

The Witches of Eriadne: Interlude Four C - Part 1: Away From Home

by [The Space Witches](#)



Comfort, warmth and companionship.

Chapter 1

April 2270

"Open." Gideon looked up from his desk to see who had come to his quarters. He was trying to make the time that Deborah was away go more quickly by throwing himself into his work. There was always a backlog of reports and memos to be cleared, so he thought he might as well take the opportunity provided by her absence to do some catching up. He was trying to avoid admitting to himself how much he missed her. She'd only been gone for four days, but her absence left him feeling empty and desperately lonely. John and Luke having gone with her didn't help.

The Kesani people, whose planet they were currently orbiting, had requested medical assistance that Luke was best qualified to provide. But they also needed help in ending a dispute between two warring factions that had been going on for decades. Both sides desperately wanted to end the conflict, but their mutual distrust had reached a point where they were entirely unable to do so. In his initial discussions with the Kesani, Gideon had offered them the services of a telepath to get over this distrust. John had been willing to help, and if all parties agreed, there was no breach of the new regulations governing telepaths. The only problem was that both sides wanted their own telepath to tell them what the other side was thinking.

Gideon had explained that they only had one telepath on board Excalibur, but the two sides had been unable to reach agreement. He'd run out of ideas to help them, when Deborah had made her suggestion. While she wasn't a telepath, she was an empath. She could tell what people felt and in

particular, could tell if they lied. She had suggested that this might be sufficient to break the deadlock.

The Captain had had to admit that it might work, despite his concerns about his wife going into a war zone. Deborah had persuaded him that it was worth the risk if she could help save some of the thousands of lives that were being lost every day in the conflict on the planet below. She'd finally convinced him that with John being there to take care of her, (not that she wasn't quite capable of taking care of herself; Gideon grinned as he remembered her flaring up at the suggestion that she couldn't) she should go and give what assistance she could.

The Kesani had leaped at the suggestion, so Deborah, John and Luke had left with a squad of marines, and Gideon had missed his wife every hour since. It was too dangerous to send a shuttle back and forth each day, so Deborah stayed on the planet below and he stayed in the ship above. That night had been the first time that he'd slept alone since their reconciliation on Mars. For the first time in eight months, Gideon had slept in his own bunk in his quarters and hated every minute of it. Each night he'd dozed for a couple of hours but had never really slept, missing the warmth of her body next to his and the sound of her breathing. Worst of all was waking and finding her not there next to him. He couldn't remember a time when they hadn't made love when they woke, and going back to the bad old days of jerking off in the vibe shower had been no fun at all.

Now he was facing another lonely night, and he felt tired, irritable and frustrated. Deborah had called him an hour earlier, and just the sight of her on screen had been enough to give him an erection that he'd been trying to ignore with little success ever since. The last thing Gideon needed was a visitor, but at least it might pass some time.

He was surprised when Lily entered his quarters, knowing that she was supposed to be looking after Marcus, as well as her own twins, in Deborah's absence. Gideon leaped to his feet and rushed towards her, concerned. "What's the matter? Is Marcus all right?"

He looked down at the tiny redhead as she placed her hands on his chest, bringing him to a halt. "Marcus is fine, don't worry. Angel is babysitting him and the twins for me. I just had to get out of our quarters, or I knew that I'd go mad." He watched as Lily bit her lips, and her eyes filled with tears. "Oh Matthew, I miss them so much!"

Gideon realized that this must be as difficult for Lily as it was for him, maybe worse. This must be the first time in over a year that Lily had spent any time without either of her men. She must be missing them as much as he missed Deborah. As he watched the tears sliding down Lily's cheeks, he pulled her into his arms and hugged her tightly. He couldn't help but think how different it felt to holding Deborah. Lily was tiny, the top of her head coming only to the middle of his chest, while Deborah was close to his own height. He held the tiny woman close, gently stroking her hair as she sobbed into his chest.

"I know, Lily, I know. I can't tell you how much I miss Deborah. And I know that John and Luke must be missing you just as much."

Lily's voice came out in a series of hiccups. "I... I know, but... but they have... have each other... and I'm... I'm all alone." The last word came out as a wail of despair, and a new flood of tears followed.

Gideon's heart went out to her. He knew how lonely she must be feeling and rushed to reassure her. "You're not alone, Lily. We're all here for you, and it will only be for a few days. They'll be back before you know it." He held her tightly against him, continuing to stroke her hair, then kissed the top of her head gently.

Lily pushed herself away from him abruptly and glared up at him, her green eyes flaring with temper. "No, they won't. I know they're not with me now, and I want them back. I want them back NOW! This is your fault; you sent them away. I can't wait for a few days, I need them now. Bring them back, Matthew, or let me go down to them, but I can't stand this, I have to be with them!" She stood with her hands on her hips, glaring up at him defiantly. Gideon knew that Lily was being unfair, but also knew that she was unable to help herself.

Gideon tried to calm her. "Sshhh, calm down. I know how hard it is, but they have a job to do, and a lot of lives are depending on them doing that job. We can't be selfish, Lily." He reached out to wipe the tears from her face. "You know that you can't go down there. You can't leave Dasha and Faylinn completely alone, and I need you here to help me take care of Marcus." Gideon closed his eyes and clenched his fists by his side as a bolt of pain and loss ran through him when he thought of his son, which inevitably led to thoughts of Deborah. "Oh God, Lily, I know how you feel. I never knew that I could miss someone this much. How the hell did I survive all those months without her?"

He felt Lily put her arms around his waist and lean her head against his chest. Gideon opened his eyes and looked down at her, not sure now who was comforting who. He put his arms back around her and held her tightly, glad of the warmth of her body against his.

After a few moments standing motionless, Lily leaned back a little to look up at him, and for a moment Gideon saw something in her eyes he couldn't name, something strange. Then she lifted her arm, placing her hand behind his neck and pulling his head down towards hers until his lips touched hers. His arms tightened around her involuntarily, as he felt her mouth opening under his. Lily's tongue touched his lips gently, and he parted them to allow her entry. She gently probed his mouth, darting her tongue over and around his. Gideon was very aware of how different she tasted, how different she felt, how different this was in every way to when he kissed Deborah. But it still felt good.

He pulled his head back abruptly and broke the kiss. He wanted to say, "*No. This is wrong. We shouldn't be doing this,*" but before the words could leave his mouth, Lily lifted her hand and put her fingers over his lips, still holding her tiny body pressed tightly against him. Gideon looked down into her deep green eyes, seeing that her pupils had dilated with her desire, but also that they were full of pain and loneliness, and a wordless plea for him to help her not to miss her men so much. As she would help him not to miss Deborah so much.

Lily must have seen the pain well up in his eyes again, for the fingers she had put over his lips moved to gently stroke his cheek as she smiled at Gideon sadly, then slid down his neck and chest and around to his back, while he was unable to form any coherent thought, let alone words. Gideon's eyes were drawn to Lily's lips, which were red and swollen where she'd been biting them, and moist from their kiss. God, how he wanted to kiss her again...

Lily's hands were now gently stroking and massaging Gideon's buttocks through his pants, and he could feel himself responding to the closeness of her body pressed against him. Matthew didn't protest when her hand went back around his neck and pulled him down to her again.

His mouth closed over hers, and the last of his resistance crumbled under the assault of her lips and tongue on his. Gideon felt Lily's hands moving under his T-shirt, then sliding under his belt and inside his pants. Her nails dug into his buttocks for a moment, arousing him further. As their tongues intertwined, she moved one hand between them and started to rub gently against his rapidly hardening cock, grasping it through the material of his pants, stimulating him further.

Gideon ran his hands down her back, searching for the fastening of her dress, and finding the zipper, pulled it down to the base of her spine. Lily stepped backwards and away from him, letting her dress fall from her shoulders and flow down her body until it dropped into a pool at her feet. His breath quickened at the sight of her naked body before him. She was exquisite. Tiny but totally female, her rounded breasts stood out from her rib cage that narrowed into a waist so small he thought he could probably span it with his hands. Below Lily's waist, her hips swelled then narrowed into legs that were long in proportion to the rest of her tiny frame. The triangle of bright red hair at the top of her legs drew Gideon's eyes for a moment, before he dragged them back to her face. He was panting now, his desire for that perfect body apparent to them both, and he could see that her desire matched his. Lily was staring at the bulge in his pants, first licking then biting her lips as she anticipated what was going to happen next.

