

# The Witches of Eriadne: Interlude Four C - Part 2: Just One of Those Days

by [The Space Witches](#)



If you ever meet Lily in this mood, run while you can.

## Chapter 1

May 2270

Lily sighed as she turned away from the screen. Luke had just called and told her that he'd still be in Medbay for a while, they shouldn't wait for him with dinner. They'd just got in an engineer who'd been hurt in an accident in the engine room, and he had to operate on him.

[And, of course, today of all days,] Lily thought. [Then again, such a day was long overdue.] Nothing had gone really well today. She'd been in a strange mood when she'd got up--had it been a dream that caused it?--and it hadn't got any better during the day. A lot of small mishaps had guaranteed that. With an effort, she'd at least managed to be bright around Faylinn and Dasha--she'd felt their confusion as they'd picked up on her foul mood, almost as if they felt somehow responsible for it, but didn't know why. [[Never, my darlings. You are my pride and joy, and your daddies' too,]] she had assured them.

With another sigh, she slumped down on the couch. Now the twins were in bed and sleeping, there was nothing left to hold back the little, ugly thing that was creeping around inside her. She leaned her head into her hands, trying to figure out how to get it out without exploding.

Suddenly the door opened, and Lily looked up to see John enter their quarters, looking exhausted.

"Hi, darling," he said as he bent down to kiss her, then frowned. "What's wrong?" He sat down

opposite her on the small table and took her hands into his.

Lily gave him a wry smile. "If only I knew. Guess it's just one of those days when everything goes not quite right." She lifted her right hand and ran a finger along John's left cheekbone. "You don't look your best either, if I may say so."

John sighed, then smiled softly. "Just a long day with a never ending list of complaints and requests. But now, I'm just glad to be home."

"Yeah, well, Luke won't be in for a while yet..."

John nodded. "I heard about the accident. I hope Niane will be OK." Then he smiled at Lily and lifted her hands in his, squeezing them. "I'll go kiss Faylinn and Dasha goodnight, and then we'll see what we can find for dinner and have ourselves a quiet evening, OK?"

"Sounds nice to me," Lily said and smiled.

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Since neither of them was really hungry, they had decided to wait with dinner until Luke got back, and only made a simple soup together, a broth with noodles.

To Lily's amazement, her mood had brightened while they were cooking and eating silently in the living room. [Seems like this could really be a quiet evening,] she thought as she put the empty bowls onto a tray and carried them into the kitchen.

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John jumped to his feet as he heard the sound of crockery and metal crashing on the kitchen floor, followed by some very colorful swearing. When he rushed into the kitchen, he found Lily kneeling on the floor in the middle of earthenware shards, the tray lying on its side leaning against the kitchen cupboards, the pot upside down, and the rest of the broth spilled all over the floor. Lily was muttering swear words in between sobs, and grabbed a piece of one of the bowls, throwing it onto the ground and shattering it further.

"Hey," John said softly, "That doesn't help."

"I know," Lily answered in an 'I'm not stupid' voice.

John squatted down beside her and sighed. "Come on, we'll clean this up together..."

"Don't want help," Lily interrupted, pushing his hand away as he reached out to collect the shards.

John's nerves were starting to get frayed. He had a lot of patience, but today it had been rather overused, and Lily was on her way to wearing it out completely. "Damn it Lily, what is it with you today?"

Lily turned her head and glared at him, green eyes blazing with a fire that was in stark contrast to her icy voice as she said, "Why don't *you* tell me, you're the resident telepath."

John stared at her as if she'd slapped him, then a wall crashed down between them and he wore his

most unreadable, 'Commander John Matheson, XO' face. But inside he could feel his own temper rise. He stood. "I'd spank you if I didn't know you'd enjoy it too much."

Lily glared up at him, then jumped to her feet and hissed, "Oh, so my sexual preferences don't suit you anymore? Well no problem, I'm sure you'll find the couch very comfortable."

