

Pairing: Crais/Crichton, Scorpius/Crichton

Rating: NC-17

Author's Notes: Yes, if you squint really hard, this is nominally a crossover with Stargate SG-1. After all, their all-powerful aliens have the same name, and have a fixation with wormholes. It's also a tongue-in-cheek acknowledgement of a certain guest appearance by a Farscape actress as a member of that race in Stargate ;) Thanks to my [good friend](#) for her assistance with the title (and to Victor Hugo for the quote, "Loving is half of believing.")!

Episode excerpts (lines here & there) from: Unrealized Realities

Summary: Crichton's had enough -- he wants his lover back!

This story is part of the "The Red and the Black" universe and is placed in 4th season, between Terra Firma and Twice Shy.

Word Count: 11012 according to MSWord

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## Half of Believing

by Penemuel

John Crichton lay alone in his bedchamber, tangled in his covers and twitching slightly in his sleep. In one hand he held a soft black Peacekeeper uniform shirt; drawing it in against his chest, he wrapped both arms around it, then whispered, "Crais..."

Warm arms wrapped around him, and a soft voice whispered, "Forgive me, Crichton. It was the only way..."

"Crais..." he whispered again, his tone turning needy and desperate as the man embracing him faded to nothingness. "Don't go!"

He jerked awake, feeling the tears on his face and the painful ache in his heart. He was alone, of course, since Crais had killed himself nearly a cycle ago to help them escape and destroy Scorpius' command carrier/wormhole project. He clutched the shirt tight against his chest and squeezed his eyes shut, trying to restrain the scream that wanted to escape. The ache in his heart threatened to consume him, and he wondered for a moment if he should just let the madness he felt gnawing at the edges of his brain take him -- he wouldn't feel any pain then...

*Wormhole project...* The thought rose unbidden in his mind, and was followed by a flash of memory that wasn't a true memory: Crais' response in an interview that had never happened, "John Crichton... made me a better Captain...a better leader...a better man..."

"Einstein?" Crichton whispered, looking around for the Ancient's representative. He shook his head and sighed. "No one there...?"

He sat perfectly quiet for a moment; reaching, feeling -- then shook his head and slumped back against the pillows. There was no sign of the familiar ripple that presaged the opening of a wormhole, no hint that the area of space they were in was anything but normal. He was alone.

"I need-- need to get him back. I can't take this anymore..." he muttered, looking around the room again. "Wonder if anyone out there's good at cloning... maybe the Peacekeepers keep mental scans..." He grabbed his notebook from the small table near the bed and sat up, then began scribbling notes as fast as he could, brainstorming possible solutions and talking to himself as he did so. "Cloning -- there's got to be some race out there that can get enough DNA out of a couple of strands of hair... Got some of that from one of his hair ties -- if the toad hasn't snurched it, that is..."

"But a clone wouldn't have his mind or his memories -- it wouldn't be him. Unless... Gotta ask Aeryn if the PK's keep mental scans of their officers -- although if they do, they'd be somewhere like Central Command... Oh, that'd be real fun -- 'scuse us. I know we're all wanted, but we're just here to borrow a mind scan of one ex-Peacekeeper Captain Bialar Crais. We'll just get out of your hair now. Yeah, right."

"So, that won't work... Besides, those memories would be too early -- he'd hate me because I'm an alien. Frell. There's always the chance that Scorpy still has an Aurora Chair scan of him... He at least liked me at that point... All I'd have to do is sweet-talk it out of Scorpy's bony hands..."

A brief flash of Scorpius' reaction to any 'sweet-talk' sent shivers through him, and he murmured, "Hmnm... again, not so good an idea..."

He glanced at the notebook, realizing that at some point he had switched from standard Earth english to some other symbols that didn't make any sense if he spent more than half a second thinking about them. "Great -- here we go again... Someone want to give my subconscious a translator?"

"Let's see... What else, what else..." he mused, scribbling incomprehensibly on the page. Just letting his hand move freely, he leaned back and let his mind go blank.

*Time... wormholes. The knowledge to unravel events. For that alone I should kill you...*

The voice startled him, making him jump up and slide off the edge of the bed. "Einstein? Is that you?!" he yelled, standing up and looking around at the ceiling as if he knew someone was watching him. "This isn't funny!"

After a painfully long moment with no response, he picked the notebook up off the floor and looked at it, frowning as he puzzled his way through the symbols that his mind only recognized when he wasn't thinking about it.

*That hair represents a possible outcome. An unrealized reality.*

This time, he knew the voice was only in his mind, but he understood the possibility of what it

was telling him. There was a way he could get Crais back. A very, very dangerous way...

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He didn't remember drawing Winona, but by the time he made it to the command deck, he had the pulse pistol in his hand and was ready to use it. "D'Argo!" he yelled, looking around. "D'Argo, we're looking for a wormhole now. If you've got any problems with that, Winona and I would be glad to talk it out with you later..."

"Commander Crichton, I'm not sure that is a good idea," Pilot said calmly, trying to soothe him before he did something rash. "This is a very dangerous area of space..."

"Yeah, well, if I get sucked into something, what's it gonna matter?" he asked darkly, buckling on his EVA suit. "I've gotta check something out..."

"Commander, please, think about this," the calm voice persisted. He knew Pilot was busy trying to rouse all of the others, and wanted to be out before they were conscious. Unfortunately, at least Scorpius beat him to it.

"John, where do you think you're going?" he asked, walking to Crichton's side and wrapping a frighteningly strong arm around him. "This is *not* a good idea. What good will it do you if you get what you want back, but die in the attempt?"

"Damn it, Scorpy!" Crichton hissed through clenched teeth. "Do'ya have to make so much sense?" He turned to look at the halfbreed, startled when he discovered just how close they were. "And how the frell do you know what I'm looking for, anyway?"

"Because you dream of him every night, even when you are not alone," Scorpius purred menacingly. "You should really go with the cloning idea -- it's much, much safer."

"You read my notes," Crichton accused, vaguely registering that more of the crew were on the command deck now, and that Scorpius had maneuvered him away from the controls, away from the corridor that lead to the cargo bay and the exits. "Keep your damned hands *off* my notes!"

"John, what is all of the yelling about?" D'Argo asked, planting himself firmly in their way. "Why are you looking for a wormhole this time?"

"You wouldn't understand, big guy," he answered, proud that he sounded much calmer than he had when talking with Scorpius. At least his mind wasn't completely unravelling yet...

"Try us, John," Aeryn said, joining them and fixing Scorpius with a poisonous glare.

"I can't take it anymore," he answered softly, leaning a little more against Scorpius and allowing the halfbreed's strength to hold him. He couldn't feel the heat through his EVA suit, but he knew it was there. "I have to get Crais back..."

"Oh, that is just--" D'Argo began, sounding as if he were about to launch into a Luxan-sized rant. He cut off suddenly, and Crichton wondered just where Aeryn had jabbed him.

