"

John shook his head. "I like to listen to music, but don't keep up with all the new groups."

Lily laughed. "New? The Doors? I always loved their music, but they're from my parent's generation," she frowned, "I think." The vague memories of her 'previous life' didn't include an inkling of her birth date.

"More likely your ten times grandparents, I'd say," Luke murmured, and would have laughed if not for Lily's puzzled expression.

"Ten times grandparents?"

Raven shrugged. "Maybe nine or twelve times. The Doors are from the late twentieth century, or something like that? My sister is the expert; she's the one who's interested in music of the past few centuries." He suppressed a lingering stab of guilt at the thought of her.

Lily's laugh sounded nervous even to herself. "What do you mean, 'past few centuries'? Just because..." Her voice trailed off as her brain went into overdrive. The highly advanced technology of the space

ships, the fact that Luke was from an Earth colony on another planet, what John had told her about telepaths. [All that couldn't have happened in fifty years!] Suddenly her mouth went dry, and her heart was beating as if it wanted to leave her chest. Faylinn and Dasha started whimpering, feeling their mother's distress through their link, and she hurried to send them love and reassurance, smiling at them.

"What...what century are we in?" She asked, once the babies had calmed, looking at John and Luke again, the music only registering on the fringes of her mind now.

Luke's mind was blank at the unexpected question. He could only stare at Lily while John frowned, replaying the whole conversation in his mind, acutely aware of Lily's distress. He gasped and looked at Luke wide-eyed, who shook his head and stared back.

Lily was watching them anxiously. "What?"

John took a deep breath and turned to gaze at her for several seconds, then reached out his hand for her and smiled. "I think you'd better come over here and sit down."

They lay in Deborah's bed, the sheets crumpled and damp beneath them from the exertions of their activities. Gideon lay on his back, his heartbeat and breathing slowly returning to normal, realizing that he'd just made love for the fourth time in as many hours. He wondered if he would be able to satisfy his lover, [My fiancée, my wife to be,] the next time she became aroused. He looked up at her as she knelt next to him on the bed, gazing down at him, her large, hazel eyes full of affection.

Suddenly, she sat upright and closed her eyes. Gideon watched as Deborah's face took on the soft smile that she always wore when she was 'talking' to her sisters. He wondered if whichever sister it was had known what they'd been doing and had waited until they finished. [Then again, everyone in the castle must know when we finish.] He grinned to himself and waited for Deborah to return her attention to him. Gideon watched as her eyes flicked open and her face changed. She looked at him and the only words he could think of to describe her expression were 'stunned amazement'.

"Matthew, how old are you?" He was taken aback by her sudden question.

"Older than you. Why?" Gideon watched as Deborah smiled.

She leaned down and kissed him gently, avoiding his question. "What makes you think that?"

Gideon raised an eyebrow in surprise as she sat upright again. He asked, "Well, how old are you? I've kept meaning to ask."

Deborah frowned. "I suppose it depends on how you count. If you count from the year I was born, it would come out at one figure. But we were in stasis for a while, so I don't think that really counts. If you add up the years that I've experienced, then I must be," she closed her eyes and bit her lip, then opened them again and smiled, "thirty or maybe thirty-one."

Gideon said, "See? I told you that you were younger than me. I'll be forty-three next month."

Deborah grinned. "Yes, but if we count the other way, I'll bet I'm older than you. What year is it?"

Gideon stared at her. It had never occurred to him that she wouldn't know that, but having been cut off from the main events of the galaxy for so long, how could she?

"It's 2269. August 29th. So how old does that make you?" He watched as she nodded.

"That's what Lily just told me. Twenty-two sixty-nine? Really?" He nodded. She took a deep breath before continuing. "Just how do you feel about older women, Matthew?"

"Older, younger, makes no difference to me." Gideon grinned and waited for Deborah to respond.

"I hope you mean that, because if it's August 2269, then like you, I have a birthday next month, and then I'll be," Deborah looked down at him anxiously. "Are you sure that you're ready for this?"

"Go on, just spit it out. Tell me the bad news." Gideon reached to the side of the bed for a glass of juice and took a drink.

"OK. Next month it will be 290 years since I was born."

Gideon choked, then coughed. Then he sat up to try and get his breath back as Deborah pounded his back, apologizing as she did so. "I'm sorry! I should have waited until you'd swallowed! Are you all right? Shall I get Luke? Matthew, speak to me!"

His coughs gradually diminished, and he managed to get his breath back. He looked at her, and this time it was Gideon's face that showed stunned amazement. "Two hundred and ninety? You're 290 years old? There has got to be a mistake here somewhere. What year were you born?"