"Oh God, Lily, I want you." Briefly, Matthew wondered if he'd really said that out loud, or if he'd only imagined saying it. He fell to his knees and buried his head between her breasts, then shifted to take her nipple into his mouth as his hands moved over her body. He heard Lily moan with pleasure as one hand found her other nipple while the other slid between her legs. Gideon felt her hands on his shoulders, her long nails digging in as he stroked her labia, before gently sliding a finger into her. Lily's breath caught as he moved his finger inside her, then found her clitoris with his thumb. Gideon lifted his head from her breast and looked up at her standing above him. Lily's head was thrown back, the long red curls cascading down her back almost to her knees. Her mouth was open as she panted for air, and as her lips dried, her tongue darted out to wet them. Gideon kissed the base of Lily's throat where it was flushed and hot with her passion, then moved his hand from her breast to pull her head down into a passionate kiss. All the time, he was pushing his finger deeper inside her, probing for the spot that he knew would give her most pleasure.

Gideon moved his hand from the back of Lily's neck to his belt, quickly undoing it and unzipping his pants, then releasing his now painfully swollen cock. When it was free, he moved his arm back around her waist and started to pull her down toward him as he sat back on his heels. Lily moved her feet either side of his legs as he knelt, still locked into their kiss, and bending her knees as she gradually slid down his body.

Her hands were still kneading his shoulders, the nails digging into him as she used them for support while lowering herself onto him. Gideon felt the tip of his cock touch her curls, and he pulled his finger out of her, using that hand to open her, ready to receive him. Her face was now level with his and he gazed into her incredibly green eyes as he whispered. "Are you sure? I don't want to hurt you, Lily. Physically or emotionally. We can stop now."

Lily smiled as she started to push herself down onto him and whispered in a voice raw with desire, "I couldn't stop now even if I tried. I want you, Matthew. I want all of you inside me now."

Lily could feel herself stretching to accommodate Matthew as she pressed down onto him. She was wet and ready, desperate to have him inside her, but had to go slowly. He was bigger than she was used to, and she had to allow herself time to gradually take him in. When she finally felt her ass touch his thighs, she shifted her legs, bringing them round to encircle his waist, taking that last fraction of him into her as she did so.

She was now sitting on Matthew's thighs, completely impaled, her arms wrapped tightly round his shoulders, his arms around her, as he knelt on the floor. Suddenly Lily felt him moving and realized that he was lifting himself to his feet, his cock thrusting deeper than ever inside her as he stood,

making her moan with pleasure as it hit the most sensitive part of her vagina. She tightened the grip of her legs around his waist as he walked towards his desk, every step moving his cock inside her, arousing her more. Matthew turned and sat on the chair, bringing his hands down under her buttocks and starting to lift her off him. Lily groaned and resisted, pushing down on his shoulders to force herself back onto him. "No! I want you there."

Matthew smiled as he brought a hand to her face and stroked her cheek. "I just wanted to ease you back a little. I can feel how deep I am inside you, I didn't want to hurt you."

"You're not hurting me. It's wonderful." Lily started to rock from side to side, feeling his cock moving inside her. She watched as Matthew closed his eyes and groaned softly with pleasure at her movements. Lily brought her legs down from his waist and lowered them to the floor to give her leverage, then started pushing up and down onto his cock, as he sat in the chair. Leaning back, she held onto Matthew's shoulders, rocking and thrusting, pushing hard down onto him, loving the feel of him deep inside her. He moved one of his hands to her breast, rolling the nipple between his fingers, then slid the other hand between them, finding her clitoris again and pressing it in time with her motions.

Lily felt waves of heat running through her as she approached climax. She moved with increased urgency, slamming down onto him harder and harder as her need for release built. She could hear Matthew grunting with effort and passion as he thrust up into her in time with her movements. She could feel her nails bending under the pressure with which she now grasped his shoulders. The pressure of his finger on her clit, and the constantly shifting patterns of pressure inside her, lifted Lily to an orgasm so intense she cried out. Wave after wave of it throbbed through her, as Matthew continued to thrust and press on her clit, holding back from coming himself, lifting her to new heights of pleasure with every pulse of his cock inside her.

When she thought she couldn't bear any more, Matthew slowed his movements and eased the pressure on her clit. Lily collapsed against his chest, panting for breath, then became aware that he was lifting her off him. The next thing she knew, he'd turned her around until she was standing facing away from him with her legs straddling him. Bringing his hands to her waist, Matthew pulled her back down towards him again. She leaned forward and placed her hands on his knees as she felt his hand move between her legs. His fingers slid back inside her, two of them this time, pushing up into her then out again, smearing the juices from her vagina across her anus. He started to gently massage her opening, pushing his wet fingers into her slowly, just one at first, then back to her vagina to wet his hand again. Next time, Lily felt herself stretched by two of his fingers entering her back passage, and she rocked down onto his hand taking them in further. Matthew's other hand moved down and started to massage her clit again, making more moisture pour from inside her.

Suddenly, his fingers moved out of her, and Lily groaned in disappointment at her emptiness. He pulled her down onto him, quickly burying his cock deep into her vagina then lifting her again. Matthew shifted in the seat and on her next downwards thrust she felt the pressure of his cock probing her anus. She pushed down gently, taking just the head inside her, glad of the lubrication of her own juices. Although she regularly enjoyed anal sex, Lily had never taken anything as big as his cock inside her ass before. Each downward thrust brought a mix of pain and pleasure as she forced him deeper and deeper inside her, until she came to rest on his stomach. She started to rock forwards on her hands, lifting off him each time, then pushing back down. Matthew's hands were now grasping her hips again, lifting her up then pulling her back onto him. Lily could hear him panting as he came closer to climax, then she almost screamed as he brought his hand between the front of her legs and slid his fingers back inside her.

She was now filled front and back. It was almost like having John and Luke inside her together, the way she liked it best. The pleasure of the fullness this gave lifted Lily back to the brink of orgasm, her vagina starting to pulse, and this time she could feel that she was going to take Matthew with her. His free hand moved to her breast, and he squeezed her nipple hard as he came, his cock twitching inside her as he released a hot flood deep into her. The pressure on her nipple and clit, the fullness of her vagina and ass were too much, and Lily screamed as she climaxed again and again, finally falling forward, exhausted.

Matthew moved his hands quickly and caught her as she fell, pulling her upright, until her back rested on his chest. His hand still cupped her breast, while she felt his other hand pulling her hair to one side. His lips touched her shoulder gently, then moved slowly up to her neck. Then he rested his head on her shoulder as his breathing gradually slowed. Lily could feel him softening inside her, then felt his hands move to her hips again as he lifted her off him. Matthew swung her round until she was sat across his lap, her back resting against his arm, her head lying on his shoulder.

Lily looked up into Matthew's eyes as he gazed down at her, his arms holding her close to his chest. She could see the warmth and tenderness there as he looked down at her and whispered, "What have we done, Lily? Oh God, what have we done?"

She lifted her hand to his neck and pulled his mouth down to hers. When their lips were just touching she spoke. "We shared."

Luke dropped onto the sofa of the quarters he was sharing with John and Demon, swung his legs up, closed his eyes and sighed deeply. John looked across at him from the chair where he sat quietly, reading from a datapad. "Tired?" He smiled gently as he asked.

"Exhausted." Luke opened his eyes and smiled across at his partner. "It's bedlam in there, John. It's been a while since I ran an ER, but I tell you, this is worse than anything I've seen before. The casualties from the fighting just keep on coming, there never seems to be a lull or a let up. The medical teams are exhausted and they're damned close to running out of the most basic medical supplies. The fighting has to be stopped, it just has to be." He sat up on the sofa and ran his fingers through his already ruffled hair, leaning his elbows on his knees, looking as if it was only the support of his hands that kept his head from dropping to his chest.

John moved over to the sofa and pulled Luke to him, holding him, sharing his pain. Luke buried his head into John's shoulder for a moment, then pulled back to kiss him gently. John smiled at him and spoke softly. "We're doing everything we can. But there's so much suspicion and mistrust. The emotions flying around that conference room are mind blowing. Hatred, anger, prejudice, but most of all fear. They're so frightened of each other. They've tried so many times to end this war but every time, one side or the other has reneged on the deal. Someone has always betrayed them and they just can't trust each other any more." He shook his head in despair.

Luke smiled sadly at him and ran his fingers gently through John's hair, ruffling its usual crisp tidiness. "I know that you're doing everything you can. How's Demon holding up? And where is she?"