"John, he's gone," she said quietly. "I'm sorry, but he's... *gone*."

"I know," Crichton answered. "But I know how to get him back, too. I *know* how to change it!" The rational part of his mind knew he was sounding dangerously unstable; obsessed. It took a long, hard look at him, and decided it was time to hide. "I can get him back -- I can drag him out of there *just* as it happens. I can *save* him!"

//And what if your timing is off? What if you lose your focus for even a fraction of a second?// Harvey asked, leaning as close as Scorpius' physical form was. He could feel the heat pouring off the halfbreed, tried to ignore the way it made him feel.

*Since every destination is surrounded by similar unrealized realities the closer you travel the more you must maintain absolute engrossment. And never return to a familiar place prior to the last time you left. Your next journey may lead to a permanent unrealized reality.* Einstein's voice rang out through his mind, answering Harvey's question far better than he could.

//So if you fail, you will not only lose Crais and possibly yourself, but you could also fail to destroy the wormhole project and give us everything we need to create the weapon you want to keep us from having?// Harvey cocked his head at Crichton and smiled darkly. //Perhaps I should let you try it, after all...//

//Just as much of a chance that I frell things up even worse than that, Nosferatu. *Way* worse than that...// Crichton responded, his mind flashing through the various mixed-up realities he had visited/caused when Einstein had tried to teach him of the dangers of wormhole travel. //I can't do it... it's too dangerous. But I can't stand being without him, either.//

//I think perhaps you need to rest, John. Once you are calm, you can think about other possibilities. I'm sure there are some you haven't explored yet, which do *not* require frelling with the fabric of the universe.//

//Yeah. Yeah, okay. For now...// he responded, shaking his head slightly and resurfacing to find himself leaning all his weight against Scorpius. "It's okay -- it's cool -- I'll go back to my quarters and just chill," he said quietly, looking up at D'Argo and Aeryn and seeing the concern in their eyes. He straightened and tried to push Scorpius away, but found he didn't have the strength.

"I will make certain he actually returns to his quarters," Scorpius purred, and then he escorted Crichton away from them before they could respond.

D'Argo and Aeryn watched them leave, then Aeryn turned to the Luxan and asked, "Do you have any idea what he thinks he's doing?"

"No -- and I'm not certain he does, either."

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Scorpius helped him back to his quarters, pushing him onto the bed when they drew near enough to it. "It seems I'm not distracting you enough recently, John," he purred, pinning him down easily with one hand in the middle of his chest. "We'll have to rectify that, I think."

"I don't think so," Crichton said, grabbing Scorpius' arm with both hands and trying to push him off. After a brief struggle, Scorpius sat down next to him on the bed, stroking up and down until Crichton squeezed his eyes shut and arched into the caress. "Aww... frell," he hissed, lust burning through him as Scorpius moved the hand from his chest and leaned in closer.

In one easy move the halfbreed leapt fully onto the bed, straddling him and pinning him down with frightening ease. Crichton groaned and arched helplessly up into him, his control fading as if it had never been. He couldn't even remember the last time he had been able to keep from reacting to Scorpius' attentions...

Scorpius leaned close, sniffing at Crichton and letting out an appreciative moan at the scent of his rising arousal. He nuzzled at Crichton's throat until the human tilted his head back, then nibbled along the same path. "John, John... you are such an undisciplined creature," he whispered, pausing to nip sharply at one earlobe.

"Not my fault," Crichton hissed, trying to ignore his rapidly hardening cock and the way Scorpius' lean legs gripped him. "You've pretty much made sure that-- oh, *frell*. Gotta get out of the EVA suit."

"We don't have to -- I could just ride you like this," Scorpius purred in his ear, undulating his hips against Crichton's to illustrate.

"No -- I can't-- can't feel your heat like this..." Crichton answered, feeling heat flood his face from the shame of his admission. "Too well insulated..."

"Aaah... I see," Scorpius said with a predatory grin. He leapt off Crichton and quickly stripped him out of the EVA suit before he could attempt to flee, although he knew it was unlikely that his prey would even try. "You just love that feeling, don't you, John... The heat filling you,

overwhelming you..."

"Frell..." Crichton hissed as Scorpius climbed back atop him, lean legs squeezing him and frighteningly strong hands clamping around his wrists, pinning them to the bed above his head. He couldn't help arching up into Scorpius, moaning softly as the heat began to overwhelm him. "Oh... *fuck*."

"You want my heat, don't you, John?" Scorpius purred, leaning in close again. "You like to feel it burn you..."

"Ohhh..." Crichton moaned, squeezing his eyes shut and arching helplessly. He wanted to deny it; wanted desperately to, but he knew it would be a lie -- he hated to admit it to himself, but he was addicted to the heat; to the way Scorpius wielded power over him. And, he knew it was not entirely his doing, but had been burned into his mind by first the Aurora Chair and then by Scorpius' neural clone. No matter how hard he tried to fight it, that part of his mind that Scorpius owned would always trip him up.

Scorpius slid his hands up under his shirt, and Crichton realized the halfbreed had removed his gloves without him ever noticing. The heat of his hands felt so good as he caressed and pinched, sending little shocks of arousal through Crichton as his nipples hardened. Then Scorpius wriggled his way back, dragging his nails down Crichton's torso until he reached his waistband.

Panting helplessly, Crichton squeezed his eyes shut as Scorpius' nimble fingers unbuckled his belt and opened his pants, peeling back the leather and mauling his cock through his underwear. "John, your body is always so responsive," Scorpius purred, working his hands under the waistband and toying with the head of his cock with his nails. Crichton jerked and gasped as Scorpius teased the slit with the nail of his index finger, his eyes opening wide at the intensity of the pleasure/pain, just in time to see Scorpius bring the finger to his mouth and lick precum from it.

"Oh... *frell!*" he hissed, bucking his hips up helplessly. As ghoulish as Scorpius looked, there was still something far too erotic about the way he licked things.

Scorpius leaned closer for a moment and purred, "You want to feel the heat of my mouth on you, don't you?" and Crichton couldn't even form a coherent response. "Yes, I thought so..." He smiled darkly and moved so that he could comfortably reach Crichton's cock, then purred, "I will make you scream."

That hot tongue darted out and laved the head of Crichton's cock, and he was lost to it. The brief flash-fire of terror when he thought about Scorpius' teeth only served to make the arousal more intense. When the wet heat engulfed him, he couldn't help thrusting up into it as his hands

dug into the bedspread beneath him. "Oh fffrell!" he moaned as Scorpius swallowed him down, throat muscles working around his cock.

Helpless in the face of the strength and heat, he stopped struggling and surrendered to it. Scorpius chuckled around his cock, and he moaned incoherently at the feeling, thrusting blindly into the warm wetness. When sharp-nailed fingers dug into his buttocks and squeezed hard enough to break the skin, he just groaned and thrust harder, the pleasure/pain sending fire through his veins before settling in his balls.

