

The Witches of Eriadne: Toil and Trouble - Part 1: Anticipation

by [The Space Witches](#)

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The Excalibur crew

Taken from [TNT's official Crusade Site](#)

Chapter 1

Gideon marched towards the conference room with an expression of sheer triumph on his face. He'd just finished talking to General McLean, who'd ordered the refit of the Excalibur, and Gideon had convinced him that it was unnecessary for the entire command crew of the ship to stay on board while the work was done.

There was only one fly in the ointment. How was he going to tell Sarah that she wasn't getting the vacation that the others were? With Medbay being the most important part of the refit, it was essential that she stayed and familiarized herself and the medical team with the new equipment. He felt enormous satisfaction that it was the work done by him and his team on Eriadne, and the instruments they'd brought back from there, that had led to the breakthroughs made since. The result was the refit now ordered. And only just over four months had gone by since they'd left.

As ever when he thought of Eriadne he thought of Deborah, remembering how he'd last seen her, looking so controlled at the foot of the ramp, not allowing herself to show him how much his leaving was hurting. But he'd known; it had hurt him as much. Then as always he thought of Angel and how he'd last seen her. He pushed the thought away; he was ashamed of what he'd done that day.

But now there was a chance to go back. He'd got McLean to agree that he and some of his key personnel could vacation on Eriadne, making it a working holiday, seeing if there were any more undiscovered secrets that could be of value. This gave him the excuse for the detour to drop them there. He'd contacted the bridge and called a meeting as soon as he was off the line. Now to break the good news.

When he arrived the full team was assembled. Max and Dureena were sitting close to each other as usual. Since their time on Eriadne they'd been close. Max was happy because some of the discoveries he'd made there had been amply rewarded by IPX, putting him in credit for years to come.

John Matheson stood waiting as always; he'd never sit until his Captain was in the room. Sarah spoke quietly with Galen, who seemed to be spending much more time aboard Excalibur these days, but was as remote as ever. Gideon realised that it was weeks since he and Galen had talked. He wondered if he'd done something to upset the Technomage; unlikely, if he had Galen would have told him. Bluntly.

He stood in front of the viewing screen, leaning back on the shelf there with his legs and arms crossed. "I've got some news."

They quieted and looked round at him, Matheson slipped into a chair next to Dureena. He knew Gideon well enough to see beyond the poker face, realizing that something was exciting him; Gideon had good news and he was drawing it out intentionally.

"You all know how much progress has been made with the equipment we brought back from Eriadne; and yes, Max, I know that most of that is down to you. We all know that you're a genius, you don't have to tell us again." Gideon's mouth was quirked into a half smile as he said it and Max sat up straighter in his chair, preening slightly. "And you don't have to tell us again how much IPX paid you in bonuses for some of that stuff either. We might ask for a cut." They were all laughing now; even Max was smiling at the joke at his expense.

"Well, the news gets better. The smart guys have figured out how to turn it into upgrades for the Medbay and engineering. We're going to be refitted and we're on our way to the ship yards at Sirius Minor for an overhaul." There were groans from around the room. Sirius Minor was known as the armpit of the sector. R&R facilities were primitive. Gideon maintained the poker face.

"But we're going on a small detour first." He turned to Sarah Chambers, "I'm really sorry Sarah but they're going to need you on board for the upgrades. They need you to co-ordinate and get your team up to speed on the changes." Chambers shrugged her shoulders.

"That's OK Captain, sounds interesting. I've always regretted I wasn't with you at Eriadne when you discovered all those wonderful things." No one would quite meet her eyes at this point. Gideon pushed on before anyone could be less than discreet about the 'wonderful things' they'd discovered.

"But for the rest of us we get a short break. A working vacation."

Max groaned. "Why can't we have a non-working vacation?"

Gideon looked over at him. "Thought IPX didn't pay you for vacations, Max? Looking for us to chip in again? Well this time you get the chance to make a few more bonuses while having some fun."

Gideon's mouth twitched again as he knew he now had their attention.

Matheson spoke for the first time "And where does this detour take us Captain? Where do we get to take this working vacation?" He knew that Gideon had been drawing it out, building their anticipation, but decided he wanted to know where this was going.

Gideon looked straight at Matheson, his smile becoming more apparent.

"Eriadne B."

