

The Witches of Eriadne: Toil and Trouble - Part 2: Reunion

by [The Space Witches](#)

{[Chapter 1](#)} {[Chapter 2](#)} {Chapter 3}



Demon and Matthew

Chapter 3

Galen left Angel's rooms and headed directly back to the library. He was hurt and confused by what had just happened. Did Angel really find him so repulsive that she would reject him with such vehemence? Apparently so. He decided that however she felt, his presence could only cause her pain, so the best thing for him to do was to remove himself. He wanted to let Gideon know his plans before he left, well aware that he was removing their only off planet transport by leaving. He wouldn't go far or stay away long, but he hoped to give Angel time to calm and consider before he risked seeing her again.

He entered the library using the same door on the upper level that he'd used earlier. He stopped just inside the door, listening carefully, not wanting to interrupt if Gideon and Demon were... At first he thought that they must have left, it was so quiet. He moved to the balcony and looked down to see the couple sitting on the long couch that stood to one side of the main doors. Gideon was sitting back in the couch, his legs spread wide, with Demon sitting sideways across him, her backside resting between his legs, her back against the arm of the couch, where Gideon's arm curled around her shoulders. Galen could see that Demon was asleep, her head resting against Gideon's shoulder, while he read a book that he held in his free hand.

Galen coughed quietly and Gideon looked up to see him standing at the top of the spiral stairs leading to the lower level. He lowered the book he was reading and placed it on the sofa beside him, then put his finger to his lips. Galen descended the stairs watching as his friend smiled down at the woman sleeping in his arms, then kissed the top of her head gently.

Galen moved a chair to sit in front of the sofa, and waited for Gideon to speak.

"She needs the sleep." He barely breathed the words. Galen had to strain to hear them. He replied in equally low tones.

"I just came to tell you that I'm leaving for a couple of days." Gideon looked surprised; they'd only arrived the day before, what was making Galen so restless? He raised an eyebrow in silent question.

Galen spoke softly. "There are some ruins around the far side of the planet which might bear investigation. As I'm less ... preoccupied than the rest of you, it makes sense for me to go look. I'll be back in a couple of days."

Gideon nodded. "Have a good trip, don't stay away too long," he smiled. Galen smiled back, stood and left as silently as he'd arrived. Gideon picked up his book and carried on reading.

It was mid-afternoon before Demon stirred. She was woken by the sound of Gideon's snoring. She pulled her head away from his shoulder and looked up at him. His head was resting against the back of the couch, his mouth wide open. The book he'd been reading was placed carefully by his side, his free hand resting gently on her stomach. She smiled as she remembered that this wasn't where he usually put his hand when they sat like this.

She kissed the side of his neck softly, and then worked her lips up to his chin, kissing her way along his jaw line until she reached his ear. She licked gently at the lobe then ran her tongue around the outside edge of his ear. She felt his arm tighten around her shoulders and his hand left her stomach, reaching up to take her chin and pull her head back to where he could look at her. His eyes opened and looked straight into hers, smiling, then he pulled her chin towards him. He touched his mouth softly to hers then parted his lips; his tongue flicked briefly over her lips before gently pushing her mouth open and finding her tongue with his, deepening the kiss.

She could feel herself becoming aroused as his free hand dropped to her breast and started to massage the nipple through her clothes. She pressed her hips closer to him and could feel his cock starting to stir. He suddenly sat back, releasing her mouth abruptly. She looked at him in confusion.

"Not here, anyone could walk in. Let's go back to your rooms." He pushed her away from him gently, so she swung her legs round and stood. He joined her quickly and put his arms around her again. "There are some things I prefer to do in private." They hurried back to her rooms.

As soon as the door was closed behind them he pulled her close again and kissed her passionately. His hands were undoing the buttons which held her top together, pushing it back off her shoulders, exposing her breasts to his sight and touch. He dropped his mouth to her breast and started to suck at her nipple. She pulled at his shirt, trying to get the buttons undone. She just wanted to get him undressed as quickly as she could; she needed him urgently.

He lifted his head and grinned at her. "Eager aren't you? I thought real ladies were just supposed to lie back and think of England."

She pulled hard at the edges of his shirt, sending buttons flying. "Fuck England ... no, forget that, just fuck me."