He vaguely registered when those hands left him, but the wet heat kept squeezing his cock and distracting him from whatever else Scorpius was doing. It was only when the halfbreed released his cock with a wet 'pop' that his mind returned enough for him to protest. And then an instant later, Scorpius' cock savagely speared him, and what was about to be a smart-assed complaint turned into a hoarse moan.

"Yes, that's so much better, isn't it, John?" Scorpius purred, relentlessly driving in to the root of his cock. He could see the blue eyes staring at him, hazy with lust and pleasure; knew that the sight of his body, still encased in the cooling suit with the exception of his codpiece, sent an extra thrill through the human. He could feel the reaction it caused, the extra flare of arousal that Crichton tried so hard to deny. "Yesssss..." he hissed as he bucked his hips forward to nudge his cock against that incredibly sensitive spot inside his plaything.

"Oh!" Crichton cried out, stars exploding behind his eyes. It was too good, and all he knew was that he wanted more.

Scorpius smiled darkly at Crichton's inarticulate pleas, knowing that no matter what, he *owned* a part of the human; that even if his insane quest for the lost Sebacean succeeded, Crichton would always need this. The *hunger* he could sense from the human wormed its way into his senses, and he responded in kind, driving brutally into Crichton's willing body.

Crichton arched up into Scorpius' cruel strokes, moaning helplessly with each thrust, completely overwhelmed by the pleasure burning its way through him. Deep down, he knew he shouldn't allow Scorpius to use him the way he did, but even that knowledge heightened the pleasure he felt.

Scorpius grasped Crichton's cock hard with one hand and began to pump in time with his thrusts, and Crichton lost it, bucking into the strokes and coming all over both of them. The last thing he remembered was Scorpius roaring as he came hard; the halfbreed's searing hot cum spurting deep into him. Before his spasms even finished fading, the blackness claimed him...

"Awww, frell," Crichton groaned, dragging himself out of bed and to the bathroom where he dealt with morning necessities and then ran a steaming hot bath. It was obvious that Scorpius had returned to his own quarters sometime during the night, leaving him alone once more. Wincing at the aches the night before had left behind, he climbed into the tub and sighed as the heat soaked deep into his muscles.

"Gotta stop liking heat this much," he murmured, submerging as much of his body as he could in the tub. "Leads to trouble..."

He held his nose and ducked his head under the water, staying like that until he had to come up for air once more. Then he soaped and rinsed his hair and leaned back in the tub to relax, letting his mind wander. *I could do it -- I know I could...* he thought, running through a possible rescue scenario in his mind's eye. *Except that if my timing's even a moment off, I either drag him out of there too early and Talyn doesn't starburst, or I try to go a second too late and we all buy it...*

He sighed irritably and began scrubbing himself clean, continuing to run through the possibilities in his mind. By the time he finished washing, he knew that he couldn't justify using that ability just to get Crais back, no matter how badly he wanted to. It was far too big a risk and would have far too many repercussions, and even at his most reckless and insane he couldn't justify endangering everyone for the sake of his heart. *The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few -- or the one...* he thought. Then he scoffed and muttered, "Damned Vulcans and their logic..."

He dressed hurriedly and headed out to find Aeryn, finally locating her in Pilot's den. "Hey, Aeryn, Pilot," he greeted, stopping beside her and smiling slightly.

"Good morning, Commander," Pilot said, studying him. "Are you feeling calmer this morning?"

"Yeah, a little. Sorry about going off the deep end yesterday," he answered. "It's been... I've been having a little trouble handling things -- it kind of got to me. I... I came up with a couple of ways to --ah-- fix things, but one of them is too dangerous and one of them is... insane."

"Scorpius said something about wormholes and changing events," Aeryn said, a note of annoyance in her voice.

"I believe we have had enough experience with attempting to change events to know the risks are too high," Pilot added disapprovingly.

"Yeah, yeah, I know. That's why I'm not *going* to do it, even though I *could*," Crichton said with a heavy sigh. "I've been going over the alternatives, and wanted to know if either of you know of any races who are good at cloning."



"John, even if you clone him and accelerate the clone to the right age, it won't be *him*," Aeryn said, growing more concerned. She was aware that the constant stress they were under was causing him difficulties, and recent events had affected him quite badly, but he seemed to be even less sane than usual. "You do realize that, don't you?"

"Memory implant of some kind of mental scan -- the recorded data from the Chair. After all, you did kinda put him through the ringer in it," he said, his tone a little more accusing than he had originally intended. "Scorpy probably got a *nice*, deep scan of him."

"There are some races who could do that, Commander," Pilot said gently. "However, it can be dangerous and can lead to mental instability, which there seems to be more than enough of on Moya."

"Dangerous to the clone? I don't want to hurt him..." Crichton said unhappily. "I just want... Frell." He leaned against Pilot's console and rested his head on his arms. "I just want him back without destroying reality in the process..."

"He sacrificed himself to save you, John. To save you and the rest of us..." Aeryn said, reaching up to gently squeeze his shoulder. "You have to let him go..."

"I can't, Aeryn," Crichton said sadly. "I know what he did -- I know why he did what he did. I've been there; I've nearly made the same sacrifice myself at least twice..."

"One time, you did," she whispered, barely loud enough for him to hear.

He winced and squeezed his eyes shut, painfully aware of the event she was referring to. Sometimes he couldn't help wondering if he would ever be able to live up to his copy. "Yeah. Yeah, I know... but I just can't do it, Aeryn. I... it's too much."

"I understand, John," Aeryn said, trying to calm him. "Pilot, can we locate someone who is good at cloning? We could investigate it, at least."

"Of course," Pilot responded, looking sadly down on Crichton.

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Crichton sighed and sprawled on his bed, staring at the symbols in his notebook until his vision blurred. *Frell*, he thought, tossing the book aside and sitting up. He keyed his comms, then asked, "Pilot, can you tell me where Scorpius is?"

"I'm right here, John." The voice came from his doorway, startling him. An instant later, Scorpius

walked in.

Crichton keyed his comms again and said, "Ah -- never mind, Pilot," then shut it off and set it aside. "Scorpy, tell me what you know about starburst. Don't leave anything out, even the tiniest detail..."

"I would think you'd want to ask Pilot about that, John. It *is* a natural ability of Leviathans..." Scorpius said, sitting on the bed beside him and trying to steal a look at the notebook.

"I wanted a scientific viewpoint, too," Crichton explained. "I'm going to talk to Pilot when I'm done talking to you."

"Ah, I see," Scorpius said quietly, settling a proprietary hand on Crichton's thigh. "There really isn't that much I can tell you -- it's a natural ability of the Leviathan race, mainly used as a means of escape from pursuit. The Leviathan surrounds itself with a field that allows it to slip into hyperspace and travel great distances. However, unlike a wormhole, which could hypothetically be used by multiple ships going to the same location, starburst only allows the Leviathan itself -- and anything small enough to slip in directly alongside it -- to travel to a location."