Matheson leaned forward abruptly. Gideon could see his mouth moving, forming a single word "Lily." He knew that Matheson had spent much of the last few months thinking about Lily in the same way he'd thought about Deborah; missing her, wanting her. Max and Dureena were hugging each other, both smiling broadly. Only Galen sat unmoving, expressionless. Gideon turned to him.

"Coming with us, Galen? I know you didn't totally hit it off with the women last time, but I'm sure they'd make you welcome." Galen stood, pulling his coat around him.

"Oh, I think I'd better come along don't you? Just in case something nasty has got out of a Box." He swept out of the conference room, leaving an atmosphere of tension behind him instead of the happiness that had existed a moment before. Gideon watched as the door closed behind him.

"Well, he sure knows how to rain on my parade." He stood up straight and pulled down at the edge of his black jacket. He turned back to Matheson.

"We'll be stopping off at Deneb IV on the way to pick up engineering crew. That's where Luke Raven is practicing isn't it? Why don't you give him a call and see if he can join us?" Matheson reached out and grasped Gideon's arm in thanks and left without saying a word. Gideon turned to Max and Dureena.

"Would someone like to say 'thank you, Captain'? Do you have any idea how tough it was to convince McLean to let us do this?" Dureena rose awkwardly and walked over to Gideon, standing on tiptoes to kiss him on the cheek.

"Thank you, Captain. Although I don't think you've been entirely altruistic; I think you have a pretty good reason to want to go back there yourself, don't you?" She smiled up at him. He gazed back, and raised his eyebrows.

"Who me? Entirely disinterested. Just looking after the well being of my crew." He allowed a smile to show for the first time as he looked down at her. She kissed him again then turned to link her arm through Max's and left.

Chambers stood. "How long do you get to stay there, Matt?" He'd told her a little of what had happened there, and she knew how much he'd wanted to return.

"Two weeks, Sarah. Two whole weeks." He broke into a broad grin.

Gideon sat in the command chair, shuffling a pack of cards, every so often glancing impatiently at the viewing screen. Any minute now they'd drop out of hyperspace at Deneb IV where they were due to pick up an engineering crew to take on to Sirius Minor. But much more importantly, this jump would bring

them close enough to make contact with Eriadne. They'd be able to call and let the women know that they were on their way. From Deneb to Eriadne was less than a two-day jump.

Before the Excalibur had left Eriadne they'd upgraded the communications equipment. This was one of the areas where the Vorlon had left the women ill equipped. They'd had no way of making contact beyond the planet surface. So Gideon had ordered a hyperspace link installed in the castle. To make sure that it wasn't misused, he and Deborah had agreed that the best idea was to upgrade the Comm. unit she had in her rooms. They'd made themselves scarce for a couple of hours while the technicians had done the installation.

So now he was waiting for them to drop out of hyperspace so he could call them and let them know that the Excalibur was on its way. Matheson was standing at the front of the bridge, watching the helm read outs, holding his headset close to his ear, listening intently. Gideon knew that Matheson would let him know immediately they were ready to jump. He kept his head down and carried on shuffling the pack of cards.

Matheson turned abruptly "Ready to jump, Captain."

[About time!] "Jump." Gideon couldn't get the word out fast enough and stood, striding forward to join Matheson at the front of the bridge. While they waited for the vortex to form Gideon spoke quietly.

"Everything OK with Raven? Is he able to join us?"

Matheson nodded. "Trace is getting the shuttle ready for me now, as soon as we're in normal space I'll go get him. We'll be back before the engineering crew arrive." Gideon nodded and watched as the hole in the surrounding redness formed and the blackness of normal space showed through. With a surge of energy the Excalibur pushed through. As soon as they'd fully emerged Gideon turned to the Comm. station.

"Call Eriadne B. Put them through to the conference room." He turned quickly with Matheson hard on his heels. They walked through the map room and on into the conference room, letting the doors close behind them. Gideon moved to the front of the room and sat on the edge of the table. Matheson had stopped just inside the door.

"Do you want me to leave, Captain?" Gideon looked round at him.

"No, John, stay. Maybe Deborah can get Lily in on the call. You know how those sisters 'talk'." He grinned at Matheson then turned back to the screen as the signal started to come through. After a burst of static, the picture cleared and he was looking at an empty room. An instant later Deborah appeared and he stood up ready to speak when he realised that it was a recording telling him she was unavailable, please leave a message. [Shit!] He turned back to Matheson and smiled ruefully "Looks like we're out of luck, John." He faced the screen and spoke.