He pushed her down on to the sofa then stood above her, undoing his belt and pants. "Is that an order?"

She sat up and undid his belt and zipper then grabbed the waist of his pants, pushing them down over his hips, exposing his erection. "It certainly is." She took the head of his cock in her mouth and started gently sucking, running her tongue around his shaft, releasing him again, so she could lick her way down the length of him, until her mouth reached his balls. She pushed her tongue in between them, licking and sucking until she heard him groaning above her. She moved her head back and looked up at him. He was breathing hard and had his hands tightly entwined in her hair.

"Go easy will you, or I won't be able to follow orders." He let go of her hair and quickly removed the last of his clothing, then knelt between her legs as she sat on the sofa. He reached for the waistband of the skirt she wore with one hand, while pushing his other hand under her buttocks to lift her; he slid her skirt off in one movement.

"Lie back." He pushed gently at her shoulders until they were flat against the seat of the sofa, her legs spread wide with him kneeling between them. [Thank god the sofa's the right height.] He slid his hands down to her thighs and stroked gently at the skin on the inside, while watching her from where he knelt. Her eyes were closed and her nipples erect. He moved his hands further up her thighs until they touched the curls between her legs. Her hips were moving now, small circular motions indicating her readiness. He held her labia apart with the fingers of one hand while sliding two fingers from his other hand inside her. He felt her internal muscles clench around his fingers and her hips thrust up to meet him. He moved his mouth between her legs and started to suck gently at her clitoris, feeling it swell under his tongue, feeling the wetness of her vagina as he stimulated her further.

He lifted his head from her, hearing her groan of disappointment. Moving his hands back to her thighs he lifted her legs to his shoulders. He pulled himself closer, until his cock was positioned at her entrance. He pushed gently inwards feeling her wet and tight around him. Her hips were moving constantly, he could feel her urgency to take him deep inside her, but he still moved slowly. It always amazed him that it didn't matter how much he stretched her during sex, her muscles always tightened again by the time he next entered her. She was narrow inside and he'd always been careful to take her slowly, not wanting to hurt her, especially now. But the wetness she exuded helped to lubricate his entrance and soon he was buried deep inside her. He moved a hand back to her clitoris and began massaging it gently as he thrust into her, gradually increasing the pace and depth. He could feel her excitement building as she matched each thrust, her vaginal muscles pulsing in time with their movements. He felt her lift under him as she came, moaning his name, and pushed into her again. With each thrust she lifted and came again, her vagina clamping down on his cock, bringing him to release, squeezing him dry.

He held himself upright with his hands on the edge of the sofa, not wanting to fall forwards onto her stomach. She opened her eyes and looked at him as he knelt, still deep inside her, breathing heavily. She grinned wickedly.

"That was nice. Can we do it again, please?"

They spent the rest of the afternoon in her bed, talking and playing. At one point their conversation touched on Dureena.

Deborah looked puzzled. "I don't understand that you know. How can she be pregnant? I thought she was the last of her species? Who's the father?"

Gideon smiled up at her as she knelt beside him on the bed. He was lying back on the pillows, his arms behind his head, enjoying just looking at her. "It's complicated, but as far as I can work out, Max and Ilas are both the fathers."

Deborah looked more puzzled than ever. "But how? I mean they're three completely different species. Surely it just couldn't happen?"

"I know, but I've been told that with Dureena's species, one father has to stimulate the production of the ovum; that would have been Max. No genetic mix there, just stimulation. Then the other father fertilizes it; that would have been Ilas. Your little sister is one hell of a shape shifter. It seems that when she shifted into the shape of a Zanderi male, she managed to produce viable sperm and there you are. One baby Zanderi on its way, and rather more quickly than a human baby would be. Which gives me a bit of a problem." He frowned as he remembered the dilemma Dureena now presented.

"What's the problem?" Deborah leant forward and kissed his forehead where the frown lines had appeared.

"What do we do with Dureena when she has the baby? She doesn't have a home any more; it was destroyed in the Shadow Wars. And the Excalibur can't carry passengers. I'm stretching things already, as she isn't really effective as a team member now. But what am I supposed to do? Turn her out? I can't and won't do that."