"Yeah, I got that part. And because it's a natural ability of this peaceful race of living ships, it's no good for Peacekeepers or Scarrans, and can't be copied onto any of your big-ass carriers, or turned into any kind of weapon. Hence, everyone being so hyped up for what's in my head," Crichton grouched. "So, how do they *do* it?"

"Beyond the fact that it allows them to slip between the walls of dimensions, I'm not actually sure how they do it," Scorpius admitted.

"Boy, I bet it bugs you to have to admit that, doesn't it?" Crichton asked with a smirk. An instant later, however, he sobered once more. "So, you're reasonably certain that to starburst, they go somewhere *else* -- a kind of 'between', huh?" Inwardly, he pondered it for a moment, thinking, *A little bigger than dragons, but it's the best description I can think of. Maybe that's what happened with Talyn -- ended up being a pissy little Green...*

"That seems like the most appropriate description available in your limited language, John," Scorpius said pointedly.

"So..." Crichton began, taking a deep breath before he continued, "...any chance that a Leviathan doing a hurried starburst could accidentally leave passengers behind in that 'between'?"

Scorpius' eyes narrowed. *So that's where you're going with this, John? How interesting...* he

thought, meeting the blue gaze and looking as deep as he could. "Theoretically, yes, it is possible. Your own Leviathan stopped herself mid-starburst once to keep from endangering all of you, if I remember correctly..."

Crichton grimaced, remembering the event quite clearly. "Just how did you-- never mind, I don't want to know," he said, studying Scorpius carefully. "So... if I controlled it carefully enough, do you think I'd be able to reach this 'between' place using a wormhole?"

"Considering what you seem to be capable of these days, John, I would think you could reach just about anywhere using a wormhole..."

"Frell. I gotta talk to Pilot before we see the cloners then," Crichton said, grabbing his notebook and standing. "Outta my room, Scorpy. I'll talk to you later."

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"John, isn't this as dangerous as trying to change events to get him back?" Aeryn asked calmly, sitting at the dining table next to him. Chiana and Rygel sat off to one side, both surreptitiously trying to overhear anything Sikozy might be saying to Scorpius. Noranti pattered about with some dish no one seemed inclined to eat, while D'Argo leaned back in his chair and studied Crichton.

"D, stop measuring me for the straight-jacket, I'm *not* losing it," Crichton muttered, catching the Luxan's dubious gaze. Then he turned to Aeryn and answered, "Yeah, it may be almost that dangerous, but I can't just *leave* him there if he *is* still 'between'."

"He has a point," Rygel said quietly. "After all, we did experience that split Moya. She stuck herself there to protect us -- there is a small chance that whatever was left of Talyn tried to protect Crais. I think Crichton is completely fahrbot trying to get that maniac back, but I can't imagine what it would be like trapped in a place like that for eternity..."

Crichton cocked his head and looked at Rygel, then said, "Thanks, Sparky." Then he looked around the table at the others and asked, "So, is it okay if we go back to the wormhole and I take a little time looking for him? I hadn't even thought about the possibility when it all went down, but now I can't stop thinking of him being trapped..."

"He did do it to save all of us," Chiana pointed out. "We should at least try to save him."

"I suppose you're with them?" D'Argo asked, looking at Aeryn and growling frustratedly as she nodded.

"I think it's a foolish risk," Sikozy said archly.

"Yes, I'm sure you do," Crichton answered, turning to glare daggers at her. "But we weren't actually asking your opinion. D'Argo's the captain, he gets final say. The end." He paused to turn back to D'Argo, then asked, "So, D, what *do* you say?"

D'Argo sighed and nodded. "We find the nearest wormhole, though. We are *not* going all the way back to where the command carrier was -- the Peacekeepers are likely to be patrolling that area, and I *refuse* to commit suicide for Crais."

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On the second day of his search, Crichton abandoned the module, finding that while he was able to traverse a wormhole in it, he couldn't find that fine control he needed to reach his desired destination. In the EVA suit, on the other hand, he seemed to have no trouble at all finding his way into the most bizarre heart of somewhere *else*.

Einstein would have been proud -- his focus had never been so sharp, although he had heard the word 'obsessed' the last time he passed Sikoze and Scorpius in the common area. It didn't matter, though, because he was going to *find* Crais and rescue him.

The one time his mind did wander -- the time he allowed himself to think about how *powerful* this ability made him -- it was Harvey who dragged him back to his senses, clinging to him in terror as they swooped through 'between' on enormous wings of fire. It was bad enough realizing that once again he had allowed Harvey to be the voice of reason, but when he actually recognized the analogy his subconscious had set up for him, he began to think he just *might* have bitten off more than he could chew.

"Sorry, Harvey -- too many comic books!" he hissed as he tumbled back out of the wormhole and called for Pilot to pick him up. That evening he ate dinner quietly and headed back to his quarters early, asleep practically before his head hit the pillow. When Scorpius stole into his room later, he didn't even stir. Scorpius left after a moment, frustrated and -- although he would never admit it -- slightly concerned.

On the third day, he saw something deep inside the 'between' place -- a swirl of light that looked, for a moment, like a Leviathan beginning to starburst. As he tried to focus in on it, the wormhole began to fluctuate, and the light began to slip away before he could get any closer. Growling with frustration, he turned and fled the wormhole an instant before it collapsed. That night, his sleep was filled with dreams of Crais' voice, calling him from a great distance and pleading for help.

On the fourth day, he found it again, even deeper inside the 'between' place than it had been the day before. Gathering every ounce of will he had, he focused on the light, diving deeper into

the wormhole and aiming for what he knew would have been the command deck if the light were indeed a Leviathan. At the center of the swirl he could see something else -- something that could, *possibly* be a humanoid form. *Crais!* he thought desperately, trying to *reach* for it and screaming as it dissipated just before he could get close enough.

He didn't even remember calling for a pick-up this time, and awoke in the transport pod to Chiana struggling to remove his helmet.

"Chi?" he asked, confused and exhausted, "What happened?"

"You don't remember?" she asked him, helping him sit up and letting him lean against her.

"Uh... no. Not really."

"You came flying out of the wormhole a second before it slammed closed, and called us to pick you up," she told him quietly.

"I did?" He squeezed his eyes shut and reached up to rub his forehead, trying to dispel the headache he felt building up behind his eyes. "I don't remember doing it--"

"You called us in Scarran," Aeryn cut in, glaring at him from the controls.

"I *what?*" Crichton asked, sitting up and instantly regretting it as his head throbbed and his stomach threatened to jump out his nose. He slid back down again, then realized, "Oh *frell*... it wasn't me, Aeryn -- it was Harvey."

"The neural clone?" Chiana asked, cocking her head and looking down at him.