"Deborah, sorry we missed you. Maybe putting this thing in your rooms wasn't such a good idea. I just wanted to let you know that you're going to have some visitors, if that's OK. John, Max, Dureena, Galen and I plan to come on a visit. Seems a bit of a crowd to turn up uninvited, but you did say that if we were ever back this way... OK we'll be there in..." he turned back to Matheson.

"43 hours and 27 minutes, approximately." Gideon shook his head, smiling and turned back to the screen.

"What he said. See you soon." He leant forward and hit the control that ended the transmission.

"Got any plans for the next 43 hours and 27 minutes, Lieutenant?" He picked up the deck of cards from the table where he'd left them and held them up. "When you and Luke get back maybe we could try a hand of poker?"

Matheson laughed. "Only if I get Dureena to deal my cards. I'll see you when we get back." He left for the landing bay at top speed.

Gideon was sitting at the desk in his quarters, thinking about their impending arrival at Eriadne B. A smile broke out on his face as he thought about Deborah. He'd missed her and was looking forward to seeing her, more than he'd looked forward to anything in a long time. And the rest of his command crew; well, it was clear how happy they were. None of them had been able to think or talk about anything else. Gideon stopped smiling as he remembered that there was one of his team who didn't seem happy about their going back to Eriadne. Galen. Gideon leaned back in his chair, folding his arms across his chest as he thought about Galen's attitude.

There was definitely something bothering him. Since their return from Eriadne, Galen had been more distant and brooding than ever. Gideon had assumed it had to do with the Apocalypse Box, and that Galen hadn't been happy about leaving it with the sisters. Actually he couldn't blame him, he hadn't been too pleased with leaving it behind himself, especially where Angel could get hold of it. Gideon didn't trust Angel to leave it alone. He felt a familiar breeze blowing from behind him.

Turning, Gideon stood up and looked at Galen. "I was wondering when you'd come by." Gideon had wanted to talk with Galen. He wanted to find out what was up with the Technomage. Usually they spoke often, but weeks had passed since they last talked and even then Galen hadn't been forthcoming about anything. Gideon had the sudden feeling that Galen's behavior had something to do with him.

Galen moved further into the room his expression a blank mask "We need to talk, Matthew," he said quietly, as he turned to face Gideon who was watching him closely.

Gideon nodded and moved forward a little. "Yes, I agree. I was about to come and find you." He felt mildly irritated with Galen's strange behavior and the comment he'd made earlier had annoyed him. "Look Galen, are you going to tell me what has you in this mood? Or do I have to guess?" Gideon cringed slightly, his tone had sounded harsher than he'd intended. Gideon watched as Galen's expression darkened.

Galen cleared his throat. "I want to talk to you about Eriadne."

Gideon smiled. "It's great news isn't it? Everyone's excited and I'm looking forward to seeing Deborah."

Galen raised an eyebrow. "And Angel too?" He forced himself to sound neutral. Gideon looked at him in surprise. It unnerved him that Galen had asked him that. Gideon cleared his throat.

"Galen, I intend to keep well out of her way. She's nothing but trouble." Gideon hoped that his voice didn't give away any other emotion. Whenever he heard Angel's name, he was hit by guilt for what he'd done in the library. He'd lost control, he'd been angry with her, and yes, he'd wanted her, which was why he'd taken her that way. But it would have been rape if she hadn't been willing. On many occasions Gideon had cursed himself for how he'd left her. Her calling him Lucas had made him see

red, and he hadn't given a damn that he may have hurt her. Gideon forced those memories away and looked at Galen.

"Well, Matthew, maybe you should have thought of that *before* you met her in the library." Galen's voice was low and steely. Over the past few months he'd thought over what he had seen. The brutal way Gideon had taken Angel, the cold way he'd left her crying on the table. He'd brooded about it, and decided not to say anything. But now they were going back, he wanted to make sure that Gideon didn't use or hurt her again. Angel may not return his feelings, but Galen had fallen for the raven haired beauty and he wanted to make sure that she wasn't hurt.

Gideon was staring at Galen in stunned silence. When he found his voice his tone was wary. "What are you talking about, Galen?"

"Matthew, you know exactly what I'm talking about. I saw what happened. Imagine my surprise when I arrived at the library and found you with Angel, in a rather... compromising position. If you think of her as nothing but trouble, then why did you meet her there? Did you just want one more time with her?" The more Galen spoke the less calm he was.