John took a deep breath, but it didn't help calm him at all. He was really pissed now; his eyes were mere slits as he said matter-of-factly, "If you want to be alone so much, why don't Luke and I just move into my quarters and remove the connecting door? That will relieve us all of a lot of unnecessary discussions leading nowhere."

For a moment, John thought Lily would slap him when her face turned red with rage and her eyes seemed to burn him to ashes. Her fists clenched and unclenched as she spat out, "And why should I always get left behind with the kids? This time *I'm* leaving!" She whirled around and out of the kitchen, and before John could call after her, he heard their quarter's doors open and close.

"Lily!"

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[Rats!] John leaned on the kitchen counter, trying to get his head clear. [God, what happened? We never fought before!] A tiny voice inside him answered, [But then you never lived together for a long period before.] He closed his eyes and took a few deliberate, slow, deep breaths. [OK, what to do now? I have to find Lily, but I can't leave Faylinn and Dasha alone. Luke will be in Medbay for a while, and I don't really want her sisters involved.] John grimaced. It might be a bit tricky to make the arrangements, but... he wasn't willing to entrust his children *and* his secrets to anyone else on the ship. He keyed his wristband communicator.

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Gideon stood in the living room of the quarters John shared with Lily, Luke and the twins, shaking his head. John had called him in his own quarters, where he'd been doing some paperwork after eating dinner with Deborah.

"Matthew, could you come here? I need your help. *Now*."

He'd heard the urgency in his friend's voice, so had agreed without asking what it was about. When he'd arrived, he'd found John pacing the living room floor. As soon as John had seen Gideon, he'd walked up to him and said he didn't have time for a detailed explanation, but that Lily had run off after they'd fought and he had to go looking for her.

Gideon had stared at his friend. "You *fought*?"

John had blown out his breath and nodded. "I really don't know how or why..." He'd trailed off and shaken his head. "Listen, I need you to look after Faylinn and Dasha, just in case they wake up while I'm looking for Lily. Luke's still in Medbay and I didn't dare ask the sisters..."

Matthew had given him an understanding smile. "Of course. Go look for your woman. I'll stay here."

John had nodded his thanks and rushed out the door.

Matthew shook his head again. Lily and John fighting? Well, it was certainly good to know that it could happen to them too, but at the same time the thought seemed somewhat disconcerting. [Well, even they have to let off steam sometime, I guess.]

He walked into the children's room and checked that they were still sleeping, then went back into the living room and looked around, trying to think of something to do to pass the time. [Well, let's start by getting some coffee. Lily must keep the real stuff around here somewhere.] Gideon entered the kitchen, immediately noticing the mess on the floor, and he couldn't help but wonder whether this had been part of the reason for the fight, or if it had resulted from it. [Well, while you're here, you might just as well make yourself useful.]

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For a moment, John stood outside the door, thinking. Where could Lily have gone? [Not to her sisters, at least not as long as she's so agitated. She'd want to be alone.] That left a lot of places for her to go on a ship as big as the Excalibur, especially at 'night'. But being a telepath had its advantages if you were looking for someone. Closing his eyes, John concentrated and stretched his telepathic senses out as far as he could, looking for Lily's 'signature' while blocking out others as much as possible. He quickly picked up her 'traces', which were quite strong due to her anxiety, and started walking, following them.

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John finally found her in the hydroponics garden.

Lily was standing with her back to him, below a fruit tree, looking out over the seemingly random arrangement of very diverse plants. He approached her slowly, silently.

Suddenly she stiffened, as if she'd sensed his presence. "Leave me alone," she said in a toneless voice, without turning.

He took another step towards her. "Lily..."

"Go!" She almost shouted, then added more softly, "Please."

John shook his head and took another step, reaching out to her. "Not before I..."

"What part of 'go' don't you understand?" Lily whirled around as she shouted this, and the next thing he realized was that something had appeared in her hand and was now flying towards him. His reflexes kicked in immediately, but his arms came up a split second too late--the fruit Lily had thrown at him landed square on his chest, squashing with a smacking sound.