Deborah leaned forward again and kissed his lips gently. "Matthew, why didn't you say? Of course she has a home. She has a home here any time she wants it. Ilas loves her and would be ecstatic if she stayed. Anyway, my little sister needs to learn that she can't just wander around making other women pregnant then abandoning them." She grinned.

Gideon looked up at her, with a puzzled expression on his face. "You know that last sentence really doesn't have any rightful place in the English language. But what's scary is that I know exactly what you meant. Are you sure about this? It could be the perfect solution if Dureena will go for it."

Deborah smiled at him. "Let me just check with my sister." She closed her eyes and her face softened as she sent. Gideon watched; he still found it slightly unnerving that she could talk to her sisters at any time like this. He decided he needed to talk to Matheson about it. Was it the same as his telepathy or something different? He watched as she broke into a broad smile.

"Oh dear, Ilas has just got rather over-excited. She's going to talk to Dureena about the idea now." She opened her eyes. "Any other little problems I can fix? Anything else that needs attention?" She looked down at him. "Oh look, here's a little something that looks lonely and needs some TLC." She bent her head to his cock, lying relaxed against his thigh.

"Less of the little."

He was still deep inside her, and their bodies were pressed tightly together, arms holding each other closely and her legs wrapped around his waist. Gideon felt that he never wanted to move again. He felt her shift and push her upper body slightly back from his so she could look at him.

"We really ought to get dressed soon." He could hear the regret in her voice.

"Why? I like you just the way you are." He smiled up at her and kissed the base of her throat.

"Good, but I don't think we should show up in the dining room stark naked. Might give the others the wrong idea. Or are you into orgies?" She raised an eyebrow and grinned.

"Never tried one; suppose it would depend on who else was involved. Who do you suggest? And are you saying that you're bored with me already? Looking for a change are you?" He was smiling as he spoke and bent his head back to kiss her breast again.

"Stop that or we'll be here all night and we're expected to join the others for dinner soon." She lifted herself off him and lay back on the bed, her legs still spread wide around him as he knelt between them.

"Dinner? I can see just what I want to eat, right here." He started to move his head between her legs again, but she stopped him with her hands on his shoulders.

"Seriously, Matthew, we have to go. My sisters got very excited when they heard you were coming to see us and planned this big dinner for us all. I managed to stop them holding it last night as I hoped we might have other things to do, but I couldn't dissuade them completely."

He pushed himself upright again and looked down at her. "You're kidding, aren't you? Tell me that you don't expect me to get dressed and go and make polite conversation to people I see every day, when I could be here with you instead." He shook his head in disgust.

"I'm sorry, but it's important to them and you *are* the Captain, and I'm their big sister so we're sort of guests of honor. We've got plenty of time together this visit, do you mind so much if we give up one evening?" She sat up and lifted her hand to his face, stroking his cheek softly with her fingers.

"Yes, I do mind, but as it's you asking and I don't think I can say no to you at the moment, I'll put up with it. But we leave as early as we can; I've got plans for you later." His mouth quirked into a calculating smile as his eyes continued to roam over her body.

She leaned forward again and kissed him. "Thank you; now do you want a shower or shall I run a bath?" She ran her fingers down his chest, dragging her nails gently against his skin.

"I'm on vacation from decisions, you choose." He pulled her close and started kissing her again. She pushed him away and laughed.

"Come on then, you can scrub my back." She moved quickly from the bed heading for the bathroom. He watched her as she walked away, the sight of her swaying rear end giving him an idea. He called after her.

"Changed my mind; let's make that a shower. I've got something I want to try." He left the bed and walked into the bathroom to join her.

Deborah and Gideon entered the dining room hand in hand to find that Lily, Matheson and Raven were already there. Gideon smiled as he watched the two men standing close to the tiny girl, each touching her whenever the opportunity arose, but not showing any signs of competitiveness where she was concerned. He admired their ability to share, knowing that he would've found it impossible to share Deborah with another man. But as he watched, Raven looked at Matheson and smiled in a way that made Gideon wonder who was sharing who. [None of my business, as long as they're happy.]

Lily saw them entering the room and immediately came running towards them. She was still graceful despite the distribution of weight around her body having shifted. She threw herself into Deborah's arms and hugged her fiercely, then pulled back and looked up at Gideon, her green eyes sparkling with humor.