Gideon was too shocked by what Galen was saying to him to even think about questioning his presence in the library. "Galen, I don't know what you think, but I didn't meet her in the library. I was in there looking for something to read, when she appeared in the doorway. We started fighting and..." Gideon faltered, unable to explain what had happened.

"And what, Matthew, things got heated and you fucked her?" Asked Galen angrily.

Gideon's eyes widened at Galen's words. He'd never heard him speak like that before; it was unnerving.

"It wasn't like that Galen... look, things got out of control. It should never have happened."

"You're right, Matthew, it shouldn't have. Neither should the way you spoke to her. It was cruel to throw Lucas Buck at her like that, and her sister... what were you trying to do, punish her, make her see that you weren't Lucas, make her see what she couldn't have? Is that it?" Galen couldn't stop himself.

Gideon was starting to get angry. He walked up to stand in front of Galen, looking him straight in the eyes. "That is not what happened." Gideon paused, took in a deep breath, forcing himself to calm down. "I can't even explain it to myself. OK, yes I admit I find her attractive. But she gets me mad every time she speaks and what happened... just did. I wasn't trying to punish her. And what I said about him was in response to her calling me Lucas. God dammit, Galen for a moment she thought that I was him, and I snapped. She didn't think of me as *me*, but as Lucas. Can you blame me for leaving the way I did?"

Galen sighed. "It's the way you left that has me worried. I believe that you didn't arrange to meet her. But, Matthew the way you handled her is of great concern to me. I don't think you have any idea of the damage you could do to her." Matthew opened his mouth to remark on what Galen was saying, but Galen lifted a hand, cutting him off.

"Let me explain. Look, I know what you think of Angel, that she's selfish, doesn't care how much she hurts others as long as she gets what she wants. But you haven't allowed yourself to look deeper. I got a chance to see her in a different light, and Matthew, I saw someone who feels more than she allows herself to show. She is more fragile emotionally, especially after her encounter with Lucas, than you

can imagine."

Galen stopped to watch Gideon turn and sit on the edge of his desk; his arms folded in front of him. "Galen, what are you getting at?"

"What I am getting at is I want you to take care how you react to Angel when you see her. She's attracted to you, for two reasons. One, because sometimes when she looks at you, you remind her of Lucas, and two because you are what Lucas wasn't. Compassionate, considerate and good. Matthew, don't do anything with Angel, stay away from her. Yes, I know that is what you plan to do, but that may not be that easy, considering your attraction to her and hers to you." Galen stopped to watch Gideon take in what he was saying.

Gideon stood up and was now looking at him with irritation in his eyes. "Galen, have you quite finished?"

"Not quite. Watch how you treat her, Matthew. If you were to sleep with her again, that would give her hope that something could happen between you two. But then if you reject her, and I'm afraid that you would, given your relationship with Demon, you could drive her to do something that would affect everyone badly." Galen's tone was steely on the last sentence.

"What do you mean drive her... you're not saying that she'd try to replace me with Lucas again are you?" Gideon's voice was thick with concern. The last thing he wanted was to be in that nothingness again.

Galen shook his head "No. Despite what you think, Angel loves her sister and would never do anything that would take you away from her." Gideon gave him a sceptical look and Galen hurried on " I know what you think, but you're wrong. Matthew, I suspect that Angel is still in love with Lucas, and if you gave her hope of there being something between the two of you and then reject her, I'm afraid that would drive her towards him."

"Lucas is gone!" Gideon frowned.

"No, Matthew, he's just in the Box. She and Demon wouldn't let me destroy him. And he still has a hold on Angel. Lucas created a bond, which although abusive, may never be broken. And I fear that if hurt and rejected Angel would turn to him." Galen's voice sounded heavy, as if the idea of what could happen was weighing him down.

"Are you saying that Angel could get him out the Box again?" Gideon asked with concern. The thought of Lucas being brought back was nauseating.

"Anything is possible where magic is concerned. Which is why I'm asking you, Matthew, do whatever you must, but don't get involved with Angel. I know it wouldn't be your intention, but she'd be hurt and the consequences could be catastrophic." The sound of Gideon's Comm buzzing, interrupted Galen.

Gideon turned and hit the Comm. "Yes."

"Captain, you said to inform you when Lt. Matheson returned," said the Ensign on the bridge.

"On my way." Gideon switched off the Comm and turned to Galen. "Sorry, Galen, but I have to go and welcome Dr. Raven."

