

The Witches of Eriadne: Toil and Trouble - Part 3: Out and About

by [The Space Witches](#)

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Demon swimming in the pool

Chapter 1

Max looked around at the equipment he'd put together for the expedition. They only planned to be away overnight, but he wanted to be sure that he had sufficient supplies for any eventuality. Setting off for an unknown location with two pregnant women wouldn't have been his ideal choice for a team, but Ilas had assured him that she could deal with any native wildlife. He had personal experience of her ability to use sound to render a target unconscious, so he was confident that she could take care of them.

He supervised as the Brakiri guards helped load the tent, food, medical, and other supplies onto the two flybikes they'd brought down from the Excalibur. He'd left Ilas and Dureena playing in Ilas' bath while he came down to the courtyard in the early morning light. He wanted to get an early start to make the most of the daylight, but was beginning to think that he should have dragged the women out with him. The way those two enjoyed hot water, it could be noon before they appeared.

He smiled lazily to himself, as he thought back over the last two days. Since his arrival Ilas had been very affectionate and stunningly co-operative. She'd pandered to his every desire and whim, enabling him to try things that he'd never thought were possible -- never mind find a partner willing to indulge him. His cock twitched at the memory of some of the things they'd done, with Dureena participating as much as she was able. Her advanced pregnancy prevented her from joining in every activity and

position, but he'd done his best to make sure that she was never left out, and she'd assured him that his best was very good indeed.

As he watched the Brakiri finish loading the equipment, he wondered how in hell he'd ended up in his current position. He had more credits than he knew what to do with, since getting the bonuses IPX had paid after his first visit to Eriadne. He had two alien women who seemed determined to make his life as pleasurable as possible. He had a job that fascinated him and he was due to become a father twice over. [Well, sort of.]

He shook his head in amazement and tried not to think about how much he now had to lose. He'd never trusted fate and the universe; they had a bad habit of kicking him in the pants just when he was feeling most secure. He forced his thoughts back to the present and told himself to enjoy it all while he could.

He was about to go back to Ilas' rooms and drag them out of the bath when Ilas and Dureena appeared, arms wrapped around each other. Dureena wore her usual skin-tight leather outfit, with additional panels let in to allow room for her swollen stomach. She was 20 weeks pregnant, but for her species that meant she only had another five weeks to go.

By contrast, Ilas was only just showing. They weren't sure how the adaptations made by the Vorlon would affect her, but his research suggested that her species had a gestation period of around 50 to 55 weeks. She was still able to shape-shift, but did so carefully, isolating her uterus and the baby from any change. For comfort, and for his pleasure, she had worn her natural body for most of his visit, only shifting to another shape when he suggested some variation in their lovemaking. She had chosen a pair of tight, stretch black pants and a loose sapphire blue shirt for the expedition. The material was decorative but looked sturdy and practical. Both women wore boots that supported feet and ankles. Max approved their practicality whilst appreciating the view.

As soon as she saw him, Ilas let go of Dureena, and raced across the courtyard to him, flinging herself into the air. He caught her as she wrapped her arms around his neck and her legs around his waist, kissed him passionately, then released his mouth and spoke, her eyes sparkling with excitement and amusement.

"Will you teach me to fly the bike, Max? Will you? Please?" She kissed him between each phrase. He laughed and disentangled her, putting her down on her feet.

"If you promise to do exactly what I tell you, then yes, I'll teach you. But behave yourself; I'll be on the bike with you and my neck will be at risk, too."

Ilas surged up against him, rubbing her swollen stomach against his groin, her eyes round and serious. "I'd never do anything that might hurt you, Max."

He hugged her hard and said, "I know." Dureena joined them and suggested that she took one of the bikes while Max took Ilas on the other. Max gave Dureena a copy of the chart he'd been given by Demon, showing the location of the ruins. He'd estimated that it would take a couple of hours to fly there. Giving the equipment and bikes a final check over, he said, "OK, let's go. Dureena, you lead and I'll make sure we stay close behind. If you have any problems, call me on the Commlink."

He'd made sure that they each wore a wristband and had packed spares, even though the wristbands were virtually indestructible. On expeditions, Max was totally anal. He turned to Ilas. "On you get. You sit up front, I'll sit behind you."

He swung his leg over the bike and settled close behind her. She immediately snuggled her butt against his groin. "Stop that. I need to concentrate. Let's go through the controls." He talked through which controls did what, then placed his hands over hers on the handlebars and twisted the lift and throttle controls. The bike lifted to the sound of Ilas' squeals of delight.

Gideon entered through the archway leading into the orchard. He stood looking at the rows of fruit trees that stretched out ahead of him. He let out a deep sigh. Deborah was with Raven, having herself and the baby checked out. A grin broke out on his face, as it always did when he thought about his son. It still amazed him that he was going to be a father. He'd wanted to be there with her, but she'd said that all he would be doing was waiting around while Raven examined her.

He had to admit that he didn't really know what to do with himself. He was so used to being with Deborah, that it left him at odds with himself when they weren't together. He'd checked on his crew and they were all occupied and didn't need his help. Max, Dureena, and Ilas had left to investigate some ruins early that morning and there was really nothing that he needed to do. Gideon moved forward into the orchard. Well, a walk would be better than just sitting alone in Deborah's rooms. He wanted some fresh air anyway, having been indoors for most of the last two days. Shoving his hands into his jean pockets, he walked on into the orchard. He looked at the variety of trees, most of which he didn't recognize; they didn't look like any fruit trees he was used to. He did, however, recognize one. He stopped and reached up to pluck a ripened red fruit and bit into the soft flesh, savoring the plum-like sweetness. Yes, this was one of the fruits they'd had at dinner last night.

