

# The Witches of Eriadne: Double, Double - Part 4: Moving Forward

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Angel by Lilith

## Chapter 3

Lucas stormed out of his quarters towards the bridge, thinking about just how he was going to punish Angel on his return. He'd been right to think that there was some spirit left in her, but he planned to crush it -- completely. She'd learn to obey him this time.

He arrived on the bridge to see the two shuttles moving towards the ship. He turned to Communications. "Any contact?" He wondered if Angel had done as poor a job of wrecking the comm equipment as she had the engines.

"No sir, and they're not responding to our hails either." Lucas just stopped himself from showing

his relief. He could salvage this, and maybe make it work for him.

"Then something's wrong. Get ten men down to the landing bay and tell them I'll join them immediately." Lucas left the bridge at a run, as he knew that Gideon would have done.

He stood with the men watching the shuttles come to rest in the landing bay. He gestured his crewmen to surround the exit door, weapons ready. First off the shuttles were Raven, with two men carrying a stretcher on which Matheson lay. [Damn him, ain't he dead yet?] Dureena and the three sisters followed a few paces behind. Lucas ordered the troops to let the doctor and his patient through first but to hold back the others.

Raven came through fast and stopped dead when he saw 'Gideon' waiting for them.

"What happened, Doctor? How was he injured?" Raven couldn't believe what he was hearing. How could 'Gideon' ask that when he knew damn well who had shot Matheson? Before he could respond, 'Gideon' bent over the stretcher looking concerned. "Get him to Medbay now," He issued the order to the men carrying the stretcher and Raven had no choice but to follow as they left the landing bay area at a run.

Lucas turned to his crewmen and gestured them to open the door to the landing bay and proceed through it. They found Dureena, the sisters, Sergeant Healy and the remainder of the crew waiting for them. Lily was hiding behind Demon, trying to avoid his eyes. Dureena launched herself straight at 'Gideon' but was held by two crewmen before she could get to him.

"Whoa, Dureena, what's going on here? Sergeant Healy, can you tell me what this is about while Dureena calms down?"

Healy looked puzzled. They'd told him what the captain had done to Matheson, but it made no sense. Why would the Captain have shot his first officer?

"We've been held in cells in the castle since we first arrived. We didn't see anything. They say you shot Lt. Matheson and left them behind. The shuttles were damaged so we got them fixed and followed as fast as we could." Healy sounded uncertain even to himself. The people who had been with him on the planet looked equally confused.

"They said what?! Now why would I do that? Someone's lying here Sergeant, and I know it's not me or you." He turned to the women and focused on Ilas. "Is that the shape shifter Sergeant?" Healy nodded; he'd seen Ilas change from a Brakiri back into the form she now held and been stunned at the sight of it. "So how do we know it wasn't her, pretending to be me, who shot Matheson?" The women all spoke at once, but Dureena pushed forward against the restraining arms of 'Gideon's' crewmen.

"It was you. I saw you! And I know that you're not really the Captain. I don't know who you are but Gideon would never have done the things I saw you do." She turned to Healy and pleaded with him. "You saw what had happened, Sergeant, just tell them!"

Healy shook his head. "All I saw was Matheson down and the first shuttle gone. I don't know whether he was shot before or after the Captain left and I didn't see who shot him. Sorry,

ma'am."

Lucas was enjoying himself now. "Are you sure about this Dureena? Even if you saw what you say, how can you be certain it wasn't the shape-shifter you saw?" Dureena was almost screaming.

"No, you bastard! It was you, I saw you!"

Lucas turned to Healy.

"Has she been behaving like this since you met up with her down below?" Healy nodded again. Dureena was not renowned for her calm manner, but even by her standards she had been acting crazy since she'd released them from their cells. Lucas paused and looked thoughtful.

"I have a theory here, Sergeant. I now know that these women held you and your people captive for the last few days. I had no idea about that or I'd never have left the planet. But I think they wanted a way to get themselves up here to the Excalibur. How do we know there's only one shape-shifter? They could all be masquerading. How do we know that this is the real Dureena? They could still have her locked up in the castle for all we know." Healy turned and stared at the women. It had never occurred to him that they weren't what they appeared.

