



Dragon Spawn (A Novel of the Lupi)

By Eileen Wilks

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Lily learns she was right. Tom Weng—a powerful sorcerer allied with the Old One who keeps trying to take over the world—is still alive. But that's not the worst. Weng is a dragon spawn, the product of a botched hatching given a human form in an attempt to keep him from going mad. A failed attempt.

Meanwhile, Lily's husband Rule is facing a Challenge to the death. Then there's the possible reappearance of another sorcerer. But none of that matters when their enemy strikes out of nowhere in the worst way possible. Lily must face a nightmare and return to a place she never wanted to see again. The place where she died...

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Editorial Review

Review

Praise for the Novels of the Lupi

“Grabs you on the first page and never lets go. Strong characters, believable world building, and terrific storytelling . . . I really, really loved this book.”—Patricia Briggs, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Fire Touched*

“As intense as it is sophisticated, a wonderful novel of strange magic, fantastic realms, and murderous vengeance that blend together to test the limits of fate-bound lovers.”—Lynn Viehl, *New York Times* bestselling author of the Darkyn series

“Eileen Wilks writes what I like to read.”—Linda Howard, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Troublemaker*

“I remember Eileen Wilks’s characters long after the last page is turned.”—Kay Hooper, *New York Times* bestselling author of the Bishop / Special Crimes Unit Novels

“Seamlessly [weaves] fast paced action and strong characters in a fantastic blend of entertainment.”—A Book Obsession

“A great read, one that I highly recommend to urban fantasy readers.”—Rabid Reads

About the Author

Eileen Wilks is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the Novels of the Lupi, including *Mind Magic*, *Unbinding*, and *Ritual Magic*. She is also a three-time RITA Award finalist and the recipient of a Career Achievement Award from *Romantic Times*.

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ONE

"You did what?" Lily shook her head. "Bad move, Cullen. Cops get excited when you take off running while they're questioning you."

"It would have been worth it if I'd caught him."

Maybe. Or maybe it would have been disastrous. "If it was really the guy who gave you those shields-"

"It was."

Cullen was wearing his stubborn face. Stubborn looked good on him. So did anger, arrogance, vexation, or intense focus, which were the expressions she saw most often on a face whose beauty could cause strangers to stop and stare. She tended to forget that. Mostly he just looked like Cullen to her. "Did you see his magic, then? If he was a sorcerer-"

"I didn't look. There were a lot of sorcŽri around, so I'd tuned out on the Sight-and then he was gone,

vanished in the crowd. But he saw me, too." He frowned. "I bet he locked his power down so I wouldn't see it."

"Can sorcerers do that?" Lily asked, startled.

"Adepts could, back in the old days. Some mages, too."

"You only got a glimpse of him," Benedict observed from his spot on the couch. "That's a lot of certainty from one glimpse."

"Two glimpses," Cullen said, "and I've spent enough time resurrecting what memories he left me of our encounter. I know what he looks like."

Roughly two years ago, a friend of Cullen's had arranged a meeting between him and another sorcerer. Cullen came away from that meeting with the strongest mental shields on the planet, memories that had been tampered with, and a burning desire to find the man again. So far, he'd failed.

Benedict leaned forward, curious. "His first name was Michael, wasn't it? What was his last name? I've forgotten."

"Maybe because he didn't use one. Damned sorcerers," he muttered, sublimely unaware of any irony. "Secretive as hell, every one of 'em."

Lily snorted. "Shouldn't you say, 'every one of us'?"

"Whatever." Cullen brooded a moment. "I'm going to find him."

Lily knew why Cullen wanted to find the mysterious Michael. He was convinced the man had the Codex Arcana-aka The Book of All Magic. She just wasn't sure that was a good idea.

It did seem like the Codex was or had recently been on Earth, based on the Great Bitch's efforts to find it-for which she'd needed Lily. The idea had been to wipe clean Lily's mind and imprint a copy of the Codex on that nice, blank slate, a process that apparently only worked if the target brain belonged to a sensitive. Lately their enemy had been more interested in killing Lily than capturing her, which made Lily think the Codex wasn't here anymore. But if she was wrong-if Cullen did find the Codex-it would change so much. Some of it for the better, sure. Who knew what kind of powerful spells such a book might hold? None of them could use adept-level spells, but Cullen was almost as good at magic as he thought he was. He'd undoubtedly be able to make use of some of them . . . if the Great Bitch gave him time to learn them.

She wouldn't. They were already targets. If they held the Codex, she'd throw everything she had at them, all at once.

Probably the issue wouldn't arise. Probably Cullen had just caught a glimpse of some guy who looked like Michael, but wasn't him. Why would this mysterious sorcerer show up here? And even if Cullen was right-about whom he'd seen and about Michael having the Codex-the man would go poof now that he'd been spotted. He'd vanished successfully before.

"Did you get his scent?" That was Rule, speaking from the kitchen. They'd gone for a mostly open floor plan on this floor, but from where she sat, the study and stairwell blocked her view of the kitchen.