"Matthew?"

Gideon paused at the door. "Galen don't worry, I have every intention of staying away from Angel. I care for her sister and I don't intend to do anything to hurt her. So you don't have to worry, nothing will happen, now or ever, between me and Angel."

Gideon moved forward, and the door opened. Before he walked out he looked back at Galen, a smile on his face. "Stop worrying so much, Galen, this is going to be a vacation. Nothing bad is going to happen." And with that Gideon walked out, the door closing behind him.

Galen looked at the closed door. "Oh Matthew, I wish I could believe you." Galen stood silently for a moment, and then placing his hood over his head he left Gideon's quarters.

Dr. Luke Raven's home and practice on Deneb IV was situated on the outskirts of a small, idyllic town called Tripoli. John landed his shuttle in a clearing in a small nearby grove. He walked down the ramp and stood there, looking around at the scenery that reminded him of Earth and taking a few deep breaths of the clean air. [A nice place to live.] Then he took the short walk to Luke's house.

When he came nearer, he could see that the house was built like a 20th Century house, southern North American style, if he remembered right. It was wooden and painted in soft yellow. A few steps led up to the front porch, on which a swing hung. John walked up the steps and paused in front of the door, suppressing his slight nervousness, then pressed the annunciator and entered. He found himself in an anteroom. An open door straight ahead led to the practice according to the sign on the wall next to it. The stairs on the left hand side must lead to Raven's private rooms, John supposed. He entered the practice and saw a reception area to the right at the far wall. A fair skinned brunette, her hair in a French braid, was sitting behind it, typing into her computer. She looked up at him and smiled as he approached. "Can I help you, Sir?"

"Good afternoon. Could I talk to Dr. Raven?"

"Do you have an appointment, Mr. ...?"

"Matheson, John Matheson. And... kind of."

Recognition blazed in her eyes as soon as she heard his name. "Oh, Lt. Matheson! You called ahead to ask if he'd be available over the next weeks, right?"

John had only made an audio call, manipulating the quality of the transfer, so if Raven were near he wouldn't recognize his voice through the static. He wanted this to be a surprise for him. When he'd asked about the availability of Luke over the next two to three weeks, the receptionist had sighed and said, "Hopeless, Lieutenant. We only seem to have severe and urgent and LOTS of cases lately. Next week he has to be at a very important meeting, and he still didn't prepare his speech. If you only want to say hello to him he might be able to sneak off for a half hour, but otherwise..."

She'd paused a moment, then continued, "But otherwise - something tells me that you can offer him the change of pace he needs so desperately. I can tell you since you're his friend - if he continues like this he'll work himself to death. He won't listen to me if I tell him to send some of the patients to Dr. Roberts, or at least take a day off once in a while. So please, could you come and take him away?"

He'd promised her he would.

John could have sworn that an amused smile played around her lips now, almost as if... [I must be imagining this - she can't know!] "Exactly. And call me John, I'm off duty."

"Okay, John. I'm Sara. Nice to meet you." She offered her hand and John hesitated for a moment. Luke obviously hadn't told her that he was a telepath or she didn't know that telepaths didn't touch others if they could avoid it. He strengthened his shields and they shook hands. "Well, John - he told me he wasn't to be disturbed. I already told you he's been totally stressed out over the last month, and he had me cancel all his appointments for the rest of the day so he could finally sit down to prepare his speech for that meeting." Before John could say anything, she continued, "Just knock and go in, and prepare to duck in case some file or book comes flying at you." She indicated the door opposite her desk, smiling.

"Thanks a lot." John grinned and nodded, then did as he'd been told.

"What-is-it-*now*?" Dr. Luke Raven asked in a resigned voice when he heard the door open. "Sara, please don't tell me there's another emergency -" He looked up from his computer terminal and stopped mid-sentence when he saw who his visitor was; for a few seconds he just stared, his mouth open. "John? John! Tell me I'm not hallucinating, PLEASE!" He jumped up and grabbed John by the shoulders, looking at him wide-eyed. John noticed the rings under his eyes, and he seemed even thinner than the last time he'd seen him. [This trip will do him a world of good!]

John said straight-faced, "Okay - you're not hallucinating," then smiled.

"Thank God!" Then he wrapped his arms around John for a fierce hug and ruffled his hair. "Darn it, it's good to see you again!" He held the young Asian at arm's length and eyed him suspiciously. "What are you doing here anyway?"