"See, Captain? We told you that she wanted to see you. Bet you're glad you stayed now." Gideon was startled, he hadn't realised that his hesitation in the shuttle had been so obvious. He smiled down at her

"I think that'd be a fair summary, yes. Now, I'm going to take Raven away from you for a moment, so why don't you and John come talk to Deborah for a bit?" He watched as she trotted lightly back to her men. He turned to Deborah.

"Will you excuse me for a moment? There are a few things I want to talk to Raven about." He brought her hand to his lips and kissed it gently, "Men's talk," and grinned at her.

She smiled back. "Go on then. And could you ask him if he'll see me tomorrow morning? I really would appreciate it if he could check us over." Her hand hovered protectively above her swollen stomach. He kissed her hand again and moved away as Matheson and Lily joined her. He walked over to Raven who was standing alone, well out of earshot of the others.

"Captain. You're looking well. What can I do for you?" Raven smiled and held his hand out to Gideon who shook it firmly.

"I've got a few questions for you. Do you mind?" Gideon was nervous as hell about this, he needed to know what the doctor could tell him, but he was embarrassed about asking.

"Ask away. If I have answers they're yours. Is it about Demon? She's bigger built so it's not as obvious on her as it is on Lily, but they have to be at the same stage don't they? Congratulations, Captain. Or is that the problem?" Raven looked concerned.

"No, not at all, I'm delighted, but this is a first for me Doc, and I just don't know enough about pregnant women. I'm worried that I'm going to hurt her or the baby somehow." He had his head down, unable to look at Raven's face. Raven was glad because he was finding it difficult not to smile.

"You mean sex I assume?" He decided to let Gideon squirm for a while.

"Yes. I mean, how do I know what's safe and what isn't?" He looked up abruptly just in time to catch the grin on Raven's face "Oh, thanks for the sympathy Doc, it's OK for you to laugh, you know about these things." Raven tried to straighten his face and failed completely, he couldn't help grinning at Gideon's embarrassment.

"Sorry, Captain, but the thought of providing you with sex education at this point is... well, never mind." Raven was biting his lip hard now as Gideon looked at him with eyes narrowed and arms crossed. Raven decided to put him out of his misery.

"OK, there's just one rule to follow with a woman who's carrying your child, Captain. It's easy, even Earthforce Captains can learn it."

Gideon leaned forward. "Don't enjoy this too much, Doc, you never know when you might need a ride again." But he smiled as he said it. "What's the rule?"

"Whatever they want they get. If she asks for cherry ice cream with pickled gherkins at four in the morning you go get it. And if she wants sex hanging upside down from a chandelier, then start swinging. Trust her, Captain, she knows her own body." Raven grinned at Gideon who smiled back.

"Yeah, I think even an Earthforce Captain can follow that one. Thanks Doc." He turned to walk away then paused, turning back. "Any idea where they keep the ice cream in this place?"

The dinner had gone better than Gideon had expected. Max, Ilas and Dureena had arrived soon after he and Raven had rejoined Deborah, John and Lily. His crew had been on form; Max excelling himself with a dry acerbic wit that had kept them laughing most of the way through dinner. Raven and John had got into a punning contest that had lasted throughout the meal, making everyone else groan. There was only one exception to the general level of good humor. Angel had sat through the meal with her head down, hardly speaking even when the others tried to include her in the conversation.

She'd arrived last and alone, which had irritated Gideon immediately. He thought she was trying to gain attention and sympathy for being the only person there without a partner, [and whose fault is that?] When she'd arrived he'd been standing alone by the fireplace, looking into the flames. Deborah had gone to check that the delay while they waited for Angel wouldn't cause any problems. He looked up and saw her standing watching him and couldn't hide his annoyance with her causing trouble again. And he had become more annoyed when he saw what she was wearing. The red dress fitted her like a second skin, cut low over her breasts, showing her cleavage to advantage. It flared into a full skirt from her hips and he couldn't help but be reminded of the dress he'd torn off her in the library. He never doubted that she'd dressed deliberately to taunt him.

He'd watched her face as she saw Max helping both Ilas and Dureena into their chairs, then Luke and John laughingly vying with each other to see which of them could help Lily to her seat. She'd avoided looking at him while he held Deborah's chair for her, but he could see the resentment in her face at the way her sisters were being cared for. She seated herself without waiting for anyone to help her.