John nodded towards one of the bedrooms that led off the living room where they were sitting. "She's in her room." The Kesani had allocated them a comfortable apartment in an underground site, based in one of the few neutral territories on the planet. A shuttle was provided to take Luke to the Medical Center where he was reorganizing their ER facilities, while John and Demon could take a monorail

directly to the center where the peace conference was being held.

John frowned as he sat back, pulling Luke against his side, and placing his arm around his shoulder. "I'm worried about her, Luke. Demon's not trained for this sort of thing and it's wearing her down. She's doing her usual tough, stubborn, 'I'm in control, I can handle it', act but it's getting to her. She's never been taught how to block out feelings, as I was in my Psi Corps training. I've been trying to help her since she came on board, but it's still a real effort for her." He kissed the top of Luke's head where it rested on his shoulder. "And the emotions flying around that room are tough to handle even for someone with Psi training. They're totally negative, and they never let up. There's always someone in there who's feeling angry or betrayed, who's hating someone else. They've all lost family and friends in this conflict, and just sitting down at the same table with their enemies is an effort for them. We've had four days of it now, and there's little sign of any break through."

John sighed deeply. "I don't know how much more Demon can take, and she's missing Matthew and Marcus terribly. She tries to hide it and I try not to pick it up, but I'm having to keep my shields down for the talks, so I can't help but feel her loneliness."

Luke sat upright and looked at John carefully. "If she misses them as much as we're missing Lily and the twins, she must be in a bad way by now. At least we have each other, she's totally alone in there. I can't even begin to think how lonely I'd be feeling right now if you weren't here." He leaned forward and kissed John's lips, tenderly.

John smiled back at him and ran his fingers through Luke's hair, trying to tidy it, pushing it out of his eyes. He whispered, "I know, and I'm so glad that you're here with me. Now let's go to bed and I'll show you how glad I am. Or are you too tired?"

Luke laughed at he stood abruptly and pulled John to his feet. "Never too tired for that." He pulled John towards their bedroom, shedding clothes on the way.

They lay naked in bed, drowsing in the relaxation that followed passion, both tired but content, enjoying the few moments of peace and rest. John lay on his side with his head resting on Luke's chest, right arm sprawled across him, while Luke played with John's hair. They were jolted from their pleasantly sated state by a wave of misery and loneliness that swept across them. John sat upright and looked down at Luke who was frowning in confusion. "Demon." He threw aside the sheet that covered them and ran for the door of their room, with Luke following closely. They ran across the living room to the door of the bedroom on the far side. John's hand went to the door handle, then hesitated. He paused, then knocked gently on the door, calling, "Demon? Are you all right? Can I come in?"

There was no answer and he looked back at Luke, standing behind him, with some anxiety. "Should I?" All hesitation disappeared when another wave of misery swept through them both, and they heard the sound of sobbing from the far side of the door.

John flung the door open and rushed into the bedroom. The sight that met him stopped him in his tracks and he could hear Luke's sharp intake of breath behind him. Demon lay across the bed, sprawled naked on her stomach, her head buried in a pillow. Her long blonde hair covered much of her back, but her buttocks and legs were completely exposed. John dragged his eyes up her body and saw that in her outstretched hand she held a cube. It was identical to the one that Lily had once given him and that he currently had by the side of the bed in his and Luke's room. The cube Demon held showed

a picture of Gideon, smiling up at Marcus as he held the child above his head.

Another wave of pain and loss accompanied the sound of crying. John could see that Demon's whole body was shaking from the violence of her sobs. He rushed over to the bed and sat quickly by her head, reaching out to stroke her hair as Luke sat on her other side. "Demon? Please? You're sending. You need to calm down." He started to project calm and reassurance, hoping that she would feel him, but concerned that in her current distressed state she wouldn't.

John carried on gently stroking and projecting, as Luke moved in from her other side. He pushed his arm under Demon's body and pulled her towards him, trying to lift her into his arms. As he did so, she moved quickly and threw her arms around him, burying her head into Luke's shoulder and crying harder than ever. Luke held her tightly as he moved to lean his back against the head of the bed, looking with concern at John over her head.

John continued to touch her head and back gently as he projected calmness. Gradually the sobs subsided, and the waves of pain and misery diminished. Eventually, Demon lifted her head from Luke's shoulder and sniffed loudly. She first looked up at Luke and then round at John, her eyes red and her face tear stained. Then she whispered, "Sorry," before burying her head back into Luke's shoulder.

Luke rocked her gently as he held her, then moved his hand to lift her chin so that she had to look up at him. "You don't have anything to be sorry about, Demon. Except for trying to hide from us. Don't you ever listen to your little sister? Lily is always telling us that we have to share." He kissed her gently on the lips as he wiped the tears from her face with his fingers.

John moved further on to the bed and put his arms around Demon from her other side, increasing his contact with her to help him calm her further. She looked round at him as she felt his body close around her back and smiled tentatively. "Thank you. I couldn't have stopped without your help."

Demon was now sitting more or less upright, across Luke's lap, her head on his right shoulder, her back against John as he knelt behind her, with Luke's right arm surrounding them both. John's right arm encircled Luke's shoulders as his left arm came round to hug Demon tightly. They sat like that for a few moments, as Demon slowly calmed following her outburst.

John gradually became aware that his left hand was gently caressing Demon's breast, his thumb running across her slowly hardening nipple as he knelt with his chest pressed to her back. The feel of her hair and skin against his was beginning to affect him, and he pulled away abruptly. She turned to look at him, a puzzled expression on her face.

"Oh god, I'm sorry, Demon. I wasn't thinking... I shouldn't... I mean it was sort of automatic... oh hell, Matthew will kill me..." John's words trailed off as he saw her face fill with distress again.

"Matthew..." Another wave of sorrow, loneliness and loss crashed down on him as Demon's face crumpled back into tears.

Luke pulled Demon's head back into his shoulder and started to rock her, then lifted her face to look at him and kissed her gently again. But this time, he couldn't take his lips away. He found himself touching his tongue to her lips and gently parting them to allow him to enter. His right arm pulled her closer, as his left hand moved to the breast that John had just caressed. He could feel her responding to his touches and felt his own arousal growing. Still kissing her, Luke opened his eyes to look at John,

now sitting back on the bed. He could see John's surprise and concern so reached out his right hand to touch his face.

[[She needs this, John. She needs to be held, to be touched, to be loved. Matthew can't help her tonight, but we can.]] He sent his thoughts to John as he continued to kiss and caress Demon. She was now kissing Luke passionately, and her left hand had moved to his chest where she gently massaged his nipple.

John watched as his friend and lover started to make love to his Captain's wife. He sent back, [[I can't Luke. She's Matthew's wife. I can't betray him like that.]]

[[This isn't betrayal. This is sharing.]] Luke's eyes never left John's as he watched his friend grappling with his dilemma. Luke felt Demon's hand sliding down his stomach and gently touching his now swollen cock. He felt her trail a finger up the length of his shaft, then down again to softly caress his balls. Closing his eyes, Luke focused all his attention on their kiss. He withdrew his hand from John's face and ran it down Demon's back, coming to rest on her buttocks, where he started to gently kneading her ass cheek. His other hand continued to play with the nipple that was now hard under his fingers.

Demon was lost in the sensations of hands caressing her, touching her, feeling her, fulfilling her. At first there were only two hands, one on her breast, the other on her ass, but then two more joined them, stroking her other breast and her thigh, sliding between her legs and touching her clitoris. She could feel lips on her mouth and lips on her shoulders, then teeth grazing her neck and a tongue touching her ear. She had lost all sense of where she was or who she was with, she was only aware of a terrible emptiness that needed to be filled.

Hands moved her until she was lying on her right side, then the hands lifted her left leg to entwine around a body in front of her. The hands kept moving, touching different parts of her, arousing her further until she felt fingers entering her vagina, and Demon moaned her pleasure aloud. She pushed down onto the fingers wanting them deeper inside her, wanting to be filled, nearly screaming in frustration when they withdrew and left her empty. A moment later, the emptiness was filled again as new fingers found their way into her center. Different fingers, shorter but wider, stretching her further as they pushed into her. Then Demon felt another pressure, as a wet finger slipped into her anus. At first, she tensed against the invasion, but the finger moved slowly inside her, massaging the tight ring of her sphincter until it relaxed.