John looked down at the mixture of pulp and juice dripping down the front of his t-shirt, then up at Lily, only to be target for another fruit she'd picked from the small tree, this one hitting his right shoulder.

Lily used the momentum of her throw to run forward and push him aside, trying to brush past him, but John caught her wrists and pulled her towards him, trapping her hands between their heaving chests.

"Let me *go*!" Lily struggled, but couldn't manage to break free of his tight grip. She finally gave up, glaring up at John to find his eyes blazing like hers. For several seconds, they stood there panting, eyes

locked in silent struggle.

John never knew what possessed him at that moment to lean his head down and claim Lily's mouth in a violent, bruising kiss. After a moment of surprise, she struggled, trying to break free, but gradually started pushing against him instead of pulling away, opening her lips to allow his tongue entry, entwining hers with his as it slid into his mouth.

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Lily had run through the corridors of the Excalibur, trying hard to suppress the tears that were threatening to rise. It was evening ship time, so at least she didn't meet that many crew members on her way to--[Where?] Lily stopped in the middle of a corridor, trying to orient herself. Anger flared up inside her as she remembered the words John had used, but then she had given him more than enough provocation. [Dear Mother, what happened to me? We never fought before!] She had to find a place to be alone, to think. [The gardens!]

She'd stood alone in the dark gardens, trying to sort out her feelings, to find out what had caused her mood. When she'd felt John's presence behind her, she knew she wasn't ready to confront him yet, so she'd told him to leave, using as few words as possible to prevent herself from losing control again. But he didn't listen, and she'd had to take more drastic measures. But he'd caught her when she'd tried to escape, holding her wrists so tightly that they hurt. She'd glared up at him--how dare he do this to her?--challenging him with her look, the set of her mouth, her whole attitude. She'd almost physically felt the tension between them.

And suddenly something had flared up, changing everything in the blink of an eye.

At first, she'd struggled against John's hard, adrenalin-fed kiss, but it had sent a chain reaction through her body, electrifying her, sending heat coursing through her veins as she found her body answering to his nearness.

As soon as he let go of her wrists, her arms snaked around John's neck. She felt his hands roaming her back, cupping her buttocks, diving into her hair while her body melted against his. John pushed her back until she stood against the fruit tree, a moan rising in her throat as she felt the prominent bulge in his pants press against her groin. He broke their kiss only long enough to order the computer to lock all doors to the gardens, barely able to finish before Lily pulled his head down again.

She started grinding her hips against his, her long fingernails digging into his buttocks through his pants, arousing him even more. John's lips wandered down her throat, making her lean back her head against the trunk, then sigh as they reached her cleavage. Lily buried her fingers in his thick, soft hair, pressing his face against her breasts. While he gently bit her hard nipple through the soft fabric covering it, John's hands wandered down the sides of her legs. They gathered up her skirt and slipped beneath it, softly tracing up the back of her legs, over her buttocks, and, hooking his thumbs into her slip, down again, ridding her of the lacy underwear. Lily quickly stepped out of them, kicking them off as John stood again. She gasped as John's hand slid between her thighs, stroking her clit with his fingers while his other hand undid his belt and zipper.

Lily was panting with desire, her arousal rising quickly. John's mouth covered hers again in a deep, passionate kiss. Lily moaned in protest when she felt him withdraw his hand from between her thighs, but suddenly, she found herself whirled around and her breasts pressed against the trunk. John's hands quickly lifted her skirt, spreading her legs with his, and an instant later she felt the tip of his cock at her wet entrance. Her arms embraced the trunk as she pushed her hips back, fingernails

digging into the bark when he entered her, filling her, and started moving in and out of her, his hands on her hips pulling her back towards him in time with his pushes. Lily found her arousal rising to new heights as John fucked her with hard, fast strokes, her breasts being roughly pressed against the trunk with every one of them, the slightly painful sensation exciting her even more. She could hear his groans in her ear, mixing with her own, feel his hot breath on her cheek, and she knew he was close to climax, like her.