"Yeah -- guess he was a little worried I'd be floating around out here too long otherwise," he answered, finding himself immensely intrigued by the way her hair looked as it fell down around her face. "I think I might have pushed it too hard -- but I *saw* something. I don't know if it was him, but there was something there. I couldn't reach it..."

"We're getting you back aboard Moya, and then you are going to *sleep*, John," Aeryn said in a tone that brooked no argument. "You can try again, once you are rested."

"I think I can find that spot again -- I'll know it the instant I feel it," he murmured, feeling his eyes drifting closed, even as he tried to concentrate on Chiana's hair swinging back and forth. He smiled sleepily up at her, only confused for a instant when the swirling white light burst out of the ends of her hair and engulfed him.

"Took you guys *frelling* long enough," he muttered, finding himself floating in nothingness.

"What, no icebergs? No guy in a suit? Someone steal your FX budget?"

He spun around, finding himself able to control his own movements to some degree, and searched all around for any signs of life. "Or... maybe you *found* an FX budget..." he breathed as a glowing being descended from the light above and hovered in front of him. He cocked his head and stared, then chuckled and asked, "Space jellyfish?"

Glowing tendrils reached out and gently probed at his temples then drew back again, and a quiet voice sounded inside his head, //You must cease your probing. You have *already* been warned.//

"No, actually I *won't* cease my probing. A good friend of mine is trapped in there, and I'm going to get him out. You're gonna have to kill me if you want me to stop," he answered, following the hypnotic movement of the tendrils and finding it fascinating.

//You will kill yourself if you persist.//

"Yeah, well, that's a risk. Although it looks like I've got backup, so that might not happen, anyway. I'm not gonna stop. I can't leave him there."

//The only destinations you can realize by design are those of which you have foreknowledge.//

"Apparently not," Crichton replied, frowning. "Einstein, is that you?"

//Destination is the key.//

"*Crais* is the key," Crichton countered angrily. Then he paused, going thoughtful.

"Wait a minute... I'm looking so hard for Crais that I could be unconsciously going back to the event anyway, is that it?"

//The journey can be random, or with purpose.//

"Oh, believe me, there's a purpose. I'm just not sure, now, if I'm looking for Crais wherever he is *now*, or if my mind is leading me back to the event *then*..." Crichton said, looking worriedly at the floating being. "How do I know the difference?"

//Every portal has a distinct space-time signature.//

"Yeah, yeah, you said that before. But it doesn't *feel* like the same place -- time -- something. It's *different*."

//Then you have the answer.//

"So... he is trapped there, in 'between'. I can't leave him there, Einstein. I have to get him out."

//The next time, or you will be stopped. Your probing is becoming dangerous -- to you and to us.//

"Then *help* me get him out of there. You guys have so much frelling power, *help* me!"

//We cannot interfere.//

"Oh, *frell* that non-interference crap! If you want me to stop poking, give me what I'm looking for. Otherwise, I'm gonna keep at it until I get him. You got it, Einstein?"

//The next time, or you will be stopped,// the voice repeated, and then the light faded and he abruptly ceased floating.

"Whoa!" he cried out, jerking upright and then falling back against his pillows. "What the fuck?!"

"Lie still, Crichton," Scorpius soothed, holding him down easily with one hand. "You have been unconscious since the transport pod retrieved you."

"I-- have?"

Scorpius stroked Crichton's face, then trailed his hand down his chest. "Yes, you have. There was some concern..."

"Yeah. I guess so..." Crichton answered, not entirely surprised to find his body too tired to react to the attention it was receiving. "I... I think I found him, but it's going to be tough to actually *reach* him."

"Oh?"

"I tried, and just getting close wore me out. I have to get him next time, or I'll never be able to," Crichton explained. He didn't feel it was a good idea to tell Scorpius about his encounter -- and part of him worried that he may have imagined the entire thing, anyway. "And I was thinking -- we're going to need to have the transport pod *really* close to the wormhole entrance -- I'm pretty sure he wasn't wearing an EVA suit when he returned to Talyn."

"Ah, yes," Scorpius answered. "A good point."

"Yeah," Crichton sighed, shaking his head slightly in an attempt to wake himself up. Scorpius' hand rested on his thigh, now, but his eyes kept sliding shut, and the last thing he remembered seeing was the halfbreed sighing and walking away. That night, he slept so deeply that he didn't even dream.

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"Okay, is everybody sure they know what they have to do?" Crichton asked, looking at the group standing before him in the transport pod. "I may be really out of it when we come out of the wormhole, and at the very least Crais'll be having problems because of the exposure to vacuum. I have no idea what condition he's going to be in from his ordeal -- he may need immediate medical care, or he may be fine. I'm probably not gonna be able to give you guys any info before we get out..."

"Yeah, Crichton, we've got it," Chiana answered. "Aeryn's the best pilot, so she brings the pod as close to the opening of the wormhole as she can, and then holds it steady there. Scorpius and D'Argo, as the strongest ones, stand ready to grab the two of you, and I stand by to give whatever first aid is needed."

Crichton nodded, then looked at Scorpius and D'Argo. "Can you two work together for the length of time this is gonna take? I don't want to find out that I'm about to go 'splat' on the outside of the hatch because you're arguing over something..."

"For the length of time this takes," D'Argo answered, glowering threateningly at Scorpius. "John, you're going to have to at least give us some kind of signal that you need the hatch opened -- we can't keep it open the whole time you're gone, or Chiana will be sucked out into space."

"Yeah, Big Guy, I know," Crichton said, nodding slowly. "I'll try to yell 'now' when I need you to open it. If I'm... the worse for wear, it might be in Scarran. I know for a fact Harvey'll do whatever it takes to keep me from buying it, so one way or another, you'll get your signal."

He checked the EVA suit one last time, then looked over at Aeryn. "Make sure you pull back a bit until the wormhole is completely established -- I don't want everybody getting sucked into it if things go pear-shaped."

"I know," she said crisply, unwilling to let him know how worried she really was. "Good luck, John," she added softly as he pulled on his helmet and checked the seal.

He smiled and flashed the thumbs-up at everyone, then went to the hatch and ducked outside as quickly as possible, feeling the hairs on the back of his neck beginning to stand up. The wormhole was about to open again, and this was his one last chance to reach Crais. Even as part of his mind counted down, he focused his thoughts on the route he had to travel to reach



'between' and the area deep within where he knew Crais was trapped. He whispered, "Now," and the wormhole blossomed into existence directly in front of him, the swirling blue light pulling him in just as he had planned.

Finding the right path was simple, now that he knew the feel of the place/time he was looking for. As he dove deeper and deeper into the wormhole and 'between', he knew he wasn't entirely alone. At the periphery of his vision he could see bright streaks of light streaming past, not *quite* in the same 'place' as him, and he realized why the Ancients had been so worried this time. He was nearly piercing their realm...