Now hands and mouths seemed to be everywhere on and in her body, touching her breasts, her mouth, her neck, her back, her ass, her clit but never withdrawing from her, as they filled her front and back. She could feel herself lifting to new levels of pleasure as the hands moved her into new positions, lifting her, moving her, until she found herself kneeling upright, her legs spread wide. Demon kept her eyes closed, not wanting to know whose body she straddled, not needing to know whose cock she was pulled down onto, just knowing that she needed to be filled, needed someone inside her to take away the loneliness and grief that had invaded her soul.

When the cock in her vagina had filled her completely, Demon felt the hands pull her forward until she lay supine on a warm chest, two arms clasped tightly around her, lips touching her neck and shoulders gently. Then hands moved and spread her ass cheeks, and once again, she felt the pressure on her back and wet fingers slipped inside her anus, massaging, stretching, lubricating. The sensation of those fingers pressing against the thin wall that divided them from the cock in her vagina was overwhelming

and for a moment Demon wasn't sure if it was pleasure or pain she felt. A few seconds later, she cried out her sense of loss as the fingers withdrew, then moaned in pleasure and pain as a hard cock slowly entered her ass, gently thrusting deeper and deeper into her.

She lay completely still, a smooth chest against her back and another pressing against her breasts, filled in a way she'd never been before. The hands still moved over her body, stroking and caressing. She felt two of them move under her shoulders and she was pulled upright, still holding herself motionless, as the two cocks started to move inside her. They moved in rhythm, one pushing in as the other pulled out, increasing Demon's pleasure with every thrust. Then a hand slid between her legs and started to stroke her clit. She exploded into orgasm, projecting it outwards, feeling herself being filled front and back with hot, wet streams as she drove both her lovers into climax with her. She took their orgasms back into herself, wove them in with her own and sent them out again, wave after wave of pleasure crashing through her, until she screamed her pleasure, her pain and her loss in a single word.

"MATTHEW!"

Gideon sat holding Lily in his lap, her head leaning against his chest as he rested his cheek against the top of her head. The warmth of her body helped ease the sense of loss and loneliness that threatened to overwhelm him at every second. Eventually he turned his head, gently kissed the top of her head and whispered, "Stay with me tonight Lily, please. Sleep with me."

Lily's head lifted, and Gideon found himself looking into the most incredibly green eyes he'd ever seen. She smiled up at him and lifted her mouth to kiss him then answered, "There's nowhere on this ship where I'd rather sleep tonight than in your arms, Matthew. Just hold me, will you? Hold me so I can forget how alone I feel."

He kissed her again, then eased her to her feet, reaching down to adjust his pants before he lifted her into his arms and carried her into his bedroom. The bunk there would have been too narrow to comfortably accommodate him and Demon, but Lily was so tiny that there would easily be room for the two of them. Gideon reached out the hand that supported Lily's legs and flipped back the covers, then lowered her gently to the bed. Pulling the covers over her he straightened. She started to protest as he stepped back but he leaned forward and touched her mouth with his fingers. "I'll join you in a minute. There's something I need to do first." He kissed her gently, then turned and left the bedroom, pulling the screen-door closed behind him.

Gideon returned to his desk and picked up the cube that rested on it, pressing the corner that showed the picture of Deborah and Marcus taken when Marcus was only two days old. Of all the images he had of Deborah, this was still his favorite. The love that shone in her eyes never failed to move him. He looked long and hard at the cube, then whispered, "Will you be able to forgive me? I miss you so much. This isn't just for sex. This is for comfort, for warmth, for companionship. I need her, Deborah, and she needs me. Will you be able to understand that? I won't betray you by taking your sister into our bed, but I need her. Tonight, when you're so far from me, I need the warmth of her body next to mine. I can only hope that John and Luke are caring for you as Lily is caring for me. Goodnight my love, my life, my heart and soul." He touched a finger to his lips then to his wife's image in the cube, then replaced it on his desk and stood.

When Gideon returned to the bedroom, he found that Lily was asleep, curled around his pillow, her face still wet from tears she'd shed in his absence. He stripped quickly and slid into the bunk beside her, taking the pillow gently from her hands, pulling her close to his side, lifting her head until it rested on

his chest. Lily half awakened and looked up at him, the loneliness she felt apparent in her expression. Gideon kissed her gently and wiped the tears from her face, then held her tightly, relishing the warmth and softness of her body next to his, smiling at how different it felt to have Lily's tiny body resting in his arms. He kissed the top of her head as it rested on his shoulder and spoke softly. "Go to sleep now, Lily. Maybe tomorrow won't be quite as bad as today."

Demon slowly lifted from sleep, stretching as she sprawled across the bed, reaching for her husband, her lover, her life. When her hands found nothing, she whimpered in dismay. Her eyes opened to see that her bed was empty, and she remembered that she was alone. Tears welled up and overflowed as her grief at Matthew's absence threatened to overwhelm her again as it had the night before. She frowned then, as she tried to remember. Something had happened. Demon remembered giving up the fight against her loneliness and despair, surrendering to the pain of absence, letting her sense of loss take over. But then she remembered that somehow that pain was eased, somehow the emptiness was filled, somehow... no, someone...

Demon sat up quickly, as memories flooded back into her head, breathing accelerating as she remembered the hands and the things they'd done. Her nipples hardened at the thought of what had happened the previous night, but she could feel herself blushing from head to toe as she remembered. Did embarrassment or desire create that flush? Demon wasn't sure. All she knew was that she didn't think she could ever face John and Luke again.

She buried her head into her pillow, as a wave of despair hit her. How could she ever tell Matthew what she had done? Guilt washed in over the despair and replaced it. [Oh gods, what have I done? He'll never forgive me.] Then fear pushed the guilt aside as Demon thought of Matthew being so angry with her that he'd leave her.

She didn't hear the door open and was unaware of someone in her room until two strong arms surrounded her and lifted her, pulling her head to a naked chest. Demon looked up into Luke Raven's eyes as he smiled down at her and kissed her gently. "Now I thought we'd got you past that last night. What's brought all those bad feelings back again?"

Demon struggled free of him and backed down the bed, until she was kneeling at the foot, the sheet pulled up around her. Luke sat with his back to the headboard, wearing only a pair of pants. He smiled gently at her as she stared at him. "Demon, don't feel guilty about what happened. You needed comfort and company. You needed to be loved. Is that so bad? I know how much you miss Matthew; I miss Lily just as much. Last night we helped each other through that pain. Don't beat yourself up about that."

Demon watched him carefully, having to swallow a lump in her throat before she could respond. "I love him so much, Luke. How could I betray him like this? He'll never forgive me." She pulled the sheet up to her face and sobbed into it, rocking herself in her misery.

Before she knew it, Luke had taken her into his arms again and was holding her gently, stroking her back and kissing her forehead. "Matthew knows how much you love him. He'll understand, I know he will. So don't fret. What we did was to help each other with the loneliness of missing the people we love. They'll forgive us."

Luke continued to hold Demon until her sobs subsided. He lifted her chin and smiled at her. "Now we have jobs to do and places to go. You need to eat. John tells me that today could be critical. So be a

good girl and get yourself washed and dressed, and I'll have breakfast ready for you when you come out." He kissed her on the forehead and pushed her gently away.

Demon slid off the end of the bed, dragging the sheet with her. She had no idea why she was clutching it. Given what had happened the night before, it was a bit late for modesty. She watched Luke as he stood and just as he opened the door to leave, stopped him. "Do you really think that Matthew will forgive me?" She freed one hand to rub her runny nose.

Luke smiled back at her. "Demon, he's so head over heels in love with you, he'd forgive you just about anything, but this time there's nothing to forgive. You turned to friends for comfort when you were lonely. Was that so bad? Matthew will understand." He left the room pulling the door gently closed behind him.

John looked up from the chair where he'd been sitting, listening to everything his partner had said to Demon. "I wish I could be sure of that, Luke. He may forgive Demon, but us? Matthew's not the forgiving type. If he finds out what we did..." Luke pressed his fingers to John's lips to silence him.

"Don't underestimate him, John. Would you forgive Lily if she sought comfort in another man's bed, while we're away from home? If she was so lonely without us that she needed the warmth of another body next to hers? Of course you would, and so would I. So why would Matt feel any differently? He loves Demon as much as we love Lily and just as we would be grateful to someone who cared enough to comfort Lily in her loneliness, Matt will feel the same. I'm sure of that." Raven smiled fondly down at John.