Since then she'd hardly touched her food and sat looking sullen across the table from him. He knew that her demeanor was upsetting Deborah who, sitting immediately opposite her, could hardly help noticing how unhappy her sister was. Why couldn't the girl pull herself together and at least pretend to enjoy herself? Gideon felt his temper fraying as it always did around Angel.

Raven and John started a discussion about books and each person around the table was talking about their favorites. Gideon squeezed Deborah's hand tightly as John mentioned that 'The Once and Future King' had always been a favorite of his. In an effort to bring her into the conversation Raven turned to Angel who sat next to him.

"And what's your favorite, Angel?" She looked up, startled to be included in the conversation so abruptly.

"Oh, well, I suppose it would have to be Wuthering Heights. I love the writing and the setting. And the characters are wonderful. Especially Heathcliff. I've always had a bit of a crush on Heathcliff." She smiled up at Raven.

Gideon couldn't stop himself. "Oh come on, Heathcliff was a thug. He took advantage of the kindness of the people who took him in and stole their farm from them. He was a vindictive brute."

Angel flared immediately. "How can you say that? He was mistreated terribly as a child and if he took revenge for that was it so bad? And what about his love for Cathy? He really loved her and died still loving her." Her face flushed as she defended her hero.

Gideon leaned forward and spoke without thinking. "Did he? Or did he just want her because she belonged to someone else? There are people like that you know, people who can't bear to see others happy and deliberately set out to destroy that happiness. Heathcliff destroyed his Cathy and Edgar Linton out of spite because he couldn't have her himself." He sat back in his chair. "So he's your hero; that explains a lot." He heard his own words and was appalled.

Angel leapt to her feet and rushed from the room. The atmosphere was tense. Lily leant forward and started to move her chair.

"I think someone should go to her." Before she could move further Gideon became aware that Deborah had taken her hand from his and was standing.

"I'll go," she turned to Gideon and spoke softly. "That was cruel, Matthew." He opened his mouth to apologize but she shook her head and stopped him, "We'll talk later." She walked unhurriedly but swiftly to the door, leaving the room in silence behind her.

Max cleared his throat. "Well, Captain, if you ever need a second career it looks like you should give literary criticism a miss. Critics are supposed to inform their audience not drive them out of the room." Gideon stood abruptly. He was feeling deeply ashamed of what he'd just done.

"Shut up Max. We all know that the only part of Chaucer you ever read is The Miller's Tale." He left the room, heading for Deborah's rooms, knowing that she'd eventually return there. Wondering how he could make up for his stupidity.

Angel rushed into her bedroom slamming the door shut behind her. She stumbled over to the couch and sat down, doubling forward, wrapping her arms under and around her knees as she rocked herself back and forth, a strangled whimper escaping her throat as she played over what had just happened.

She'd been so nervous about entering the dining room that she'd stayed outside in the hallway for half

an hour, hearing the others talking and laughing, willing herself to have the courage to go in and face them all. Tonight would be the first time she would see all of the crew from Excalibur again. She was afraid of what their reaction would be towards her, even though her sisters had assured her before their arrival that they didn't blame her and that all was forgiven. She was doubtful; they must all hate her for what had happened. And most of all she was nervous about seeing Gideon, knowing that maybe the others had forgiven her but he hadn't and still hated her for what she had done. But mostly she was afraid of how much he would remind her of Lucas.

Angel just felt like running and hiding in her room and not coming out until they'd all gone. But she knew she would have to face them sooner or later. She felt it was better to just get it over and done with. So she took a deep breath, adjusted the straps of her red dress and smoothed out the skirt, then squaring her shoulders she moved to the door and entered. She came to a halt as her eyes fell upon Gideon, standing staring into the fire. Her breath caught in her throat as she took in the sight of him. He was wearing black pants and a long-sleeved black shirt, his hands on his hips. Everything about him, his appearance, his stance, reminded her of Lucas. She stood there unable to move, oblivious to the others in the room.

Gideon must have sensed someone watching him, because he turned with a small smile on his lips. Immediately he saw her the smile faded and Angel watched as his eyes raked over her, with what she could only call contempt. His reaction and feelings towards her were clear. Her nerve gave out and she was about to turn and leave. But Demon had appeared, seemingly out of nowhere and took her hand, drawing her into the room where the others stood.