*Don't mind me, guys, I'm just doing my thing and then I'll be outta your hair -- tentacles -- whatever,* he thought, and then he forced his mind away from them and back onto the task at hand. In the EVA suit he couldn't feel the wind on his face, but he knew he was rocketing through the wormhole at an incredible speed, whooshing past branching paths and unerringly heading for the swirling light in the distance.

*Crais...* he thought, zooming up on the light quickly. Inside the light he could see the intricate tracteries that looked like Talyn's form in mid-starburst, and dove quickly for the command deck.

*We took his remains away to the Leviathan graveyard -- is this his spirit?*

In the instant it took for that thought to flash across his mind, the hybrid Leviathan's form began to break up all around him. "Frell! Hold it together just a little longer, Talyn!" he yelled, willing himself to go faster, ignoring the throbbing pain behind his eyes that hadn't been there a moment before.

*CRAIS!!* he thought again, growing desperate. And then there was a blinding flash of light -- Crichton was sure he could see glowing tentacles waving around the edge of it -- and something collided with him with enough force to stop his forward momentum.

Instinctively he wrapped his arms around the solid form, blinking hard to try to get his eyes to work again. He felt strong arms wrap around him, and a familiar -- and greatly missed -- voice cried, "Crichton!"

"Crais! Thank god..." Crichton gasped, and then muttered, "...or jellyfish..." He turned them around and threw himself forward, back towards the entrance of the wormhole; willing them to move as fast as possible because he could *feel* things starting to fall apart practically around them.

"I'm getting you outta here -- wormhole's starting to collapse. You gotta hang on, and when we're nearly outside, breathe out or yell or whatever it takes to get as much air out of your lungs as possible. We're going on a little space walk, and you do *not* want to be holding your breath."

He felt Crais nod, and the arms tightened around him. With the wormhole fluctuating so wildly around them, he wondered what, if anything, Crais could see; spared a split second for a glance and saw that the Sebacean's eyes were squeezed shut. "Just hang on -- it's going to be okay," he said softly, forcing himself to move even faster and struggling through the pounding pain behind his eyes.

*C'mon, c'mon... gotta go faster...* Crichton thought, *willing* them toward the opening of the wormhole, fleeing the destruction rumbling along behind them. He squelched the urge to look back over his shoulder, instead concentrating on the patch of normal space and the transport pod floating in it a relatively short distance from the mouth of the wormhole. With uncanny accuracy, he calculated their speed and the distance they would need to travel while Crais was unprotected, wincing when he realized that at the rate they were moving now, if they missed the hatch at all, they wouldn't survive. It was going to be a bumpy enough ride if they made it inside the transport...

"Okay, Crais, we're close -- get ready!" he warned, tightening his grip and feeling the Sebacean do the same. The rumbling behind them intensified; for a moment everything was lit by a blinding flash from behind them, and they were shoved forward by some unknown force. Crichton strongly suspected that the Ancients had just kicked them out of their realm, and he had to smile. *Amusing way of helping without helping, guys. Thanks!*

And then there was no more time -- just as they flew out of the mouth of the wormhole, it collapsed behind them. The resulting shockwave sent them spinning, and Crichton instinctively curled around Crais as well as he could. "D -- we're out of control -- need a pickup now!!" he yelled over the comms. *Not gonna get Crais back just to have him die in the vacuum!*

A moment later there was a massively painful jolt -- and then everything went black.

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The first thing that registered was warmth and softness. Crichton snuggled into the covers, pulling them up over his head and then burrowing closer to the form lying next to him in the bed; instinctively wrapping an arm around it and nuzzling gently before he drifted under again.

The next time he surfaced at all, Crichton lay on his other side, with someone spooned up against him and a strong arm wrapped around his waist. He could feel warm breath on his shoulder, and feel the tickle of facial hair as his bedmate snored softly. Even as part of his mind tried to wake him fully to see if it was a dream or a wonderful reality, exhaustion claimed him once again.

The third time, his bladder woke him up, and Crichton knew he was not going to be able to ignore it. He rolled out of bed, startled by the sudden surge of weakness as he stood up and

tried to take a step. He knew he wasn't in his bedchamber -- instead he was in the room they used as a sick bay, and there was indeed another person in the bed he had just climbed out of. However, his discomfort won out over his curiosity and he staggered his way to the bathroom to deal with necessities.

*God, please let him still be there when I get back -- do **not** let this just be a dream... he thought. Or, if it's a dream, then just don't ever let me wake up...*

He glanced in the mirror when washing his hands, and was startled by the face staring back at him. The face was pale, its skin stretched thin, and the circles under its eyes made it look like it hadn't slept in weeks. He was sure it couldn't be his own face -- except that when he reached up to rub his face, hands reached up to make the identical move in the mirror. *Damn -- no wonder everyone was worried about me...*

He splashed some water on his face and soaked his hair, then grabbed a towel and scrubbed hard until his hair stood up in spikes. Trying to hold back a huge yawn, he walked gingerly back to the bed and looked down. The only thing not hidden by the covers was long, wavy black hair -- he reached out and gently stroked it, smiled at the quiet sigh in a familiar masculine voice.

"Crais?" he whispered, kneeling down beside the bed and gently turning back the covers. "Crais, it's Crichton..."

"Mmnf." A hand reached up and grabbed the blanket, pulling it back over his head. He remained like that for another moment, then suddenly threw it back and sat up. "Crichton!"

Without even thinking, he threw his arms around Crais and hugged him close, whispering, "You're alive -- we're *both* alive!"

He felt Crais' arms pull him close, the bearded face brushing against his neck as he nuzzled gently. "Crichton -- I... I'm not sure what happened, but I am happy to see you. Very, very happy." Hearing that voice once more, Crichton swallowed hard to try to hold back tears -- now that he had succeeded in his quest, all of the strength and determination trickled away, leaving him weakened and tired. He wasn't sure how long they had been asleep so far, but he knew he was far from recovered.

"Let me get back into bed, Crais -- I'm still beat..." he murmured, turning slightly to kiss Crais on the cheek. When Crais shifted over to the other side of the bed, giving him room to climb in, he asked, "Do you have any idea what happened?"

"I remember ordering Talyn to starburst -- I remember a burst of intense light -- and then nothing. Just-- nothing..." Crais looked at him and frowned. "Why are you asking me this?"

"I-- you did it -- you and Talyn took out the command carrier -- we succeeded," Crichton said softly. He lay down, tugging Crais down with him, then added, "And you were lost in the explosion..."

For a long moment Crais was silent, then he closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "Lost?"

"All we managed to find were the mangled remains of Talyn... We took what was left of him to the Leviathan graveyard and gave him a proper send-off," Crichton explained.

"I am assuming, then, that it has been some time since that happened?" Crais asked, studying his face.

"Yeah -- almost a cycle."

"You look terrible, Crichton," Crais said, reaching out to stroke his face. "Has it been that difficult?"