John stood and looked at Raven anxiously. "I wish I could be so sure, but there's nothing to be done about it and we have a job to do." He took a deep breath and turned to Raven with a grin. "I seem to remember hearing you offering breakfast to Demon. Do I take it that you're going to cook? If so, I'll get the indigestion tablets out now, shall I?"

Raven picked up a cushion and threw it at him. "My cooking's not that bad! So I can't make John Matheson's Special Chicken Soup, but even I can burn toast. Just watch me!"

Gideon awoke as he felt lips closing around his cock. He let out a small moan of pleasure as he lay with his eyes closed, thinking how much he enjoyed it when he woke with an erection that Deborah immediately wanted to taste. He lay for a moment enjoying the sensations of her lips and tongue as she worked her way down his shaft. Then he felt fingers stroking his balls--small fingers, not Deborah's fingers. His eyes flicked open, and he looked down to see a mass of red hair covering his belly, groin and thighs. Below that red hair was curled a tiny, beautifully formed butt, just visible as Lily knelt, her head down and legs tucked under her.

Gideon lifted his hand and stroked her hair gently, trying not to thrust himself up into her mouth as her tongue worked its way round the head of his cock, and her tiny fingers stroked the base.

He knew that Lily's attentions were going to make him climax quickly, and he didn't want to come in her mouth. He had no idea whether this was something she was used to and didn't want to upset her, so he grasped a lock of her hair and pulled gently. She lifted her head and smiled mischievously at him.

"Good morning, Matthew. I was just having a little pre-breakfast snack."

Gideon laughed softly. "Well, if you carry on like that, you might get more than you bargained for. Just ease off a little will you, Lily? I'll finish myself off in the shower."

Lily's eyes flared green. "Don't you dare! I want that for myself and I want it now!"

Before he could move, she had scrambled up the bunk and straddled him. His cock was trapped between them, pressed against her labia. When she started to slide herself slowly along it, the sensations were nearly overwhelming, but Gideon didn't want to come anywhere in that area. He'd been careful the night before to avoid any possibility of making Lily pregnant. He had no idea what method of birth control she used, and as Deborah had been happy to continue her long-term shots, he'd stopped his own some months earlier. If Lily were fertile, there was a damn good chance that he could get her pregnant. Sleeping with his best friend's partner was one thing, impregnating her was quite another.

Gideon tried to lift Lily off him but she fought back, shifting herself so the head of his cock slipped into the opening of her vagina. He started to protest, "No, Lily, don't... stop it... I can't..." But she was relentless. Having captured his cock between her lips, she drove herself down onto him, her wet warmth enclosing him completely. "Oh God, Lily, please..." She started to lift off him then slammed down onto him again, riding him hard, taking him as deep inside her as she could get him.

The tightness of her around his throbbing shaft was becoming more than he could handle. Gideon made one last attempt to lift her off him, thinking how stupid this was. Lily was tiny, he could lift her easily, but somehow what she was doing seemed to sap his strength, making it impossible for him to stop her. The speed of her movements increased, and he looked up into her face to see that she had her eyes closed and was biting her lips as she neared climax. All resistance failed, and he reached up to caress her hard nipples as she pounded up and down, now meeting her thrust for thrust. One small part of his mind told him he had to stop, to withdraw, to get out of her, before he came. As his balls started to tingle with the sensations that came before release, he tried one last time to lift her off him.

Lily leaned forward and bit him on the neck. Hard. Gideon's hands flew up to try to release her grip, but at the same moment, he exploded into climax. He could feel himself pumping a stream of hot semen deep inside her as she continued to slam down onto him, and her teeth sunk deeper into his neck. She spasmed around him, drawing everything out of him as she came, and he could do nothing to stop her.

He moaned his pleasure and his anguish at what they had done. "Oh God, no. Lily, no. I didn't want to do that." Lily collapsed onto his chest, releasing her sharp teeth from his neck, panting for breath. Gideon moved his arms to hold her against him, feeling himself softening inside her in the aftermath of his orgasm, wondering how he could ever explain to his best friend what he'd just done.

Lily lay panting on Matthew's chest, eyes closed. She'd heard his protests, and knew the concerns behind them, but she'd been unable to do anything about them. When she'd awoken in his arms, realizing that John and Luke were still away, she'd almost started screaming as the pain of separation had torn through her once again. The only way to get herself under control was to do, not to be done. So she *did*. [How pathetic. And how very human. But whatever will be is in your loving hands, Great Mother.] She felt peace float through her at that thought, and knew that everything would be all right.

Demon and John sat opposite each other in the otherwise empty car of the monorail, in total silence. The ride from their apartment to the conference center took about half an hour, and they'd spent the first ten minutes of the journey not speaking, looking anywhere but at each other.

John watched Demon out of the corner of his eye, pretending to look at the scenery flowing past the window. She'd kept her head down since they'd boarded the train, and had stared at the same spot on the floor all the time. [She'll wear it out if she stares at it much longer.] Breakfast had been subdued, with Luke desperately trying to make conversation and getting monosyllabic responses from his companions. He'd eventually given up and breakfast had ended in silence. John decided that he had to start somewhere.

"I think it's going..."

"John, we really have to..."

They spoke simultaneously and both ground to a halt together. Demon's head was still down, so John tried again.

"I think today could be really important to the peace talks. We're reaching a climax..." He stopped in mid-sentence as he heard his own words. John felt a blush that started somewhere around his ankles and worked its way up his entire body until he knew that his face was flaming red.

Demon's head came up abruptly as she stared at him, biting her lip. He watched as her expression changed from the blank mask she'd maintained since leaving her room, gradually breaking into a broad grin. "What? Another one?"

John lost it completely, falling on his side as laughter took over, barely able to look at Demon across the gangway, as she broke up. They both laughed helplessly, setting each other off again every time one of them sobered. Eventually, the pain in his side made John sit up and try to control himself.

"Demon, we really need to talk." He was still spluttering but managed to force the words out. She sat up opposite him, wiping tears from her cheeks, still grinning, but regaining control.

"I know. We have to work together, and as you said, today could be," Demon bit down on her lip again as she searched for a neutral word, then remembered the one Luke had used, "critical."

He nodded. "About last night..." he suddenly realized that he had no idea what to say about it. Fortunately she did.

"It happened, John. We can't change that or deny it. And I don't want to. It was... nice." She smiled across at him.

"Nice? Is that all you can say? Nice? The view outside the window is nice, the apartment is nice, and by some small miracle, even the breakfast Luke made us was NICE. But last night wasn't nice. Last night was wonderful. Spectacular. Amazing. Are you saying that for you it was just nice?" John knew that his usually impassive face was showing his surprise and hurt at her comment.

Demon rushed to reassure him. "I'm sorry, bad choice of word. It was incredible, and I can't tell you

how grateful I am to you and Luke for helping me out of the misery I'd locked myself into but..."

John didn't need to be a telepath to know why she'd stopped. "Matthew."

Demon nodded, tears welling up in her eyes as she looked at John. "How am I going to tell him? I can't keep this from him, it would eat away at me, but I'm so afraid of how he'll react. What if he hates me? What if he can't accept it?"

John reached out to touch her, then quickly withdrew his hand. They both had to work at keeping their shields up, to avoid drowning each other in their emotions. Physical contact would make it that much more difficult. "Would you forgive him if the roles were reversed?"

Demon frowned and looked back at the floor, considering his question. After a few moments, she looked up again. "To be honest, John it would depend on the circumstances and who the other person was. If he were lonely and miserable and turned to someone I trusted and cared for, then yes, of course I'd forgive him. There'd be nothing to forgive. But if it was just for sex or with someone I thought might want to take him from me, then... I don't know." Her face showed her ambivalence on the subject.

John smiled at her. "Then there's no problem, is there? Matthew will understand that you were unhappy and needed comfort, and Luke and I would never dare try to take you away from Matthew. Lily would kill us!" He watched as Demon smiled back before continuing, "What worries me is whether he'll forgive Luke and me. If he thinks we took advantage of you... well, I won't be going near any airlocks for a while. Not voluntarily anyway."

He smiled but his concern about Matthew's reaction was genuine. John felt guilty about what he and Luke had done the previous night, and there was a part of him that felt they *had* taken advantage of Demon when she was vulnerable. She may have needed comfort and warmth, but had they taken it too far? Couldn't they have comforted her without making love to her? She'd been in no fit state to decline their advances. His sense of guilt deepened.