Her meeting with the others passed in a blur. In hindsight she realized with some surprise that they'd greeted her warmly. Dureena had looked at her sideways, her gold eyes unsure and Matheson ... although he smiled at her, she could see him regard her with wary eyes. [Who could blame him?] Then Demon had walked over to where Gideon was still standing, and she watched with a sick knot in her stomach as she brought him over.

Demon looked first at her then at Gideon, "Well, aren't you two going to say hello?" Angel could feel the others watching with interest and she could sense that Demon was nervous about what was going to happen. For her sister's sake she forced a smile, but still avoided looking directly at him as she greeted him.

"Hello, Captain." Only when he returned the greeting did she allow herself to steal a look into his eyes. She regretted it instantly; they were still cold and showing that he was not happy to see her.

An awkward silence was prevented by the cook announcing dinner. Everyone was clearly relieved, moving to take his or her places at the lavishly decked out table. Angel had watched as her sisters were taken care of by their partners and she'd never felt so alone, nor missed Lucas quite as much as she did at that moment.

She had to hide her horror as she found that the only place left for her was next to Raven, placing her directly opposite Demon and Gideon. Angel seated herself quickly and kept her head down as the meal progressed. Robbed of her appetite all she could do was pick at the food in front of her. She tried and failed to participate in the conversation that flowed back and forth, and she couldn't laugh at Max's jokes or how Luke and John punned their way through the meal either.

She could feel Gideon's eyes on her throughout the dinner, but didn't dare look at him. It was too hard because he was a painful reminder of Lucas and what she didn't have.

She was lost in thought, thinking about Lucas when Raven startled her by directly including her in the conversation they were having about books. She smiled up at Raven feeling relieved that her mind was being taken off Lucas and onto a safe topic.

She couldn't have been more wrong. No sooner had she finished telling Raven about her love for Wuthering Heights and that she had always had a crush on Heathcliff, when Gideon starting trashing her hero, calling him a vindictive brute. Angel for the first time looked directly at him. Forgetting the promise she'd made to herself, she engaged him in argument as her temper flared, defending Heathcliff's actions passionately. Then Gideon had leaned forward; a dark look in his eyes and Angel listened, feeling as if a knife were being twisted into her gut, as he threw what she'd done to come between him and Demon in her face. Using Heathcliff and what he'd done because of his love for Cathy, to punish her. His every word brought back the painful memory of what he'd said and done in the library.

It had hurt more then she could bear and springing up out of her chair she raced out of the dining room desperate to get away.

There was a light knock on her door; Angel lifted her head up from her knees as the interruption brought her attention back to the here and now. She stared at the door willing whoever it was, probably one of her sisters come to check up on her, to go away. Then she heard Demon's voice calling for her on the other side of the door. She stood up on shaky legs and approached the door. She knew that Demon wouldn't leave until she'd seen her.

Angel stood in front of the door a moment and then reaching her hand out, opened it, to reveal Demon who regarded her with concern. Seeing the warmth and love in her sister's face as she walked inside, broke Angel down and she started crying as Demon's arms came around, holding her tightly.

Gideon sat waiting for Deborah to return to her rooms, trying to read and failing, wondering how long she'd be, whether she'd come back at all. Just how angry would she be? He was still angry with himself for his behavior at dinner. What was it about Angel that always brought out the worst in him? He didn't seem to be able to behave like a civilized human being when she was around. First he'd come damn close to raping her physically, now he abused her verbally. And how was he going to get Deborah to believe how sorry he was? His thoughts span in circles for what seemed like hours until he heard the door opening quietly, and leapt to his feet.

Deborah paused in the doorway, looking at him, a frown on her face. [At least she hasn't put that god awful impassive mask on.] He hurried to speak before she could.

"Deborah, I'm sorry. I really am sorry..." Before he could get any more words out she flowed into his arms, put her arms around his neck and pulled his head forward to kiss her. The kiss was long, deep and passionate and he was slightly breathless when she finally pulled her head back.

"Good." She moved to kiss him again, but this time he held her back.

"Good? Is that it? No recriminations? No telling me how much I hurt Angel? How much I hurt you? Just 'Good' and then you kiss me again?" He looked at her in total confusion.