"I think we need to investigate these allegations carefully, but in the meantime, we may have allowed dangerous aliens on board the Excalibur, and I'm not taking any chances. Sergeant, take these women and lock them in the brig until we can investigate this properly. Then get your people back to their quarters. They all look as if they need a break." Lucas dismissed them all, and stood aside as Healy escorted the women out of the landing bay. Dureena was screaming obscenities at him as she struggled with the men holding her, but the others appeared calm. He stopped each of the sisters briefly as they left.

Lily was first and she cringed as he touched her arm. He leant in close and whispered so that the men escorting her couldn't hear, "Ready for another ride yet, darlin'?"

He stopped Ilas and pulled the bag that held all the medical equipment off her shoulder. "I'll check this out Sergeant." Ilas turned to Demon and silently begged to be allowed to change and fight.

*[[They have weapons Ilas; they could hurt you. Just go along quietly.]]* As Demon passed Lucas he ordered the men holding her arms to go on ahead and wait outside the bay, telling them that he would look after this one himself. He hung back, holding Demon's arm. She waited without moving until the others were out of earshot, then spoke.

"Where is Angel? What have you done to her?" Her voice was flat and unemotional; she was totally under control and not allowing any feelings to escape her. Lucas admired her control and courage, but decided that this one could be even more fun to break than Angel.

"She's been keeping me entertained." He grinned at her, leaving her to imagine how. "But now she's disobeyed me, so she'll have to be punished. And she won't enjoy that at all." He leaned into her and spoke softly into her ear. "And when I'm finished with her, I'm coming for you and we'll pick up where we left off. Glad you've got the S&M outfit on darlin', 'cause I'm gonna be giving a little

S and you'd better be ready to take a lot of M." He felt Demon shudder at his threat. "You'd better give any weapons you have on you to the nice Sergeant, 'cause I'm gonna conduct a strip search myself later. Outside and in." He called the crewmen to take her away.

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Angel had been locked in now since Lucas had left twenty minutes before. She'd tried to find some way to get the door open, searched the quarters for something, anything that she could use, but nothing. She'd even tried to focus her power, but Lucas was still blocking it. In fear and frustration she'd clawed and banged on the door. Eventually she'd admitted defeat, and now she was sitting on the edge of the bunk in Gideon's small bedroom.

Her mind was lost in a thousand thoughts. Thoughts that made every breath that she took hurt. She looked at the room, Gideon's room. Her breath stuck painfully in her throat when she thought about Gideon, what had she done to him, where was he? What had gone wrong with the spell? Angel's mind searched over the words of the spell, but she couldn't understand it, couldn't understand how a spell meant to make him want her and not Demon could turn Gideon into the man who had just left her. Hell, she had to face facts, she hadn't just turned Gideon into Lucas, it was more than that -- somehow the spell had taken the spirit that was Gideon and brought the spirit of Lucas Buck into his body. But how? From where? And was there a way to undo the damage she had done?

Angel moaned in anguish, and stood up, the movement making her cry in pain. Her whole body hurt, and she realized that she was exhausted. She tried to remember when she had last slept. Oh, she'd managed to fall asleep for about an hour, when Lucas was busy with Lily. God that thought made her angry. Tied up and gagged she'd heard everything going on in the other room. It was sounds of loud moaning that had woken her up from a fitful sleep. Angel forced those memories away as she paced up and down, trying to ignore the pain and fatigue her body was feeling.

Her thoughts went back to what she'd done. Everything had been her fault. If it hadn't been for her jealousy and her nature to want what her sister wanted, she wouldn't have cast the spell. If she'd been listening, really listening to Demon when she had said that she really wanted Gideon, she would have realized that Demon meant for real, not just because he was a human male. But she hadn't heard that and she had set the spell in motion. Then, when her sister had told her how she felt about Gideon, it was too late.

Now there was Lucas, Angel felt shame and anger now. He'd threatened her, hurt her, and threatened to hurt Demon, if she didn't obey him. She'd given herself to him body and soul. Her head knew he could and would destroy her; yet despite all this, when he looked at her, touched her, her body leapt to life, and she continued to enjoy the pleasure and pain he gave her. She was unable to resist him. What kind of person did that make her?

Angel stopped pacing, her breathing was labored, her throat tight. She knew that right now Lucas was off dealing with the two shuttles that were arriving. Her hand went to her throat. She remembered Lucas's expression when he had looked at her, the tone in his voice when he'd told her that when he returned he was going to teach her about obedience. Angel thought back to when Lucas had told her to destroy the shuttles. She knew she had to do it, but then she had a moment

of rebellion, so she did as he had ordered, but didn't do a good job. Angel actually smiled at that, but the smile quickly disappeared.

