

The Witches of Eriadne:

Interlude Five A - Part 2: My Family

by Marcus Gideon - aged 12 ½



Uncle Alwyn

Chapter 1

17th September 2281

My family is quite complicated. Or weird. I'm not sure what the best word is to describe them. There are quite a lot of us, if you count uncles, aunts and cousins, and none of us is exactly what you would call ordinary.

I'll start with my dad. Everyone knows who my dad is. He's Matthew Gideon, the man who saved Earth from the Drakh ~~plague~~ plague. That happened soon after I was born, so I didn't know about that then. But after he had saved Earth, he came back to Eriadne where I was born and got me and my mum and we joined him on his ship, the Excalibur. We stayed with him on the ship for the next four years. I don't remember much about that time, as I was still very young, but I've heard stories since and we had lots of adventures and battles. Then my dad decided it was too dangerous for us living on his ship, so we came back to Earth. That was the first time I had been to Earth. We lived in California for a bit and I liked that house because it was right next to the sea.

Soon after we came back, my little sister Mattie was born. My mum was really sick before Mattie was born, and she was in hospital for a long time, but when she came out she got better. My mum is really famous too, but not as much as my Dad. My mum's name is Deborah Gideon, but most people know her by the name she had before she got married. Then she was Deborah Montgomery. That's why most people call her Demon. De from Deborah and Mon from Montgomery. Get it? But my dad always calls her Deborah.

My Mum is a famous writer and she has sold lots and lots of books. She's quite nice most of the time, but she can be a bit of a pain about washing and eating vegetables and bedtimes and things

like that. Once she told my dad that he shouldn't teach me how to play poker, but Dad did anyway, but then he wasn't very happy when I beat him.

After he came back to Earth Dad got bored and he wasn't very happy for a bit, but then he got a new job working for President Sheridan. Now he's what he calls a Trouble-shooter. I don't know what that is, but he has to go away travelling quite often, but he makes sure he is home for the school holidays and in between my mum and Mattie used to go with him. Since Mattie started school they haven't been able to go with him as much, which makes Mum sad as she misses Dad a lot when he's gone. I wish Mattie and I didn't have to go to school so we could all go away together. I miss my dad when he's not there.

We all moved to England soon after Mattie was born. We live in a big house in Cornwall which is really nice as there are lots of rooms for the other people in our family to come and stay with us and it has a swimming pool and a really nice beach.

When we first moved to England, the person who used to come and stay most often was my Auntie Angel, who is my mum's sister. She's really famous, too, or she was back then. She was a movie star, and her name was Angelique Denier. She made some really good movies and she ~~was nom~~ won an Oscar for one of her movies. For a while she was married to my Uncle Michael and he was really nice but he got shot and died which made us all very sad specially my Auntie Angel. That made me sad because I like my Auntie Angel a lot. Before that she'd been really good fun but then she was sad.

The next year after that most of my family went back to Eriadne on a visit for my dad's 50th birthday, but when we got there we found another man waiting for us, who was a relative of my dad's. He looked just like Dad, but I didn't like him at all. He said nasty things about my dad and one of his men shot my dad, and Dad nearly died, but then he didn't. But the bad man whose name was Lucas Buck took my Auntie Angel away with him and it was a very long time before we saw her again. It was very sad.

When my Auntie Angel came back she was really sick but she got better. She's really pretty and she looked prettiest when she got married to my Uncle Jack. He also looks just like my dad but a bit older. That's because he came from another universe where he was also Captain of the Excalibur but in his universe the bad guys won and he didn't save Earth and they came after him and they attacked the Excalibur and everyone was killed except my Uncle Jack and then a hole opened up between his universe and ours and he came through. He was in love with my Auntie Angel right from when he met her but they had a fight and he went away, but after my Auntie Angel came back they met again and they decided to get married. The wedding was on Eriadne and it was really nice. I got dressed up in a tuxedo just like Dad and Uncle Jack and I gave my Auntie Angel away at her wedding!

Mum has two other sisters, and they all lived together in a castle on Eriadne before me and my cousins were born. The next sister is my Auntie Lily. My Auntie Lily is very small, which is odd because my mum is very tall, and you wouldn't really think that sisters could look so different. Mattie and me look quite like each other, but Auntie Lily doesn't look much like my mum or my Auntie Angel. She has very bright red hair, and she wears silly clothes with lots of lace and frills.