Suddenly, John's right hand slid between Lily's legs again, his fingers pressing her clit hard, repeatedly, making her cry out as a violent orgasm ripped through her body. His voice echoed hers as her pulsing muscles pushed him over the edge, milking every last drop of his hot essence from his balls.

Finally, after an incredibly long time, their bodies stopped spasming and started trembling instead as they stood there panting heavily, John's cheek resting on top of Lily's head. Slowly, he slid down to his knees and sat back on his heels, taking her with him, his cock still buried inside her, until she knelt between his thighs, her toes touching his balls. His arms lay tightly around her as she leaned back against his chest, both trying to catch their breath.

After a while, John lifted Lily off his now soft cock, and sat her down at the foot of the tree, so she could lean against its trunk. Her head rolled to the side, eyes closed, still panting slightly. He shuffled nearer and put his fingers under her chin, lifting her head, until she looked at him, her eyes slightly unfocused. "Did I... did I hurt you?"

Lily could see the concern in his eyes and shook her head softly.

"Sure?"

She nodded almost imperceptibly.

John held her eyes with his for another second, then suddenly sank down on his side, resting his head on her chest, his left arm wrapped around her back and his right hand resting on her left upper arm, snuggling up against her in a way that reminded her of a frightened child.

"What happened, Lily? What happened to us tonight?" John whispered. After a moment, he felt Lily's right hand softly stroke his hair, and her lips place a kiss on the top of his head.

"It's me, I'm afraid."

He leaned back and rested his weight on his left elbow so he could look up at Lily. He saw her gaze down at him in the half darkness, her eyes full of affection, but also sadness. "John, I'm so sorry! I didn't want..."

John lifted his right hand and lightly put his fingers to her lips, then pulled her down into a soft kiss, letting her know it was all right. "Why don't we go to our quarters and talk there? Matthew will probably be going crazy by now."

Lily's eyes widened. "You have *Matthew* looking after the kids?"

John shrugged. "Your sisters would have torn me to pieces, before I'd even had a chance to finish explaining."

Lily started giggling, then laughing.

John sat up and looked at her wide-eyed. "What's so funny about that?"

Lily tried to say something, but another fit of laughter took control of her and she only managed to shake her head before doubling over.

John sighed in exasperation, but her laughter was so infectious that he soon found himself joining her lying on the ground, shaking with uncontrollable laughter.

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Gideon had just finished cleaning the broken bowls and spilt soup from the floor, and was feeling rather pleased with himself, when he heard one of the twins crying. He'd become familiar enough with the tones of Marcus' cries to know what that one meant. Someone needed changing. He flinched mentally; changing diapers had never been one of his favorite jobs, and it was bad enough having to do it for his own son. Why the hell should he have to do it for John's son too? But he knew that the crying would continue, until the baby was taken care of. He sighed to himself and walked through to the bedroom where the twins' cots were kept.

Looking at the cots, Gideon realized that it was Faylinn who was crying, not Dasha as he'd assumed. This brought him to a halt. Changing Dasha's diaper was one thing, but Faylinn? He'd never changed a little girl, and the idea of it made him feel squeamish. If someone walked in when he had her diaper off, what would they think? [For God's sake, Matt, she's just a year old! Do you think everyone on this ship thinks you're some kind of pervert? Anyway, this is what you get for agreeing to be a Goddess Father. Why the hell didn't someone show me the small print before I signed the contract?]

As he hesitated, Faylinn's cries had grown louder, and now Dasha was stirring. If Gideon didn't do something fast, he'd have two screaming babies on his hands. The Captain had one fleeting thought about calling Deborah and asking for help, then pushed it firmly aside. John hadn't wanted Lily's sisters involved. It was up to him. [I should get hazard pay for this!]