"I've been searching for you -- for the past few days. When I realized there was a chance you were trapped somewhere instead of actually being dead, I started looking... It-- it was a little harder than I thought. I'm still wiped..."

"I am also quite tired -- perhaps we should sleep some more, then see how we feel the next time we wake?"

"Yeah, that sounds good..." He smiled and leaned in to gently kiss Crais, then they settled comfortably in the bed. Crichton tried to stay awake long enough to be able to tell that Crais was asleep, but sleep overtook him instead.

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The next time he woke, Crichton felt strong arms encircling him, and an erection nudging against his butt. He tensed for an instant, then relaxed again as his bedmate nuzzled his neck and he felt the familiar tickle of beard and moustache. "Crais, you awake?" he whispered, leaning back into him and squeezing one of the hands.

"Ah, so you're finally awake?"

The voice startled him badly -- he had forgotten that they weren't in his quarters, and that anyone could walk in, although he would have thought that the others would make sure Scorpius wasn't the one waiting when he woke. Of course not. "Scorpy."

"And your insane quest has actually been successful. Most interesting, that you are able to

control the wormhole to that extent, with no machinery or devices..."

"Pilot, where's Chiana or D'Argo, or Aeryn?" Crichton asked, sitting up. He could feel Crais beginning to stir beside him, and was worried about how he would react -- Crais had no idea what had transpired between his 'death' and now...

"Aeryn is on her way, Commander," Pilot responded, and Crichton prayed she would arrive before things got too ugly.

And then he felt Crais shift in the bed suddenly, and prop himself up on one elbow. "Scorpius!" Crais growled threateningly, just as Aeryn stepped into the room. "What is that abomination doing here?"

That was the Bialar Crais that made Crichton weak in the knees -- the command voice that demanded obedience; the barely-leashed anger that made him seem so dangerous. In other circumstances, he would probably be growing quite aroused -- right now, however, he was worried that a fight was about to break out.

"Crais, remember I told you it's been a while? Things have happened... He's travelling with us right now," Crichton explained. Then he caught Aeryn's eye and gave her a pointed glance. *C'mon, Aeryn -- help me out here!*

"Scorpius, I think you had better leave John alone for now. Let them recover before you bother them about wormholes," Aeryn threatened. Crichton smiled, thinking that Aeryn would have called it a suggestion, not a threat, but he certainly wouldn't have wanted to be on the receiving end of it.

Scorpius sketched a mocking bow, then turned and walked out. Crichton could feel how tense Crais was; could feel him practically shaking with anger. He gently squeezed Crais' hand, trying to reassure him. "You okay?"

"What kind of *things* could possibly have happened that would make you travel with that creature?" Crais asked, looking from him to Aeryn and back. "You know what he's done -- what he's capable of!"

"It's a long story," Crichton answered uncomfortably. Then he turned to Aeryn and asked, "So, what happened? How long have we been out?"

"Nearly a full day," she answered, walking further into the room and studying them. "How do you feel?"

"Not too bad, now," Crichton answered. "Woke up earlier and still felt wiped, but after we slept

more, I feel okay. So, what happened?"

"You got blown out of the wormhole as it collapsed, and I had to match our velocity to yours so the impact didn't kill you," Aeryn explained. "Scorpius and D'Argo managed to pull you in, but even then you took a serious jolt -- once Chiana determined you were simply unconscious, she took care of Crais until we could get you two back here."

"How serious was the exposure?" Crais asked.

"It wasn't long enough to be too serious," Aeryn answered. "But you were very weak -- I don't know if it was caused by the exposure to space, or by the trip through the wormhole, or something else. We examined you---"

"Who's we?" Crichton cut in, wondering who had managed to strip *and examine* them without either of them waking.

"Chiana and I," Aeryn answered. "Scorpius volunteered his assistance, but D'Argo threatened to choke him with his own cooling rods."

"That's D for you," Crichton answered. Then he grinned and asked, "So, did Chi behave herself?"

"As much as she ever does," Aeryn answered with a shrug. Crichton decided he didn't need to know the details. "However, beyond the weakness, neither of you seem to have any serious damage -- and apparently Crichton has succeeded in doing the impossible."

"Saving me?" Crais asked, frowning slightly.

"Yeah -- everyone was beginning to think I was insane -- again," Crichton explained with a shrug. "I guess I was a little obsessive, but I couldn't stand the thought of you being trapped there, all alone..."

"I... don't really remember anything," Crais said quietly. Then he looked up at Aeryn again and asked, "Where are our clothes? If we are well, then we would like to go somewhere more private -- where Scorpius is not so likely to walk in." He turned to Crichton and added, "Unless you have other plans, Crichton..."

"Uh... no -- actually, going to my quarters sounds like a *great* idea," Crichton said, sparing a glance at Aeryn and seeing her roll her eyes. "Aeryn, let D'Argo know he can have Moya go wherever he wants -- I think I may be... unavailable for a while."

"And Scorpius?" she asked.

"He's *not* invited."

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On the trip back to Crichton's quarters, he commed Pilot. "Hey, Pilot -- I'm going to be unavailable for... I dunno, it could be days. Can you make sure we aren't disturbed? Especially not by Scorpius."

"Of course, Commander. D'Argo has indicated he is interested in finding a commerce planet -- would you be interested in visiting it, too?"

Crichton looked over at Crais, taking in his hastily donned uniform. "Yeah, actually that would be a really good idea," he responded with a smile. "But other than that, if the deck's a'rockin', don't come knockin'."

"Yes, Commander," Pilot answered, and Crichton was certain he heard amusement in the alien's tone. The smirk that Crais gave him made him wonder exactly what the translator microbes had turned that into, and then they were at the door of his quarters and he really didn't care about colloquialisms.

Once inside, with the door shut and locked, he started stripping off the EVA suit once again, watching as Crais did the same with his uniform. "You realize that we're going to have to get you new clothes -- can't have you running around in that uniform and scaring the locals, or attracting unwanted Peacekeeper attention..."

"I-- do you actually believe they will allow me to join the crew?" Crais asked, looking up from removing his boots.

"Hell, yeah -- you sacrificed yourself to save all of us!" Crichton answered, tugging off his trousers and shirt and tossing them aside. "If they let Scorpy stay, they'll *have* to let you stay."

"Why *do* you let him stay, Crichton? After what he has done to you -- to me?"

"It's... he-- he saved Aeryn's life. He even saved my life... It's complicated. I don't wanna talk about him right now, though. Maybe later, once we're done celebrating your return, huh?" Crichton answered, smirking in response to the heated glance Crais gave him. "Come to bed, Bialar..."

He backed towards the bed, watching as Crais stripped off the rest of his uniform; smiling as the Sebacean began folding it neatly and then just tossed it aside to join the rest of the discarded clothes. And then Crais strode towards him and caught him in a strong embrace before he could

get into the bed. "Oh, how I have missed this!" he sighed, pulling Crichton tight against him and kissing him fiercely.