What was Lucas going to do with them now? [Oh God,] she thought, her mind racing in fear, [He wouldn't order them blown up in space... would he?] [No,] thought Angel, he would be cleverer than that. Killing them like that would raise questions. He might be exposed, no longer Captain Matthew Gideon. So that could mean that her sisters were on board by now. Angel closed her eyes and tried to call out to them, nothing. She tried to see if they were calling to her. Again nothing. Angel sighed; they probably wouldn't answer her if they heard her. She'd betrayed them. She wrapped her arms around herself, and tried to comfort herself. She tried not to think about those remaining moments on the planet, but now they flooded back to her. In her mind's eye she again saw Lucas kissing Lily and then pushing her away, the others rushing to see if she was all right and then Lucas had shot Matheson.

Angel felt tears falling down her cheeks. Lucas had killed Matheson, just shot him in cold blood. She didn't know Matheson, hadn't even spoken a word to him. But she could see that he was a good person, the way he'd stepped forward without hesitation to exchange himself for Lily. His death was her fault; all this was her doing. Angel felt like screaming. But instead her pain, anger and shame were silent.

Angel stood there, arms wrapped around herself, crying silently. Standing there, Angel became aware from the grumbling in her stomach that eating, like sleeping, was something that she hadn't done in a long time. The last thing she'd eaten had been that fruit on her way to Demon's room. Even though her stomach was grumbling, she didn't have an appetite, and if there had been food somewhere in the quarters, she wouldn't have been able to eat anyway.

Angel shrugged and let her arms fall to her sides. As she did so, her top rubbed into the recent bite that Lucas had given her. She reached her hand up to touch it. Her fingers felt dried blood, and it hurt when she made contact with the broken skin. Her body hurt all over, including inside, and Angel wished that she had the regenerator Max had taken. Angel wished she had something softer to wear over her abused neck and shoulders, something that wouldn't rub too hard against the bites, and bruises.

She looked around the room, and saw a cupboard by the door. She walked over to it and tried to open it, but it was locked. She noticed the panel on the side. To open it she needed a code. Then she remembered the cupboard by the bed, where Lucas had taken one of Gideon's uniforms. Maybe in there she could find something of Gideon's to wear instead of the leather top. She walked over to it slowly, her body lacking its usual graceful movements. She reached up, took hold of the handle and pulled on it. She smiled with relief when it opened.

Some uniforms were hanging there, alongside civilian wear. Angel forced her eyes away, the uniforms bringing back bittersweet memories. Her eyes wandered instead to where T-shirts were folded neatly on a shelf. She picked up the one on top. It was red. Angel held it for a moment against her. Then she put it down again, and moved to undo her top. She winced as her movements caused the fabric to brush against the bites, and her arm and back muscles were still painful from when she had been tied to the bed. The top, undone, dropped to her bare feet. As she reached for the T-shirt, her attention was drawn to her reflection in the full-length mirror on the inside of the door.

She froze for a moment and then, still holding the T-shirt in her hand, turned to face the mirror. She gasped at the sight she made. Her face was pinched and deathly pale; not even her freckles showed. She took in the dark rings under her eyes. They made her eyes look slightly sunken, their usual bright blue dark and dull. Then she let her eyes wander to her neck and shoulders. Her neck was bruised from the times he'd held her tightly there. She had three deep bites; one was on the left side of her neck where it joined the shoulder. It was red and nasty; the skin around it bruised. The other two were on the right, one on her neck and the other on her shoulder.

She forced herself to look away from them and let her eyes move to her arms. Dark bruises lay on her upper arms, and she could see the pattern from Lucas's hands where he'd held onto her. She saw her wrists and held them up. They were raw and bruised from where the scarves had been. She suspected that her ankles looked pretty much the same. Then she looked back at her reflection. She looked a mess; even her usually neat hair was tangled and wild.

Angel looked at herself for a long moment; seeing this, she realized just how rough Lucas had been with her. Pleasure and pain. Angel shook her head. All she felt now was sore and tired. She turned away from her reflection and slipped the T-shirt over her head.