"He was too far away and I don't have your nose. Not that I could recognize his scent, as the son of a bitch didn't leave me a memory of what he smells like."

"Son of a bitch" was a major lupi epithet. Cullen held a grudge. "Are you out on bail?" she asked.

"Of course not. It isn't against the law to interrupt a cop by running away. It just takes some explaining. Are those cookies done?" He stood abruptly and started for the kitchen.

Lily stayed put in the oversize chair that used to comprise one-third of all the furniture she owned and absently stroked the pile of orange fur draped across her lap. Dirty Harry purred loudly. She smiled. There was just something about petting a purring cat . . .

"You think he really saw that sorcerer?" Benedict asked.

Lily snorted. "Cullen's always certain. He isn't always right."

"True." Benedict fell into a thoughtful silence.

Silent was the default state for Rule's big brother. Sometimes he overdid it, but today it felt restful. Lily wasn't feeling terribly chatty, either, though it was good to have company. It was really good to be home.

Home meant a lot more than it used to. Twenty-two months ago, it had been just her and Dirty Harry. Now she was married. Back then she'd been a homicide detective with the San Diego PD. Now she was a Special Agent with Unit 12 of the FBI. Back then, home had been a tiny apartment. That's how she'd thought of her place, anyway-as home-and it had possessed the basic elements: familiarity, her bed, and a front door key she paid for. One she could turn in the lock to shut out the rest of the world.

Then she'd met Rule and the mate bond hit. That bond had given them no choice; they had to be together. It had made more sense to share Rule's apartment in a high-rise than to try to fit him into her place. Harry had hated it there, though he'd mellowed a bit when Rule's son, Toby, joined them. Harry adored Toby. But they'd given up that apartment, thanks to the war the rest of the world didn't know about, and moved to Nokolai Clanhome to stay with Rule's father, Isen. Isen's house was spacious and comfortable, but it had never felt like home. It wasn't hers.

This place was hers. Hers and Rule's.

Admittedly, in terms of dollars, he'd put way more into it than she had, but the only way they'd ever be financial equals would be if he lost most of his wealth. She wasn't crazy enough to wish for that. Her new goal was to stop defining the "equal" in "equal partners" in terms of dollars. She wasn't there yet, but she was working on it. And it was true that some of the whopping price tag for their place was his to shoulder, since the land and the guard barracks were necessary because of his position as Leidolf Rho. Even so, he'd put more into the house than she had, because he'd paid for all of the renovations. She'd contributed little except opinions.

Turned out she had plenty of those.

Twenty-two months ago she'd have said she didn't care what her place looked like as long as it wasn't cluttered, but once forced to contemplate backsplashes, closets, and lighting, she found she did have likes and dislikes. Fortunately, some of them coincided with Rule's. Some, but not all. Who could have guessed

that a man who loved contemporary design would have such a fixation on wood?

Compromise was the name of the game in marriage. Their bedroom was not sheathed in dark, heavy wood paneling, thank God. But covering one wall in scraps of reclaimed wood—which he insisted on calling an art installation—had turned out well. Rule hadn't gotten the open shelving he wanted in the kitchen, either. Trendy, sure, but way too cluttered for her. Why did people want to see all their stuff all the time? But she'd caved on the ceiling. Paneling a ceiling sounded weird, but Rule really wanted it, so she'd gone along. She was glad of that now. The honey-colored wood looked fantastic overhead.

This house was nothing like her old apartment, and not just because it was so large and upscale. It had only one of the elements she'd once believed made up home—her bed, the one she shared with Rule. But she wasn't paying for the place all by herself, and it wasn't familiar. Not yet. They'd only been in the master suite for a couple weeks when they took off for Washington, D.C., and they'd been back from that trip for less than twenty-four hours. Yesterday was the first time she'd seen the finished second floor . . . finished except for furniture, that is, and when was she going to find time to shop for that? Or the rest of the stuff the place needed. And it didn't matter who had a key to the front door, not when everyone and his brother felt free to drop in.

One reason they'd bought this house was because of the land that came with it. Rule needed to be able to house the Leidolf guards he'd brought from that clan's territory on the East Coast. Those guards had a barracks of their own, but Rule was their Rho. Lupi need contact with their Rho. They also have a limited sense of privacy and no grasp of the concept of alone time.

And yet the moment she and Rule walked in the door again yesterday, something inside her had relaxed. Home. She was home again after more than two months on the other side of the country. She glanced at the wall separating her from the kitchen. She was hoping that being home would relax something in Rule, too. She didn't think he'd had the nightmare last night, but she wasn't sure.

Dirty Harry lifted his head. He stared intently at nothing in that disconcerting way he had. Then he leaped down and headed for the French doors, one of which was open. Places to go and things to do, apparently.

A muffled thud from the kitchen interrupted her thoughts. Since it was accompanied by Cullen's triumphant "Ha!" she didn't spring to her feet. She did call out a warning not to break anything.