Demon reached out and touched his hand gently. John could feel that she was using everything he'd taught her to keep her shields up, not wanting to read his feelings without his agreement. "John, you know that above anything, Matthew is fair. If he forgives me, he'll forgive you and Luke too." Her face broke into one of her most mischievous smiles. "So either none of us go out of the airlock, or we all go out together."

Gideon stood at the observation window to the landing bay, watching the shuttle come to rest. Lily stood beside him, barely able to contain her excitement at the prospect of seeing John again. She was shifting from foot to foot, unable to decide whether to stay at the window, so she could watch the shuttle doors open, or move to the door of the landing bay, so she could rush through as soon as the bay re-pressurized. He smiled and reached out, pulling her against his side. "Calm down. Bouncing up and down won't get them here any quicker." He had to sympathize though. Deborah was also on that shuttle, which made him feel like doing some bouncing around of his own.

John had called a couple of hours before, giving them the news that the peace agreement had been signed and ratified by both factions of the Kesani. The mission was a total success. Although the Kesani had wanted them to stay and join in the celebrations, he and Deborah were coming back immediately. They had been away over a week, and both of them were desperate to come home. Gideon

knew that they'd be exhausted when they arrived. It was evening ship's time, but on the planet below, the time zone where the conference had been held was just pre-dawn. John and Deborah had worked with the peace delegates for over twenty hours non-stop to get them to the point of signing.

Luke had stayed behind to complete his medical mission, but John and Deborah were coming home. Gideon couldn't stop saying the words over and over in his head, [She's coming home.] He would never have thought that he could miss someone as much as he'd missed Deborah in the last week. Despite the comfort that he and Lily had given each other in the absence of their loved ones, he was still desperate to see his wife, to hold her, to hear her voice, to make love to her, and now she was nearly home.

Gideon watched as the shuttle door started to open, then joined Lily in a rush to the landing bay doors, running through them as soon as they opened. As they ran across the bay together, the shuttle ramp descended and John and Deborah emerged. He saw from the corner of his eye when Lily launched herself into the air, shrieking, "Sweet Face!" at the top of her voice, as John caught her and swept her into a passionate embrace.

Then Gideon had no attention to spare for anything other than the woman who flung herself into his waiting arms. For a few moments, they stood motionless, her head buried in his neck, both holding each other as close and tight as they could. He stroked her hair and kissed the top of her head as he felt her tears on his neck, then moved his hand to her chin, pulling her face up to look at him. She smiled and cried at the same time and all he could think of to say was, "Missed me?"

Deborah thumped his arm gently and grinned widely. "Give me two minutes alone with you and I'll show you exactly how much I've missed you."

Gideon laughed softly and kissed her, breaking off to say, "Tempting though that offer is, I'll have to take a rain check. Whatever my behavior and that of my XO might lead you to believe," he looked across to where John still held Lily in his arms, kissing her passionately, "I'm still trying to run a military operation here." He leaned across and nudged John's arm. "Put her down will you? We need to do a debrief."

John grinned sheepishly and lowered Lily to the floor. He kept his arm round her as he replied. "Yes Sir, certainly Sir, and I'll follow your example as far as the rain check is concerned, Sir."

Gideon shook his head in mock despair as the four of them left the landing bay and headed for the conference room. Once in the bullet car, with no one but John and Lily to observe, he pulled Deborah onto his knee and kissed her thoroughly. When they eventually broke for air she smiled at him again, asking, "Is Marcus all right? Did he miss me?"

Gideon lifted his hand to caress her face, trying to ignore and suppress the blood rushing into his groin at the feel of having her in his arms again. "Oh, he's been his usual obnoxious self. Demanding to know where his mother was, insisting on staying up at night, even though he could hardly keep his eyes open, then refusing to get up in the morning. Lily has been a saint, but he's been wearing her patience down. Did I ever tell you that he must take after you? I'm never that unreasonable."

Deborah snorted her disagreement and turned to look at Lily, where she sat on John's knee, locked into a passionate kiss. Gideon watched as his wife closed her eyes and made mental contact with her sister. When she opened them again, she smiled enigmatically at him. "Lily has been very good to us, taking care of you both while I've been away. I'll have to find a way to thank her properly."

Gideon froze. [What the hell did that mean? Had Lily told her? Surely, she wouldn't...] He watched Deborah carefully, looking for any signs of anger, but there were none. She just gave him a smile that the Mona Lisa would have been proud of. He couldn't believe that she'd react so calmly if Lily had told her what they'd done.

He still wasn't sure if he regretted the one night that he'd spent with Lily. It had been memorable and delightful, but the potential consequences were terrifying. If Deborah found out about it, he just wasn't sure how she'd react and he'd decided he'd rather not find out. And if Lily were... Gideon suppressed that thought quickly before he could start to feel guilty, an emotion Deborah would pick up on at once.

He was saved from having to make a response by the arrival of the bullet car at their destination. "Come on, we need to get a report prepared for the ISA." Gideon pushed Deborah to her feet and turned to John, who was also standing, but kept his arm around Lily's shoulders. "I know the two of you must be exhausted, but let's get some initial comments into a note for them. That will buy us some time to prepare a full briefing. If we can get something together in the next hour, we can all go off duty and," he pulled Deborah to his side and gave her one last quick kiss before they exited the car, "do whatever we feel needs doing."

They stood looking down at Marcus as he slept in his cot. The initial briefing note had gone off to President Sheridan's office, and Gideon had told the bridge crew that he was going off duty. They had done a quick detour via the Medbay crèche, just to reassure Demon that her son was all right and could wait to see her until morning. She smiled to herself as she looked down at where Marcus had thrown off his covers in his sleep. [He's as restless as his father is.] She leaned over the cot and pulled the covers back up, then gently kissed the child on his forehead, stroking his blond curls as she did so.

Demon sometimes surprised herself at how protective she felt towards Marcus. She'd never expected to become maternal, having always been convinced that she lacked those instincts completely. But something about that little scrap of humanity pulled at her heart. She told herself that it was just because he looked so much like his father and turned to lean against Matthew's chest. He held her for a moment then kissed her, before pulling back to run his thumb along her cheekbone.

"You look tired. Have the last few days been very bad?"

Demon didn't try to deny it. "It was much tougher than I'd expected. I've never been surrounded by such hatred and mistrust before. It was pretty horrible." She looked deep into his eyes, allowing him to feel her passion for a moment. "I missed you terribly. I never want to be away from you for so long again. Luke and John were kind and comforted me, but..." she ran out of words, unable to describe how lost and lonely she'd felt without him.

Matthew pulled her close again, kissing her neck, whispering, "I know. I missed you too. Just don't ask me how much, as I don't have words to describe it." He leaned back and looked at her again, smiling sorrowfully. "Are you very tired? Do you want to sleep before we..."

Before he could finish, Demon was kissing him passionately. When she released his mouth, she smiled and said, "Don't even think about it. I've been dreaming of nothing else for the last week, so you'd better get your main gun on line, Captain."

They barely made it into their quarters before they were all over each other, both physically and mentally. John broke free from their latest breathtaking kiss, trying to ignore the desire coursing through his veins, and took Lily's face in his hands, looking at her intently. [[Did you really get through the last week OK?]] He'd already 'asked' her in the bullet car, but she'd only answered that it didn't matter now that he was back. But he needed to know.

Lily softly smiled up at him, laying her hands on his. [[I survived, though sometimes I thought I'd lose my mind.]] She looked at him for a moment, then pulled him down into a short, deep kiss. [[Thank you.]]

John looked at her wide-eyed. [[What for?]]

Her smile spread into a grin. [[For being there for Demon, when she needed comfort.]]

[[So that's what you were talking about in the bullet car!]]

[[That, and...]] Lily's next thoughts came out in a jumble, overpowering the feeling of guilt that had threatened to rise again inside him.

[[Whoa, careful! You'll give me a headache...]] He trailed off, looking at her open-mouthed for several seconds as he digested what she'd sent him, then smiled. [[Lily I... I'm so relieved! Luke and I were missing you like crazy but we still had each other, so we were afraid how much worse off you'd be all alone...]]

Lily smiled and brushed up against him, smiling seductively. [[Well, you're back now...]]