"Nineteen seventy-nine. But I've been in stasis for most of that time! I had no idea it had been so long. I wonder whether the Vorlon kept us asleep for a long time before they changed us, or whether it was a long time after that before the Brakiri found us. I have no idea what year it was when the Vorlon had us awake."

Gideon became aware that his mouth was wide open and closed it hurriedly. "When were you taken from Earth?" He remembered the first night he'd spent with Deborah. He'd asked her then when she'd left Earth and remembered her answer. *'Oh, a very long time ago. We've been here for about five years now.'* Had she deliberately misled him? He'd assumed, as she'd no doubt intended, that the two halves of her answer were linked. Gideon now realized that what Deborah had told him was the truth--as she'd promised--but it hadn't been the whole truth. She'd allowed him, even encouraged him, to arrive at an incorrect conclusion by providing him with completely accurate data in a totally misleading way.

Gideon started to laugh. "I can see I've met my match. That was very clever." Deborah was looking at him warily as he explained what he remembered. When he finished, she was smiling.

"I didn't know how long it was since we'd left Earth; I just knew that it must have been quite a while, but I didn't think it was this long! Anyway, I said I'd tell you the truth and I did. I didn't say it would be the whole truth."

"No, you didn't. And now that I know you can be as double-dealing, twisted, and misleading as I can, I'll ask you again, and this time I'll listen carefully." He pulled Deborah to him and leaned back against the headboard of the bed. "What year was it when you were taken from Earth?"

"Two thousand and three. I found Angel soon after my twenty-first birthday in 2000. We lived

together for about three years before we were taken."

"Found Angel? What does that mean?" He listened carefully as she quickly summarized her father's departure when she was five, her upbringing in boarding schools, the death of her mother, finding Angel and bringing her back to England, and their abduction by the Vorlon.

Gideon digested what she'd told him for a moment, then spoke. "So, if I've got this right, you've been more or less looking after yourself since you were a child. At twenty-one you took on responsibility for a sister you'd never met before, and at twenty-four you acquired two more sisters, who you've been looking after ever since." Deborah nodded.

Gideon thought back and remembered another conversation and what she'd said then. It was the day Deborah had been unwell, and she'd been in a foul temper, snappy, and obnoxious. He'd walked out on her, leaving her to stew for a while, then she'd joined him and apologized. Gideon remembered her words. *"I'm not used to being unwell, and I'm not used to someone trying to take care of me. No one has ever done it before."*

He now realized that Deborah had told him the literal truth. He closed his eyes when he remembered his own words. *"Didn't your mother ever tuck you up in bed when you weren't well?"* No wonder she'd turned away from him.

Gideon hugged Deborah close to his chest and stroked her hair. "I've made up my mind. I prefer older women. Much older women. In fact, I wouldn't look at any woman who's a day under 280. They're just so damned immature under that age."

He could feel her deep throaty laughter against his chest.

Faylinn and Dasha were feeding, lying on their backs while Lily was on her stomach on the bed, an open book in front of her, barely aware of the words she was reading or John's and Luke's voices from the table talking about their future assignments on the Excalibur. She was still slightly distraught by the news that had hit her like a ton of bricks. [Twenty-two sixty-nine? I still can't grasp it. How long were we in stasis?]

When John had told her what year it was, her automatic response had been, "Impossible!" Even to her such a leap in time had seemed too fantastic. But then Luke had inserted a data crystal into his datapad and called up a specific file, put it on the table and turned it so she could see the screen. It was one of the medical journals Sarah Chambers had given him when she'd been on Eriadne, and Luke had wordlessly pointed at its release date. Lily hadn't been able to do anything but sit there, staring at the figures on the screen. Finally, she had looked up at Luke then at John, a single word escaping her throat, "Wow!" Shortly after that, another orgasmic wave had swept through the castle, and she'd called Demon.

Lily blinked her eyes several times as another thought occurred to her. [If The Others didn't abduct us around the same time, could I even be older than Angel and Demon, counted from my year of birth?] She shook her head. Since she didn't know her year of birth, the point was moot, and it didn't matter anyway. Such thoughts didn't help, and they didn't change anything.

Lily smiled down at her babies. "And I wouldn't want to change a thing about my present situation," she whispered to them. [Well, almost nothing. But one of these points is clearing itself up now.]

Happiness swept through her at the thought of finally being together with both of her men. Yet there was still something she wanted to do on Eriadne, and which required the presence of both men.

"Would you mind participating in another little ritual this afternoon?"

{Chapter 1} {Chapter 2} {Chapter 3}

The Witches of Eriadne: Cauldron Bubble

{Part 1: Preparations} {Part 2: Goodbyes and Hellos} {Part 3: Twists and Turns} {Part 4:
Crossroads} {Part 5: New Horizons}