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# Moons Like Great White Whales

By Charles Coleman Finlay

28 February 2005

First one pale oval moon then another and a third breached the darkening sky. Down below, the ocean covered the entire planet. Ripples of blue stretched off to a horizon that merged with the color of the twilight sky so that the moons seemed to leap from the water.

The pilot and her companion skimmed through the atmosphere on organic wings. They had completed their survey and the planet sampling, so this flight out from the landing craft and back was purely for their own joy. They'd timed it exactly so they could see all three moons rise together.

"What do you think of that?" he said. As if he wasn't going to venture his opinion before hers.

"Just perfect." She took a sip from her drinking tube, then lifted her face into the wind as they drifted through the air.

After a while, he said, "So what can we do to top that?"

She felt like their voices were polluting the pristine world, and she wanted him to be quiet. "Let's just enjoy this moment, okay?"

"Okay." He shrugged his shoulders, enough to make a huge whomping flap with his wings.

They glided effortlessly through clear skies toward the distant beacon of their ship. The two smaller moons zipped visibly across the young planet's sky. All three were in low orbits.

Even now, it was easy to see the inevitable. Eventually the moons would crash into the planet and destroy the atmosphere, like what had probably happened on Mars. Or the big one would collide and fragment the planet into a binary system, with one living and one

## [Before Paphos](#)

by Loretta Casteen

8 January 2007

It starts again. The baby begins to cough and choke.

## [Locked Doors](#)

by Stephanie Burgis

1 January 2007

*You can never let anyone suspect, his mother told him. That was the first rule she taught him, and the last, before she left him here alone with It.*

## [Heroic Measures](#)

by Matthew Johnson

18 December 2006

Pale as he was, it was hard to believe he would never rise from this bed. Even in the darkest times, she had never really feared for him; he had always been strong, so strong.

## [Love Among the Talus](#)

by Elizabeth Bear

11 December 2006

Nilufer raised her eyes to his. It was not what women did to men, but she was a princess, and he was only a bandit. "I want to be a Witch," she said. "A Witch and not a Queen. I wish to be not loved, but wise. Tell your bandit lord, if he can give me that, I might accept his gift."

## [Archived Fiction Dating back to 9/1/00](#)