[[Yes, I am.]] John gave her a hungry look, then grabbed her and let one hand wander down her back to cup her ass, while the other moved to the back of her neck, pulling her head back by the hair and covering her parted lips with a passionate kiss. He pressed her hips against his, letting her feel his arousal, then moved his hand up along her spine until he found her zipper, and down again while undoing it. All the while, they were still kissing, exploring each other's mouths with their tongues, and Lily's arms lay around his neck tightly, her left hand mussing his hair.

When he'd undone the zipper completely, he slipped his hand beneath her dress to cup her naked ass, lifting her, and she swung her legs up and around to encircle his waist, slipping off her shoes, making him moan as she moved her hips against his. Finally, they came up for air, panting, and John could see the desire he felt from Lily through their joined minds reflected in her eyes; her pupils dilated with desire. He let his lips wander along her jaw, down her neck, along her cleavage, making her moan with pleasure. Silently, he instructed her to slip out of her dress's sleeves, and when she'd pushed down the silky material, he closed his lips around one of her already hard nipples, sucking and licking it, feeling her fingernails dig into his neck and shoulders as she threw her head back.

He carried her to the sofa, letting her slide down to stand on it, as he continued caressing her breast with his mouth, his hands busy removing her dress completely. As soon as she'd stepped out of it and let it slip to the floor, Lily pressed the full length of her naked body against his, still fully dressed. But it didn't stay like that for long. She was already pushing the jacket off his shoulder, and when his mouth wandered up her neck, it lay on the floor next to her dress, soon joined by his T-shirt, pants, shoes, socks and briefs.

Lily pulled him down with her, as she let herself sink onto the sofa, smiling at him hungrily, but he gave her a teasing grin when he was on all fours above her.

[[Impatient?]]

Lily raised an eyebrow, but before she could say or do anything more, John bent down and kissed her thoroughly, but only briefly. [[Turn around.]]

A naughty grin spread on Lily's lips, then she turned around onto her belly, resting her head on her arms and closing her eyes in anticipation of what was to come. John lifted her hips and put a cushion under them, then pulled her long curls to the side and laid on top of her, careful not to crush her, smiling at her moan as his erection pressed against her ass. He let his right hand wander gently over her arms, her shoulders, down her sides, along her hips and up again, while sucking her earlobe. He moaned as she started moving her hips rhythmically, causing his cock to become even harder.

[[I want you... now!]] The slightest moans and gasps escaped Lily's half-open mouth; her fingernails were digging into the soft upholstery of the sofa.

John let go of her earlobe and shifted slightly, then entered her hot wet core with a single, slow thrust. For a moment, he remained still, eyes closed, then laid his arms along Lily's, their fingers interlacing, and leaning his cheek against hers started to thrust into her, slowly, deliberately, concentrating on her pleasure entirely. Soon they were lost in an ocean of pleasure, soft moans filling the room, her body undulating beneath his as they were carried closer and closer to the edge. He could feel Lily's muscles start pulsing around his cock and came with a loud moan, answered by hers as he emptied himself deep inside her.

Finally, he collapsed on top of her, and they lay there panting, basking in the afterglow. By the time they'd caught their breath, John had softened inside her. He slid out of her and moved to sit back on the sofa, pulling her with him and sitting her on his lap with her back against him. For a moment, he wrapped her in his arms and leaned his cheek against hers, relishing her presence and letting her feel how happy he was to be back.

Lily stirred in his arms and turned to look at him, and even without sharing her mind, he would have known from the look in her emerald green eyes that she would always love him, as he would always love her. Yet something... someone was still missing.

[[But soon we'll be truly complete again.]] Lily smiled softly and touched John's lips with hers in the gentlest of kisses.

Gideon knelt between Deborah's legs as she lay on her stomach on their bed. He pushed her hair to one side and started kissing her neck, then across her broad shoulders, down her spine to the hollows just above her buttocks. He ran his hands over her ass, fondling her cheeks before sliding a hand between her spread legs and into her curls. She moaned and lifted her hips from the bed, silently telling him what she wanted. He smiled and slid a pillow under her hips then slipped a finger inside her, finding her wet and soft beneath his touch. Slipping a second finger alongside the first, Gideon started to gently finger fuck her with one hand while caressing her back and buttocks with the other. His cock stood stiffly to attention before him, and he had every intention of burying it deep inside his wife in the very near future, but he wanted to make her come before he entered her, and then he planned to make her come again, and again, until she begged him to stop.

He could feel her vagina pulsing around his fingers and knew that Deborah was close, so slid his hand

out of her and up to her clitoris. He stroked it gently, then slipped his hand back inside her. Each time Gideon did this, she came closer to climax and she was now thrusting herself up and down onto his fingers. With one last thrust of his hand deep inside her, he lifted Deborah to orgasm, then kept her there, wave after wave of pleasure surging through her as he rubbed her clit. His cock was quivering with the need for his own release, but he fiercely quelled it, as he let her waves roll over and through him.

When she finally subsided, Gideon leaned forward, lying on her back, resting his cock in the cleft between her buttocks. He moved his hands until they covered hers, then pulled her arms above her head, holding onto her wrists. As Deborah quieted, he lifted his hips and slid his cock between her legs, sliding it along her labia, searching for her entrance. She lifted her ass again, positioning herself to allow him entry, and he slipped the head of his cock inside her.

Pushing his feet against Deborah's ankles, he spread her legs wider apart, his body now completely covering hers as he lay on her back. Gideon thrust his hips down and entered her completely, drawing a deep groan of pleasure from her. Holding still for a moment, he enjoyed the feel of her vagina enclosing his cock, warm and wet, gently grasping and releasing him as Deborah flexed her muscles. That movement was enough to draw a response from him, and he started to move, slowly withdrawing almost completely, then equally slowly pushing back into her, each long, slow thrust bringing both of them closer to climax. Gradually, he increased the pace of his movements, every time nearly pulling out of her before pushing back into her depths. Deborah pushed back into him, matching him thrust for thrust, as he kissed the back of her neck and shoulders. Gideon could feel her hands gripping the pillows under his, as he continued to hold her arms immobile above her head.

Then Deborah exploded into an orgasm more intense than any he remembered since their reconciliation on Mars. He kept pounding into her, trying to resist his own climax as long as possible, driving her into another wave of pleasure with every thrust. Eventually, his resistance broke under the double assault of his own sensations and her projections, and he came. And came and came. Each forward lunge seemed to release another burst of wet heat into her, drawing everything out of him, draining his balls of the pent up pressure of a week without her. Gideon had one fleeting thought that he hadn't gone that full week without release, before pleasure overwhelmed him and coherent thought vanished.

He collapsed onto his wife's back, gasping for air, his heart thudding frantically in his chest and as he slowly regained control, he kissed the nape of her neck again. Gideon knew Deborah well enough to know that she wouldn't want him to withdraw for a while. She loved the feel of his weight on her and the feel of him deep inside her.

They lay quietly for a moment, then Deborah turned her head on the pillow and spoke, still with her eyes shut and a smile on her lips. "Matthew?"

"Mmm," was the only answer Gideon could summon at that moment.

"Why don't you ever fuck my ass?"

Gideon froze for a moment then slowly withdrew from his wife, lifting himself off of her and rolling onto his back. He stared at the ceiling for a few moments, trying to think of a way to answer Deborah's question. He looked over as she turned onto her side, propping her head on her hand and frowning at him.

"Did you hear me?"

He nodded. "Yes. I'm just trying to tell myself that I didn't. I don't think I can have heard you right."

She frowned even more. "Well, what do you think I said?"

Gideon turned his head back to stare at the ceiling. "I don't think I want to say. Why don't you ask me again? Then I'll know if I heard you right."

Deborah repeated her question. It was as he'd feared. He *had* heard her correctly. "Why do you ask?" As soon as he said it, he wished he hadn't. Did he really want to know the answer to that question? Her response was everything he'd feared.

"A couple of reasons. First... well, you fucked Lily's ass, so why don't you ever fuck mine?" Gideon closed his eyes for a moment, hoping that this was just a dream, a nightmare, and that he'd wake up soon. He looked across at his wife again, and couldn't believe that she didn't look angry, just puzzled and maybe a little hurt. While he was trying to think of a non-incriminating response, Deborah spoke again. "I always thought that maybe you didn't like to fuck..."

He interrupted her before she could finish her sentence. "Do you think you could use another expression? Something a little less... basic?" Gideon put his arms behind his head and continued to stare at the ceiling, wondering how the hell he was going to get out of this one.