He leaned over Faylinn's cot and picked her up gently. "Hey, sweetheart, you're quite a weight now, aren't you?" She wasn't as heavy as Marcus, but she'd nearly caught up with her cousin in the year since they'd been born. Gideon smiled as he remembered the first time he'd seen the twins, and how tiny they'd looked then. The smile changed to a grimace as he caught a whiff of what was bothering Faylinn.

"Oh hell. You couldn't just be wet could you? You had to go the whole hog."

Carrying her over to the changing table, Gideon laid her down carefully, then realized he had no idea where Lily kept the diapers. He started to hunt around the cupboards and turned back just in time to see Faylinn pulling herself to her feet and wobbling towards the edge of the table. Lunging back across the room, he caught her just as she threw herself off the edge, giggling wildly as she did so. Gideon held her close, trying to ignore the smell that was getting stronger by the second, and waiting for his heart to go back down his windpipe into its proper place. After a moment, he looked down at the now laughing baby.

"So you think that's fun do you? Well, if you like throwing yourself off high places, I have a number of career options we can discuss when you're older. I think there's something called an Aerial Erector, and you're going to be cute enough for that job, I'm sure." Gideon grinned down at the little girl and tousled her red-blond curls as he held her. "But give me a break, will you? Where does your Mommy

keep the diapers?" Faylinn giggled again. "So you won't talk, eh? We'll see if you're so tough when I'm wiping your backside, kid."

Holding her under one arm, Gideon went through a number of cupboards and drawers before finally finding clean diapers, and all the other equipment he needed, in a drawer immediately below the changing table. He sighed to himself, "Now that would have been way too easy, wouldn't it? Why the hell didn't I look there first?"

Faylinn gurgled at him as he spoke, and he looked down at her again. "So you have an opinion on this, do you? Are you saying that your Goddess Father is stupid?" Gideon took her grin to be agreement. "OK, I'm just checking, not arguing."

He laid the baby gently on her back on the changing mat and started to undo her diaper. When he had it open, he couldn't help but take a quick step backwards. "What have they been feeding you, kid? That is the worst thing I've ever smelled! I thought Marcus could produce some stinkers, but that is awful! What the hell happened to sugar and spice and all things nice?" Gideon lifted her away from the soiled diaper and slid it out from under her, then holding his nose with one hand, picked up the offending item with the other. He was about to take it into the bathroom and dispose of it, when he saw Faylinn turning to get back on her feet. "Oh no you don't! We've had enough skydiving for one night!"

Now Gideon was faced with a dilemma, how could he get rid of the diaper without leaving Faylinn unattended? When he changed Marcus' diaper, he always made sure he had a bucket handy for instant disposal, but he couldn't see anything like that nearby. There was no choice; he took his hand away from his nose and tucked Faylinn back under his right arm, holding the soiled diaper at arms length with his other hand. Rushing into the bathroom, Gideon dropped the diaper into the disposal chute as quickly as he could, trying not to gag as he did so. He looked down at the baby tucked under his arm and said, "On the other hand, if you keep producing stinks like that all your life, you could have a great career in chemical warfare ahead of you."

Coughing quietly, he took her back into the bedroom and laid her on the changing mat, then started to clean her up. The Captain found that if he backed away as far as he could, shut one eye and wrinkled his nose, the smell was less unbearable. Half a pack of wipes later, the smell was barely noticeable and as far as he could tell, she was totally clean.

Feeling rather proud of himself, Gideon slid another diaper under Faylinn's bottom and was just about to fold her into it when she decided to pee. He watched as the nice clean diaper soaked it up and frowned down at her. "And I suppose you think that's funny too." He sighed and started again, thanking whatever Gods were listening that little girls didn't pee upwards. At least he hadn't got an eye full.