The soft material felt good, and didn't rub too painfully on her neck and shoulders. It was miles too big for her and nearly reached her knees. But fashion was the last thing on her mind as she walked over to the bed and sat down. She sat still for a moment. The past few days' events rushed in again, and she started to cry. She knew it was just a matter of time before Lucas returned. That fear mingled with her sorrow, and she started crying harder. [What had she done?] Angel lay back on the bed, and as sobs racked her body she curled up into a fetal position. For what seemed like hours, she cried until she could no longer cry and her body became still. She lay there until her eyes became heavy and she could no longer think about anything.

Still lying curled up like a frightened little girl, Angel finally succumbed to exhaustion and let herself drift into a deep sleep.

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Lucas made a detour via Max's quarters to take him Ilas's bag. Having had a brief glance at the contents, they'd meant nothing to him. This was definitely a job for Max. When he arrived at the door, he operated the voice lock and entered. Max was seated at his desk studying the healing device Lucas had given him earlier. He leapt up as Lucas entered.

"Why did you lock me in here? What's going on?"

"Calm down Max, you'll bust a blood vessel going on like that. Like I said, I don't entirely trust you yet." He dropped the bag on the desk. "But this should convince you which side is most profitable." He watched as Max opened the bag and sorted through the contents.

Max sat down to examine the items in detail. His eyes lit up as he saw the things inside, a larger version of the healing device and other things that he didn't understand, but soon would. "Where did you get these?"

Lucas leaned against the wall, with his thumbs hooked over the edge of his pants pockets and smiled. "Your girlfriend made a personal delivery." Max looked up sharply, raising his eyebrows and peering over the tops of his spectacles.

"They got the shuttles fixed and arrived a few minutes ago. Blue girl is in the brig with her sisters, but she brought that bag with her." Max hadn't seen him shoot Matheson and Lucas saw no reason for Max to know that fact yet. "I, um, liberated it for you. Would you like me to do the same with Blue?"

Max narrowed his eyes. "What do you mean?"

"Well, you can have Blue as a playmate if you like. Or I can toss her out of the airlock if you'd prefer. Whichever." Lucas straightened and turned towards the door. "I'll come by later and you can let me know what you want," he said as he walked out. Max heard him reset the voice lock.

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Lucas arrived back on the bridge well satisfied with the way things were working out. He had the situation under control. After leaving the landing bay, he'd ordered a guard to be placed on Medbay and Dr. Raven confined to that area on the basis that he couldn't be sure whether Raven was who he appeared to be.

Now he just wanted to check on progress on the engines. Once he got the damn ship moving, he could go back and give Angel the lesson in obedience she needed. This time he planned to break her completely, and he was going to enjoy every moment of doing it. Even with the bruises and bites he'd inflicted, he still thought she was the sexiest thing he'd seen since escaping the Box. She just needed to know who was boss. And he was going to have a great time teaching her.

He demanded an update on progress on the engines from the watch officer. She cringed knowing that he was not going to like the answer. "They're having some problems. It's going to be at least another hour, sir. Sorry, sir." Given the mood Gideon had been in for the last few weeks, she hated being the bearer of bad news; he'd been known to shoot the messenger.

Lucas controlled his anger. In some ways he was better at this than Gideon had been; he only ever showed people what he wanted them to see. "I'll need another update in an hour. And tell Engineering that if we aren't moving by then, they'll be getting out to push. I'll be in my quarters." He turned and was leaving the bridge when Communications called him back.

"Sorry sir, but we're being hailed."

"On screen." Lucas turned back to his chair. [Who the hell is way out here?]

Galen's image appeared on the screen.

"Just thought I'd let you know I'm in the neighborhood. Any chance of a cup of tea?" Lucas cursed to himself but smiled sardonically at the screen.

"Oh, we'll put the kettle on for you Galen. When will you get here?"

"Should be ready to dock in an hour. Break out the cucumber sandwiches, Matthew, I'm feeling peckish."

An hour. That gave him plenty of time to prepare.

"We'll expect you in an hour. I'll tell the cook to cut off the crusts." The screen went blank and Lucas turned to Communications. "As soon as he's docked I want to be on our way. You know where I'll be." He left the bridge, whistling softly to himself. A student of 20th century music would have recognized "Angel" by the Eurythmics at once. "She took her life within her hands..."

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## The Witches of Eriadne: Double, Double

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