Deborah sighed. "Oh, all right. Never knew you could be prudish." Gideon was stunned when she leaned over him and kissed him, then she drew back and smiled. "What I was going to say was that I always thought that you didn't like... um... anal sex. Is that better?"

"Barely. Of course I like... what you said. All men like it. Well, as far as I know they do." He carried on staring at the ceiling, thinking back on his academy days when he'd discussed such things with fellow cadets. [Can't think of a single guy who said he didn't. Some preferred boys and some girls, but everyone liked a good ass.]

Her next comment caught Gideon totally unprepared. He could hear the hurt in Deborah's voice as she said, "So it's just my ass you don't want to... have." She knelt upright and turned her head to look over her shoulder, trying to see her own butt. "Is it too big? I know that Lily is much smaller than me, is that why you liked hers better?" She was almost whimpering her distress.

Gideon sat up abruptly and pulled her down into his arms. "You have the most beautiful ass in the galaxy, OK? It's just... We never talked about it, and I assumed that you hadn't... Well, that you hadn't had a lot of experience in that area. But as Lily sleeps with two men every night, it was a pretty fair bet that she did." He paused and kissed Deborah gently. "I can't believe we're having this conversation! Aren't you mad at me? With Lily? Did she really tell you about this in the bullet car? I saw you link to her then."

Deborah nodded. "Yes, she told me in the bullet car, and no, of course I'm not mad. You helped each other when you were lost and lonely. How could I be angry about that?"

Gideon let out a sigh of relief as he hugged her to his side. He would never have believed he could get that lucky. Deborah wasn't angry with him, he'd got away with it! He swore to himself that he would never do anything like that again, no matter what the circumstances. He never wanted to jeopardize what he had with Deborah. They lay quietly for a while, her body soft and warm against his side, as

he ran over their previous conversation in his head. One comment she'd made puzzled him.

"You said there were a couple of reasons you asked that question. What was the other one?" He was mildly curious.

"Well, I just rediscovered how much I like it."

Gideon froze in place as the implications of what Deborah had said sank in, then sat up abruptly, turning her onto her back and glaring down at her. "Who was it? Which one of the bastards did that to you? I'm gonna space the..."

Deborah shifted her hand to his lips and stopped him in mid rant. "Matthew, stop it. I told John that you were always fair. Don't prove me wrong."

"John? Was it John? So much for being my best friend! What sort of man fucks his best friend's wife in..." Gideon stopped dead as the hypocrisy of his own words hit him. He took a deep breath and looked down at her as she lay quietly beneath him. "Why? What made you sleep with him? Or was it with them both?"

He cringed as Deborah nodded. She'd slept with both of them. How could she have done that to him? She lifted her hand to caress his face, and the look of love in her eyes nearly made Gideon weep. "I was lost and lonely, Matthew. I missed you so much, I couldn't bear the pain. I was losing myself in my grief, just as I nearly did on Mars. This time you weren't there to save me, to stop me falling into that bottomless pit of despair, but John and Luke were. They caught me. Caught me and held me, stopped me losing myself and I'm so grateful to them. I think I would have gone mad without them."

Gideon realized what an idiot he'd been. He hugged her tightly, kissing her face, her hair, her neck, everything he could reach. Deborah returned his kisses with love and passion in equal measures, and soon he could feel himself becoming aroused again. He stopped kissing her for a moment, and looked at her, smiling. "Are you too tired?"

She smiled back and shook her head. "Perhaps you'd better show me what I've been missing."

"I thought you said that she scared you? Got over that did you?"

Commander John Matheson looked up from the report about the peace mission to the Kesani people and stared at Matthew Gideon, his Captain and friend, face blank, his mind trying to follow the sudden change of topic. Then their eyes met, and John noticed Gideon's guarded, searching look, the look he had when interrogating someone--and it hit him. Hard. He could feel himself blushing violently and adrenalin surging into his bloodstream. The report he'd held in his hands slipped onto the desk, as he opened his mouth to...[Do what? Apologize? Confess my guilt? Defend myself? There's no excuse for what I--we--did.]

"Close your mouth, Commander, unless you want to catch imaginary flies." Gideon's voice was carefully neutral, and John was too agitated to get any hints about the emotions the Captain was hiding behind that poker face of his. John abruptly shut his mouth and swallowed, trying not to let his nervousness show, painfully aware of his [Former?] friend watching his every move.

"You seem to be a little tense, Commander. I'd even say you give the impression of someone who's

feeling... guilty."

For endless seconds, the two men's eyes were locked, then John closed his and lowered his head, shame and guilt welling up inside him. "I am," he murmured, thinking, [He'll kill me, slowly and painfully. Not physically, but...]

He expected Gideon to explode and knock him out cold, or to quietly tell him his career with Earthforce was over--anything but touching his hand and saying, quietly, "Don't."

John opened his eyes and looked up again, totally confused now. He could see the warmth in Matthew's eyes and felt sincerity through his touch, as he repeated in a soft voice, "Don't, John."

John was still unable to say anything when Matthew withdrew his hand and leaned his arms on the desk with a sigh, lowering his head for a moment, then looking at John again. "The last few days were hell for all of us, probably most for Deborah with all those negative emotions storming in on her and her lack of training..." Gideon's voice trailed off as the painful memories of the past lonely days rushed in on him, but he suppressed them, then continued, "You can believe me that any other men who even tried to touch Deborah would die a slow, painful death at my hand, provided she didn't beat me to it." A tiny smile appeared on his lips. "But I absolutely know that you and Luke would never betray my trust, and you love Lily too much to stray too far."

John grimaced. "Hell no, we'd never dare. She's just too damn quick with her daggers."

Gideon laughed and held John's eyes with his. "Promise me you won't feel guilty any more for giving Deborah the comfort she needed, John."

John felt a heavy weight lift off him, and he took a deep breath. "If you don't either..." He gave Matthew a small knowing smile.

Gideon barked a short laugh. "No way to keep a secret in this family, I guess." He turned serious again and looked straight into John's eyes, holding out his hand. "Deal."

John's smile widened as he shook it and nodded. "Good."

Gideon grinned. "Got you going there, didn't I?"

John laughed. "Yes, you did. I'd even say you enjoyed it, Captain." He cocked an eyebrow at him.

Gideon looked at him wide-eyed. "Who me? You must be confusing me with someone else, Commander," he said, then grinned.

John shook his head. He hesitated a moment, then asked, "May I make a suggestion?" Matthew gestured for him to go on, looking at him curiously, and he continued, "I'd recommend that from now on, you let me lead any away missions that require an absence of more than a couple of days. I don't think I--or Luke, for that matter--could cope with Demon coming after us looking for comfort every time you leave her alone for longer."

For a while, Gideon just sat there with his jaw flapping, then said, "Er, right... she can be a bit demanding, can't she?" He broke into a wide grin, which his XO returned, looking at him with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes. After a moment, Matthew's grin disappeared and was replaced by a frown as he sighed and shook his head. "That's blackmail. Again. If you keep this up, I'll end up

permanently minding the shop, while you go out and have fun." He leaned forward and gave Matheson a stern look, not quite succeeding in keeping the edges of his mouth from turning upwards. "I'm afraid I don't have a choice there, do I?"

"So do we have a deal?" John asked, his grin growing even wider.

Gideon growled. "We do--on one condition." John braced himself, sure that Gideon was about to turn the tables on him somehow.

"What's that, Sir?" He waited for the axe to fall.

"You get to lead any away missions that will take more than forty-eight hours, but only those missions when I can't take Deborah with me. If I can take her," Gideon paused and smiled maliciously before continuing, "You get to baby sit Marcus. I warn you now, that kid has the smelliest diapers known to man, Narn or even Pak'ma'ra. Do we have a deal?"

"Yes, Sir. Of course there aren't that many missions when you'd risk taking her, are there?" John gave him his best innocent look.

Gideon found himself sighing again. "You're getting entirely too good at that. I'll have to keep a close eye on you."

Matheson bowed his head. "I learned from the best."

"Well, thank you..."

"Actually, I meant Mr. Eilerson, Captain." Matheson ducked quickly to evade the paper ball Gideon threw at him.

"Get out of my office, Commander, and go home to show your family how much you love them."

Matheson got up and saluted smartly. "Yes, Sir. Recommend you do the same, Sir," then disappeared out the door quickly, leaving Gideon to look after him grinning.

{Chapter 1}

The Witches of Eriadne: Interlude Four C

[{Part 1: Away From Home}](#) [{Part 2: Just One of Those Days}](#)