"Just Cullen," Rule said, "though I don't think he's badly broken. Here, make yourself useful."

Cullen appeared carrying two mugs of coffee, trailed by a young woman with a bonfire of curls caught up on top of her head and serious black-rimmed glasses. She held a plate of cookies.

"Here you go," Cullen said, handing one of the mugs to Lily.

She accepted it and made a come-along gesture with her other hand. "Come closer with those cookies, Arjenie."

The front door slammed open and ninety pounds of ten-year-old boy came racing in. "Hi, Dad! Hi, Lily! Damn, I'm hungry. I hope—" A pause. "Oh, shit."

Cullen burst out laughing. Lily kicked his calf. "Sorry," he said, grinning. "But that was a perfect double fault."

Toby flushed, mortified. And not, Lily knew, because he'd cursed. Because he'd been wrong.

When they came home from their prolonged stay on the other side of the country, they'd found a couple of changes in Rule's son. Even before First Change, lupi tended to have more muscle mass than humans, so they weighed more than their appearance suggested. So while Toby was heavier than many ten-year-old boys, his growth spurt had him looking like a string bean. An undernourished string bean. Lily knew about growth spurts, but how could he have grown so much in only two months? Rule had assured her it wasn't that sudden. She just hadn't noticed how fast he was growing until they were separated for a couple months. Any day now, she thought glumly, he'd be looking down at her.

The other change had been in his language.

"Mark it," Rule said, emerging from the kitchen with a tray. The tray held three more mugs of coffee, a glass of juice, an apple, and a second plate of cookies. "Quietly, please. Cynna's putting Ryder down for a nap upstairs."

Toby brightened. "Can I—"

"After your homework's done, if Ryder's awake and they're still here."

Toby grimaced and dragged himself into the kitchen, where the Chalkboard of Doom awaited-aka the place where he had to tally his infractions.

"What's the big deal?" Cullen asked. "So he said a couple bad words."

Rule put the tray on the table. "He's not allowed to use curse words until he's older."

Cullen's eyebrows lifted. "How very human of you. I don't see it, myself. Why is 'shit' more objectionable when a kid says it than when an adult does?"

"That's roughly what Tom Erdquist says. Tom allows his son to curse, and Mark is Toby's agemate and a good friend." Rule took his coffee from the tray and sat beside Lily. "It's not surprising Toby picked up the habit."

"What's the problem?"

"The problem is that it is a habit."

"Yes, and . . . ?"

Lily shook her head. "Come on, Cullen. Think. What do you lupi value more than anything?"

"Children," he said promptly.

"What character trait?"

He frowned, bit into one of his pilfered cookies, and chewed. Just as Toby came back into the room, he spoke. "Ah. Control. A habit is by definition not behavior under conscious control. You don't object to Toby cursing. You object to it being a habit."

Rule nodded.

Toby grabbed the apple and plunked down on the big hassock. "I didn't think it was a habit. Dad said that if I was right, I wouldn't have any problem not cussing for a week."

Benedict's eyebrows lifted. "And you agreed?"

"He didn't ask me to agree. He told me that if I didn't cuss for a week, he'd lift his ban."

Arjenie nodded. "Sounds reasonable. How many marks on the chalkboard now?"

The boy sighed. "Six."

None of them pointed out that he'd only been tallying his use of bad words since late yesterday. Clearly he was aware of that.

"I don't get it," Toby said, taking a man-sized bite out of the apple. Toby was allowed to have sweets after he came home from classes as long as he ate a healthy snack first. Growing human boys burn through a lot of calories. Growing lupus boys eat like sumo wrestlers. "Why do I keep forgetting? I remember not to cuss around Grandpa."

"Are you wanting an answer from me?" Rule asked. "Or would you rather discover the reason yourself?"

He thought that over. "Myself," he said, and took another big bite.

That was another, more subtle change, but Lily had spotted this one as it emerged over the last few months, so it didn't come as such a shock. Toby was beginning to seek his own answers.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Rebecca Clark:

Hey guys, do you desire to find a new book to learn? May be the book with the title Dragon Spawn (A Novel of the Lupi) suitable to you? Often the book was written by well known writer in this era. Often the book untitled Dragon Spawn (A Novel of the Lupi) is the main one of several books that will everyone read now. This specific book was inspired lots of people in the world. When you read this publication you will enter the new way of measuring that you ever know previous to. The author explained their concept in the simple way, so all of people can easily understand the core of this publication. This book will give you a large amount of information about this world now. To help you to see the represented of the world on this book.

Dawn Dustin:

The particular book Dragon Spawn (A Novel of the Lupi) has a lot of knowledge on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of benefit. The book was authored by the very famous author. McDougal makes some research prior to write this book. That book very easy to read you will get the point easily after looking

over this book.

George Pinard:

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the sea world or hanging out with buddies is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try thing that really opposite from that. 1 activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love Dragon Spawn (A Novel of the Lupi), you may enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still wish to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh occur its mind hangout guys. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

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