"The Excalibur has to be refitted with new equipment based on what we brought from Eriadne B. The command crew has been allowed to go on a working holiday of sorts for two weeks... to Eriadne B." There was no mistaking the sparkle in Luke's eyes when he mentioned their destination. "Since Dr. Chambers is needed on the Excalibur for the Medbay refit, and you're the only other Doctor who has experience with the Vorlon equipment, we wanted to ask if you'd like to come too. And Sara told me, you could use a break anyway." He grinned slightly, knowing that Gideon's real reasons for inviting Raven along hadn't been any of the above, but these had been the ones that had convinced the General.

Luke's heart leapt at the prospect of seeing Lily again, but then reality crashed in on him. "I would love to, but...! Next week I have to participate in a conference and I haven't prepared my presentation yet, my patients are killing me, there's one emergency after another, and I didn't get any real sleep for about a month now and YES OF COURSE I'LL COME!"

John grinned delightedly. "Great! When can you finish here?"

"Right now!" Luke was rummaging through his office and picked up some stuff, medical equipment all, and put it in his bag. He never left without minimal equipment. He turned off his computer, then did one last look around. Suddenly his eyes widened and he opened the top drawer of his desk, smiling at John as he took something out. His hand appeared above the edge of the desk holding a small, emerald green box. John gave his friend a knowing smile and reached into his jacket pocket with his right hand, taking out an identical box. These were the ones Lily had given them, containing a lock of her hair. They smiled at each other for a few seconds, then Luke said, "Let's go," and stormed out the door. "Sara, you have two weeks off! Cancel all my appointments, or have them go to Dr. Roberts if

it's urgent, and send the guys at the meeting a message that I can't come because... because... you'll think of something I'm sure."

Sara smiled, enjoying his renewed vigor. "I will, boss!"

Luke was putting on his jacket, mind still racing. "I'm sure I forgot something..." he murmured while he tried to get into the second sleeve.

Sara grinned and helped him. "Don't you worry, I'll cover all eventualities. While you're on the trip, send me some means to contact you in case of a *real* emergency, and then forget your office and I even exist." She patted his shoulder.

He turned and shook his head. "Sara - you're a gem."

She grinned and handed him a bag. Apparently she'd packed for him while he'd been talking to John. "I know, you tell me at least once a day. Now go!" She lowered her voice and said teasingly, "I don't have to ask where the trip goes, from the glitter in your eyes... lucky boy!"

He looked at her and shook his head. "I should know better than to tell you these things..." Then he gave her a quick kiss on the cheek and shouted, "Bye!" when he stormed out the door in front of John, who shrugged at Sara, grinning, and waved his hand when he left.

"Bye you two, have fun!" She looked after them until they had disappeared amidst the trees of the grove, smiling. Then she closed the door and went into Raven's office, looking at the mess and sighing. "Oh well... guess this will be a working holiday!" But then the smile returned. [I'm glad I was right when Matheson called... this trip will do Luke a world of good!]

"You actually told her what happened during our stay on Eriadne?" John couldn't imagine telling *his* receptionist, if he'd had one. He'd noticed during their exchange that Luke and Sara seemed very close, and despite himself he couldn't help but feel a slight uneasiness at that thought.

"Yes." Luke shrugged, as if this was the most natural thing. Then he looked at John and grinned. "Oh, I forgot to tell you... Sara's my sister."

John stared at him, awestruck, then looked back out of the view port to concentrate on flying again. "She isn't!"

"Course she is! But of course no one believes it at first since she is so much smaller than I am and we don't look alike at all. But look at her eyes, the same colour as mine. Our mother was small, like Sara is; maybe even a bit less, and she had the same eyes. Dad was average size, but I guess I have my size from our grandparents - dad's parents - who were both tall. Sara and I are very close - we always have been, despite the 7 years age gap between us and our different temperaments. Maybe because of them."

He sat there musing for a while then slightly shook his head as if waking up and looked at John, a smile spreading on his face. "Do they know we're coming?"

Back on the Excalibur, John led Raven to his quarters, which were the same he'd occupied during his stint as replacement doctor for Sarah Chambers.

"Welcome home," John said as Luke sauntered into the room.

Luke sighed, stretching slightly, his back still turned. "Almost feels like it." He turned around. "In a few days... definitely."

Both men smiled.

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The Witches of Eriadne: Toil and Trouble

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