When he'd got her cleaned up again and into a clean diaper, Faylinn started to doze. He carefully laid her back into her cot, and stroked her head gently until she went back to sleep. Then he started to clean up all the wipes, cotton wool and other mess he'd made around the changing table. He'd finally got it all cleaned away, and just gone back into the living room to collapse on the sofa, when the door opened and Luke arrived. Gideon cursed under his breath; why the hell couldn't Faylinn have waited until her real father arrived? Why did she have to put her Goddess Father through hell instead? Gideon decided that Faylinn must be more closely related to Deborah than he'd thought. The pair of them liked to make his life as difficult as possible, but both of them only had to smile at him to melt his heart.

He gave Luke a brief summary of what John had told him, then pulled himself to his feet when Luke



thanked him and told him that he could go back to Marcus and Deborah. As Gideon left, Luke asked, "Were they OK? Any trouble?"

Gideon put on his very best, sincere smile. "They were fine, Luke. No trouble at all." He headed back to his own quarters, willing to put money on Marcus needing changing when he got there.

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Luke looked up when he heard the doors open. He'd come back to his quarters and found Matthew there, alone, with no sign of either John or Lily. Gideon had told him the very brief explanation John had given, which surprised Luke just as much. [If Lily ran off, they must have had one hell of a fight!] Thinking back on when he'd called to tell Lily he'd be home late, she had seemed a bit subdued, but he had no idea what could have caused her to fight with John. He hoped he'd find out soon, and that they'd made up in the meantime. He'd thanked Gideon and told him to go home to Demon and Marcus, which Gideon had done, after telling Luke to call if there was anything he could do. Luke had thanked him, and after checking in on the twins, who were sleeping soundly, had sat down and waited.

He looked up to see John and Lily standing inside the door, hand in hand, and barely had time to get up from the sofa, before they both threw themselves at him.

"Whoa, careful!" He found himself sitting on the sofa again, with Lily and John on either side, leaning against him. "Well, it seems that you called a truce, so would someone care to explain to me how you ended up covered in dust and," His eyes rested on John's chest and shoulder, "whatever that once was?"

John and Lily both grinned sheepishly, and Lily giggled. "Uh, I think it would be easier if we showed you."

"OK," Luke said, looking at John, who nodded and concentrated, bringing their minds together.

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Gideon collapsed on the sofa next to Deborah and sighed deeply. She was reading a book and only looked up to kiss his cheek as he sat next to her, his left arm around her shoulders. They sat quietly for a few minutes as Gideon relished the silence and the warmth of her body next to his. Marcus was in bed, sound asleep, his wife was by his side, nobody needed him to be anywhere but here, and all was well with the world.

After a while, Deborah looked up at him curiously. "Matthew? What's that smell?"

He sniffed. "What smell? I can't smell anything."

She leaned toward him and sniffed deeply. "It's you! What have you been doing, you smell horrible!"

Gideon looked round at her and grinned. "Now that's what I call tactful. You could have said, 'you smell unusual' or 'that's a rather unique aroma' or 'have you changed your cologne?' but no, you just come right out with 'you smell horrible!' Remind me not to recommend you for a job with the Diplomatic Corps."

Deborah started to laugh and pushed Gideon off the sofa onto the floor. Before he could move, she'd sat astride his hips, pinning him down, then she lowered her face to his. He thought for one moment

that she was going to kiss him, but then she inhaled sharply. She started to sniff as she moved her face down his neck across his shoulders and eventually zeroed in on his right side. By this time, Gideon was laughing helplessly and couldn't find the energy to throw her off. She moved his right arm so she could look under it, then sat upright again.

"Matthew, why do you have shit all down the side of your sweater? What have you been up to?" Deborah looked at him, puzzled but smiling.

Gideon managed to stop laughing long enough to reach up and stroke her face. "I can't tell you; it's a secret. But why don't we go and have a shower together, then you can get rid of this, and any other smells I have that you object to."

He watched as Deborah's smile changed from puzzlement to passion, and this time when she lowered her face to his, she did kiss him. Repeatedly. Passionately.

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## The Witches of Eriadne: Interlude Four C

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