She can't climb trees in the dresses she wears. But she's a witch and she can cast some really interesting spells, so she's OK.

My Aunty Lily has two husbands. One is my Uncle John whose real name is John Matheson and he is really famous as well. He took over as Captain of the Excalibur when Dad brought me and Mum back to Earth and he's a telepath. He was the first telepath to be allowed to join Earthforce, which is why he's really famous. He is very careful not to use his telepathy when he shouldn't. He's a bit strict about that, but in other ways he's quite good fun. Uncle John is my dad's best friend. Aunty Lily's other husband is my Uncle Luke. He's Chief Medical Officer on the Excalibur and he's really nice. He's not a telepath.

My cousin Dasha is a telepath like his father, my Uncle John. Dasha is also very careful not to use his telepathy when he's not supposed to. My cousin Dasha is my best friend. He has a twin sister called Faylinn who I don't like very much because she always wants to join in when me and Dasha play games. I wish she'd just play with her little sister Naima and then Dasha and me could play together on our own. One time Faylinn got hold of my favorite toy my teddy bear Half-Ted and she ripped him apart. I was very young then so I was very upset when Half-Ted was hurt, but my Aunty Angel, Uncle Luke and Uncle G'Tan fixed him.

Uncle G'Tan is a Narn and he is very big and has lots of spots. He was head of security on the Excalibur and all the Marines on the ship reported to him. One of the Marines was my Aunty No'Kar who is also a Narn and she also has lots of spots. When we all lived on the Excalibur, I remember we sometimes went to play with their children, who are called pouchlings. I don't know why they are called that. Uncle G'Tan and Aunty No'Kar left the Excalibur last year and went to work with my Uncle Jack and Aunty Angel who live on a really cool space ship called Angel's Rest. I sometimes wish I could go live with them on their space ship, as then I wouldn't have to go to school. But I guess I would miss Mum and Dad if I did that.

My mum's youngest sister is called Ilas and she isn't human. I don't really understand how she can be Mum's sister if she isn't human, but my mum says that doesn't matter. My Aunty Ilas is really cool because she's a shape-shifter! She can look like anything she wants to! Most of the time she has white skin and blue hair but sometimes she can look really strange. Aunty Ilas is married to Uncle Max and Aunty Dureena. Uncle Max is really really rich! Once we went to visit them at their house on Mars and it is huge! It's mostly underground like most houses on Mars, but there were bits that felt like being outside because they had ~~transp~~ clear glass roofs. There were lots of paintings on the walls and ornaments and things that Dad said were worth a lot of money and either Uncle Max was richer than he thought or my Aunty Dureena had been stealing things again.

My Aunty Dureena isn't human either. She's a Zanderi and she and her daughter Ilori are the last of their kind. All the other Zanderi people were killed by the Drakh. It's very sad. Aunty Dureena is a Thief. She was trained by the Thieves Guild and she is really really good at stealing things. She helped my dad find the cure to the Drakh plague.

Uncle Max ~~is a Zenoarki Xenoarki~~ digs up old things that are really valuable. That's how he got so rich. He is also very good at learning lots of languages. Dad says Uncle Max can be a smartass

in hundreds of different languages. I sometimes think my dad doesn't like my Uncle Max much, but Uncle Max also helped find the cure to the Drakh plague, so he must be a good person.

Aunty Ilas, Aunty Dureena and Uncle Max have two children, my cousins Vya and Ilori. Vya is a shape-shifter like his mum. I didn't like Vya much when I first met him as he teased me about Half-Ted and he was mean. But then he changed and got much nicer. Although he is a few months younger than me, shape-shifters grow up quicker than humans so he looks much older now. He'll be leaving school soon and he is going to be a Ranger. I want to be a Ranger when I grow up too. Ilori is the youngest of my cousins and she's a girl.

My last uncle is the most exciting one. Uncle Alwyn is a Technomage and he has his own pet dragon! She is golden and called Ishtar and she has a baby that no one knows whether it is a boy or a girl or what its name is yet. Ishtar can breathe fire and once she flamed my dad because he was rude to Alwyn, but she only burned his ear a little bit and my mum made it better. Technomages are really cool as they can do lots of things that seem like magic. My dad says that I should be really careful not to be rude to Uncle Alwyn as he might put a Technocurse on me and I really wouldn't like that. My dad told me that once another Technomage friend of his put a Technocurse on a woman who had upset my dad, and she got an electric shock every time she went for a pee. I don't want that to happen to me so I'm always really polite to Uncle Alwyn and to Ishtar. Dad says they are both very old and probably senile, but I don't know what that means and Dad told me not to tell them he said that.