"Yeah, me, too," Crichton breathed when they broke the kiss. "Bed..."

Crais released Crichton long enough for him to turn back the covers and climb into bed, then he followed, straddling Crichton's hips and pulling the covers back up over both of them.

"Damn, I've *really* missed this," Crichton sighed, stroking up Crais' back and pulling him in close, then sliding his hands down to knead the muscular buttocks as Crais nuzzled at his throat.

"So have I, Crichton," Crais murmured against Crichton's skin, sighing as he arched up into the gentle nibbling. "Your body is magnificent!"

Crichton groaned as Crais rubbed against him, as the warm hands stroked everywhere they could reach. He continued to knead Crais' ass with one hand while stroking the other up Crais' back to grab a handful of thick, black hair. "That's so nice," Crichton murmured, carding his fingers through Crais' hair and then grabbing another handful. "You should wear your hair loose more often," he whispered, gently tugging until Crais looked up at him, then guiding him down into another kiss.

Crais groaned into the kiss, growing more and more excited by the confidence that Crichton exhibited. He knew, from their time on the command carrier, that Crichton's experiences had been changing him, but this was more of a change than he had expected. This Crichton had become a warrior, and that sent a thrill through him.

When they broke the kiss, Crichton let his hand slide down from the back of Crais' head to the back of his neck, where he gently fingered the scars left from Talyn's neural interface. From the sharp intake of breath and the way Crais writhed against him, Crichton could tell the area was still sensitive, and not in a painful way. "You like that, Bialar?" he purred, intensifying his attention until Crais was panting and grinding against him. "That's good," he whispered, probing between Crais' butt cheeks with his other hand, working the tip of a finger into the tight hole.

"Oh!" Crais gasped. His body was already submitting to Crichton, and he knew there would be no way for him to turn this encounter around so that he was the dominant one. Smiling against Crichton's shoulder, he realized it wasn't necessary -- this man had truly become his friend, his compatriot -- his lover. There was no reason, any longer, for him to try to prove that he owned the human. "Yes," he moaned as Crichton's finger slid deeper. "Please, Crichton -- frell me. Let me feel that glorious monster between your legs filling me -- let me feel you!"

"Damn, Bialar," Crichton gasped, surprised by the intensity of Crais' reaction. He knew the Sebacean enjoyed his size, but the pure *need* in Crais' voice was unexpected. And very, very



nice... "You want me in you, Lover?" he asked as he slid another finger into Crais and rolled them so that they were side by side on the bed.

"Yes!" Crais panted, writhing against Crichton and enjoying the feel of the muscular body against his own. "You magnificent bastard -- *fuck me.*"

Something about hearing Crais use the Earth word instead of 'frell' sent a jolt of lust through Crichton. He grabbed a handful of hair again and turned Crais to meet his gaze. "You want it, you got it," he purred hungrily, smiling as he felt Crais's cock twitch where it was trapped between them.

He pulled the fingers out of Crais and rolled the Sebaceous onto his back, then got to his hands and knees above him. "I need to get some lube," he explained, reaching for the small table beside the bed. He didn't want to think about why the small tub of gel was still out on the table; forced his last encounter with Scorpius out of his mind.

He popped the tub open and scooped out a little of the gel, then carefully shifted again so he was kneeling between Crais' spread legs. "Is this what you want, Bialar?" he asked, grasping his cock and slicking it while Crais watched with hungry eyes. He groaned as Crais nodded and swallowed hard, and knew he couldn't wait any longer. As Crais lifted up his legs and pulled them towards his chest, Crichton moved into position, the head of his cock nudging against Crais' anus and then slowly pressing in.

"Fuck, you're tight, Bialar," he hissed as Crais moaned and arched up into him, driving him deeper. "Don't rush it, Lover."

"You're not hurting me, Crichton -- John," Crais whispered, surprising Crichton with the use of his first name. Then he wrapped his powerful legs around Crichton and pulled him down the rest of the way, relishing the growling moan that Crichton made as he sank in to the root. Panting, Crais added, "Not hurting me at all. That's -- good. *Very good...*"

Crichton planted one hand on either side of Crais' head and looked down at him, smiling as he saw the dark eyes turn hazy with awed pleasure. "With you lookin' at me like that -- I could really get used to this," he murmured. Then he thrust forward slightly and Crais' eyes went wide, a broad smile lighting his face. "Oh yeah, that's it, isn't it? Right... *there,*" he whispered, punctuating it with another thrust.

Crais' legs tightened around him, his hands clutching at Crichton's shoulders and pulling him down into a hot embrace as he surged up into Crichton's thrusts. "Yes!" he growled into Crichton's ear as he first stroked everywhere he could reach, then began gently raking his nails up Crichton's back as his thrusts grew wilder. "Fuck me, John," he moaned breathlessly, writhing and arching into him.

"Damn, Bialar, you're a wild man," Crichton murmured, driving into him. The feel of that hot, tight channel gripping him was enough to short-circuit what was left of his conscious mind, and all that remained was the pleasure. He shifted enough to grasp Crais' cock and began to pump; leaned in to kiss Crais roughly.

Crais groaned, completely helpless and overwhelmed by Crichton's strength. He thrust into Crichton's tight grip as Crichton thrust into him, and gasped as orgasm crashed down over him, dragging him away in the flood of pleasure. Crichton groaned and thrust deep, coming hard right after him. By the time their spasms faded, both of them lay helpless and panting in the bed, barely conscious.

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Hours later, Crichton stole out of his quarters wearing only his underwear and a blanket he had wrapped around himself. He didn't see Scorpius as the halfbreed melted into the shadows of the corridor; instead headed for the dining area and snagged a tray full of food. Noranti caught him at it but kept her mouth shut, watching his every move as he snuck back towards his bedroom.

Before he could reach it, Aeryn and D'Argo happened upon him, D'Argo giving him a huge smirk and Aeryn keeping her expression carefully neutral. "Is everything okay?" Aeryn asked, looking him up and down.

"Yeah -- it's-- it's great. Thanks for asking," Crichton answered, trying not to feel self-conscious when it was more than obvious what he had been doing for most of the past day -- *especially* to the Luxan's sense of smell. "Um... D'Argo, I wanted to let you know, Crais is gonna be staying with us."

He was prepared to launch into a whole string of explanations and justifications, when D'Argo simply nodded and said, "We already discussed it, John. We assumed he would be."

"Oh. Oh! Thanks, Big Guy!" Crichton responded, surprised, and very pleased. "We'll --ah-- we'll see you guys later, then..." and he hurried back to his quarters with the food, the two of them watching and Aeryn slowly shaking her head.

"He looks *happy*," she said softly. "I haven't seen that in a while..."

D'Argo smiled and looked down at her, then said, "Maybe our luck is finally starting to improve."

\*\*\* end \*\*\*