"Why should I tell you what you already know? You said you were sorry; I believe you. I just wish I could think of a way to stop you two tearing into each other. It hurts." She looked straight into his

eyes and he could see the start of tears there. He pulled her close to him, pulling her head down into his shoulder.

"Don't. Please don't. I don't want you upset with me, particularly not now, not when you're ... well, in your condition." He kissed the side of her neck and held her tightly. She lifted her head abruptly, all signs of tears disappearing.

"What the hell has this to do with my condition? I'm pregnant, Matthew. It's normal. Billions of women have been doing it for millions of years. I didn't suddenly get all fragile you know. I won't break." Her hazel eyes had a distinct green tinge as she looked at him, which he knew was a storm warning. Her temper was about to flare.

"Whoa! Pax! OK, it's got nothing to do with your condition." He smiled as he spoke, desperately trying to head off the storm he could see coming. "But I still don't want you upset with me, now or ever." He lifted his hand to the side of her neck, holding her head lightly, brushing his thumb along her cheekbone. He could see her relax as quickly as she'd flared and tried not to sigh with relief.

"What are we going to do, Matthew? I know why you're so angry with Angel, and I know why she fights with you. If neither of you can get past those things, I don't see how it can ever get any better." He could see that she was staring over his shoulder, her eyes unfocussed as she tried to get to grips with their problem.

"I'm not sure that you do know why I'm angry with Angel. It's not just the things she did in the past. It happened, it's over; I've tried to move on from that. But everything the girl does irritates the hell out of me. Take tonight, why was she late? She kept everyone waiting so she could make a grand entrance, then sat sulking throughout dinner. She didn't make any effort to join in conversation or even try to have a good time. She obviously didn't give a damn what effect her behavior might have on you or others. She pisses me off, Deborah! And that's still no excuse for what I said. I'm truly sorry for that." He leant forward and kissed her gently then looked at her closely.

Deborah sighed. "It's all perception isn't it? Let's take tonight. She was late because she'd been standing in the hall for half an hour trying to get the courage to walk in. She thinks you all hate her for what she did and was terrified of the hostility she thought she'd have to face. So much for a grand entrance." She lifted her hand to his face and stroked her fingers along his jaw.

"And as for sulking, it took every bit of courage she had to sit there in front of *you*, Matthew. She's more sorry than you could ever know for what she did to you. She thinks you hate her and tonight you gave her every reason to believe that." He looked at her aghast as he realised how badly he'd misjudged the situation. He thought back to the incident in the library and saw how his actions then would have made Angel think that he hated her and wanted to punish her.

"Oh shit! Could I screw this up any more? Please tell me I can't get this any more wrong than I have so far."

She smiled at him. "No, I think it's fair to say that this is about as screwed up as it can get. But where do we go from here, Matthew? I love you both and I hate it when you hurt each other." He pulled her close to him again, trying not to get too distracted by what she'd just said.

"Well, the next time I see her, I'll apologize, OK? What I said was completely unacceptable; I know that. Then we'll see how we go from there. But I promise, I will try to see things from her point of view and not get so irritated with her. I'll try." He was relieved when she smiled at him and started to kiss him

again, slowly, exploring his lips, mouth and tongue with hers. He could feel himself becoming aroused and moved his hand lower down her back to pull her hips against his, allowing her to feel his erection. He smiled at her and put on his best pleading expression.

"Still mad at me? You're not going to make me sleep on the sofa are you?" She smiled back, with a wicked glint in her eye.

"Oh no, you don't get away with it that easily. I have plans for you tonight that don't involve you getting any sleep, on the sofa or anywhere else. Hasn't anyone told you that pregnant women are insatiable?" She laughed at the worried expression he assumed.

"No, but the doctor did tell me that I was to give you whatever you wanted, so go easy on me will you? You've got to make me last two whole weeks; don't wear me out too fast!"

She turned away, grabbing his hand and pulling him towards the bedroom.

"No promises."

{[Chapter 1](#)} {[Chapter 2](#)} {Chapter 3}

The Witches of Eriadne: Toil and Trouble

{[Part 1: Anticipation](#)} {[Part 2: Reunion](#)} {Part 3: Out and About} {Part 4: Life and Death} {Part 5: Breaking Away}