Uncle Alwyn is married to Aunty Sarah and she is a doctor. She and Uncle Alwyn worked together and it was them who worked out the last bit of the cure to the Drakh plague, but they don't want anyone to know that. Uncle Alwyn says he doesn't want any statues of him made. That's probably because he couldn't decide how he should look in a statue. He changes how he looks quite often. Sometimes he looks younger and sometimes older. If I can't be a Ranger when I grow up I think I would quite like to be a Technomage. Uncle Alwyn and Aunty Sarah have a son called Jaysen, who is also my cousin. Jaysen is two years younger than me and he likes to play with me when he comes to visit. He will probably be a Technomage like his dad when he grows up.

The last member of my family is Oscar. He is my dog. He's called Oscar after the statue my Aunty Angel won as he is the same color and she gave him to me. He is a Golden Retriever and my mum complains that he is too hairy and his hair gets everywhere. Dad laughs when she says that and tells her that she is just as bad as Oscar as she has lots of golden hair too and he says it gets in his mouth when they go to bed together. Then he kisses her and that gets a bit icky. He says it's just because he loves her a lot, which I know is true. Dad loves me and Mattie a lot too, which I can also tell because I can always tell what people are feeling.

So I have a big family that is a bit ~~pecul~~-odd but we are all very happy together.

Teacher's comments

This is very well written, Marcus. We will discuss the spelling of some of the words that caused you problems later. However, this was supposed to be a truthful account of your family, not made up. We can also discuss the difference between fact and fiction. I would have given you an A for the writing, but because you didn't follow the brief I'm afraid I can only give you a B+.

Veronica Haines

23rd September 2281

3rd October 2281

When I got my essay back from Mrs Haines I was a bit disappointed with my mark so I showed it to Dad. He laughed and said it was probably a good thing that she hadn't believed me as there were some things in there that only the family needed to know about. So then I showed it to Uncle Alwyn who was staying with us for a bit, along with Auntie Sarah and cousin Jaysen.

Uncle Alwyn said he really enjoyed reading my essay and he would let me know what senile meant just after he'd taught my dad a lesson about it. I think Dad already knows what senile means, but maybe he doesn't. Uncle Alwyn said he would like to meet my teacher sometime and teach her a lesson as well. Maybe Uncle Alwyn has decided to be a teacher instead of a Technomage now.

A few days later I was waiting outside the Headmaster's office (don't ask) when I saw Mrs. Haines come out of the staffroom and go into the ladies toilets. After a couple of minutes I heard a loud scream. Then it went quiet and Mrs. Haines came out looking very red in the face. When she saw me standing in the corridor, she came over to speak to me.

"Marcus, is your Uncle Alwyn still staying with you?"

I nodded, but thought it best not to say anything just then. I wondered how she knew Uncle Alwyn was staying with us.

"Will you tell him that I decided I had been a bit unfair when I marked your essay and I have changed the mark to an A?"

I was really pleased about that as I had put a lot of time and hard work into that essay, so I said, "Oh thanks, Mrs. Haines! I know Uncle Alwyn really enjoyed reading it, so I thought it must be good. My dad liked it too but he said I need to learn some 'discretion' in future. I asked him what that meant and he said I should look it up or ask someone but it was something he had found difficult to learn and that I should never ask a Drazi what it means as they don't have a word for it. I'm still not sure what discretion is."

Mrs. Haines smiled at me, "That's all right, Marcus, I can explain that to you, but you just be really sure to tell your Uncle Alwyn about that mark, will you?"

I could tell she was feeling really anxious about that, so I nodded and told her, "He's gone away for a couple of days but he should be back this weekend, so I'll tell him then."

Mrs. Haines gave a funny little moan then turned and walked away from me. I noticed that she was limping as she went, then she stopped and turned back, saying "Just be sure to tell him that I've learned my lesson." Then she limped back into the staffroom.

I think Uncle Alwyn must be a really good teacher, don't you?

{Chapter 1}

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