Thinking of dinner made him frown as he thought about what had happened then and later with Deborah. She'd been upset with him for what had happened with Angel. Hell he was upset himself; he shouldn't have let her get to him like that. He still felt guilty about what had happened in the library and at dinner last night, yet he couldn't stop being angry with her, either. He shook his head. Was he still angry with her for what she'd done? Or was his anger directed at her because he still found her attractive? Gideon cursed under his breath and his thoughts jumped to what Galen had told him: To stay away from her. Well, that was clearly easier in theory than in practice; it was obvious that they'd bump into each other sooner or later. And of course it had ended exactly how every meeting of theirs did -- badly. Gideon kicked at a small stone on the ground in frustration. He could feel his mood becoming darker, as it always did when he thought about Angel.

If he didn't force himself to think about something else, he'd be in a foul mood by the time he met up with Deborah later. As he walked further into the orchard, Gideon let himself think about his son, a subject that lifted his mood immediately.

Angel made her way through the orchard. She always used it as a short-cut on her way to the village. She'd just been called; one of the children had fallen and hurt themselves and the parents needed her to come. She really didn't feel like it, and had considered asking Dr. Raven to go in her place, but she knew she couldn't do that. The villagers were unused to strangers and probably wouldn't accept him. She shifted her carry-bag from her right shoulder to her left. It was heavy with the different herbs and powders that she thought she might need.

As she hurried past one of the fruit trees, the hem of her long skirt snagged on a root. She looked down in irritation, and taking a handful of material in her hand, yanked it impatiently. The soft brown

suede tore as it broke free. Angel looked at the rip and swore under her breath. If she hadn't been in a bad mood already, this would have put her in one. This was her favorite skirt. Angel stamped her foot, then kicked at the root before turning around and walking away quickly.

She knew she wasn't in a bad mood because of having to go to the village. She was still in a mood because of last night's encounter with Gideon. She was so busy thinking about what had happened and her subsequent conversation with Demon that she wasn't paying attention to where she was going. She stumbled over the stump of an old fruit tree. She gave the stump a dirty look and moved around it, then as she looked up, she stopped dead in her tracks.

Just a few meters ahead of her stood Gideon, and he was reaching up to pluck a large black fruit from a overhanging branch. Angel felt her heart jump into her throat at the sight of him. Seeing him was the last thing she'd expected. [Gods, why does he have to look so gorgeous?] She thought as she let herself take in his appearance. He was wearing black jeans and a white shirt that molded to his chest perfectly. She didn't know what to do; her first instinct was to duck past the next row of trees before he turned and saw her. She was in no mood to have another fight with him. She'd promised her sister that she wouldn't, but her next thought was of how much she wanted to go to him and-- [And what, Angel?]

As she stood there undecided, she suddenly realized what fruit he'd picked and was about to eat. She leapt forward, her hand coming up in warning as she cried out to him.

"Don't eat that! It's poisonous!" She struck his hand, knocking the fruit from his grasp. He looked as startled by her action as by her sudden appearance. She pulled herself together quickly. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to--" She tried again, "The fruit you were about to eat is poisonous to humans, not to Brakiri. It's grown here for them, not for us. I'm sorry I disturbed you." She turned and started to walk away, wishing that her heart would stop pounding so hard. He could probably hear it from where he stood.

"Wait -- I mean, please -- will you wait a minute?" After the first abrupt word, she could hear him make an effort to soften his tone. She stopped walking away but didn't turn. She heard him walking towards her on the gravel path.

"I owe you an apology, and now thanks as well." She felt his hand on her shoulder, pulling her round to face him. She was so aware of his touch that his hand felt like it was burning into her flesh. She allowed herself to be turned and looked up into his eyes. For the first time she could remember, they weren't angry. He was looking down at her, seemingly slightly embarrassed.

"Thanks for warning me about the fruit. After the way I behaved at dinner last night, I'd have deserved it if you'd let me eat it." He smiled ruefully and dropped his hand from her shoulder.

"Oh no! I couldn't do that! Demon would never forgive me." Her heart was leaping in her chest. He'd never smiled at her before. She started to walk away and found that he was following.

"Well, it seems we have at least one thing in common: we both want your sister to think well of us. Maybe we'd better start working at how we're going to make that happen? Can I walk with you a while?" She couldn't believe they were having this conversation. He seemed to be making a real effort to be nice to her.

"Of course. I was just going down to the village. Have you been there yet?" She looked up at him, proud that her voice was holding steady and not giving her away. Her whole body was vibrating from the

excitement of having him walk so close by her side.

"No, will you show me? Deborah is with Raven getting checked out, and to be honest, I don't quite know what to do with myself." His tone was warm and friendly and she could feel her nipples harden in response. She became aware that she was getting hot inside, a warm glow starting between her legs. [Stop it!]

"Of course, but there's not much to see. Just a few houses, a school, and the infirmary where I'm headed." She had to work at not showing her arousal, but decided she could risk another glance up at him as they walked. As she turned her head, the hole in her skirt caught on another root, pulling her off balance. She stumbled and was about to fall when she felt his arms around her, holding her up.

"Careful." He pulled her to her feet but her knees gave way at the feel of his arms around her. He held her up, looking straight into her eyes. She gazed up at him, her head back, her lips parted, her breathing coming in gasps. As he held her against him she realized that he was as aroused as she was. He leaned forward and kissed her, gently, deeply, in the way she'd always dreamed he would kiss her.

Gideon pulled her tighter against him. He pushed his tongue deeper into her mouth, savoring its sweet honey flavor. From the moment she'd appeared and knocked the fruit out of his hand, he'd been aware of how beautiful and desirable she was. His conversation with Deborah the previous night made him now react more gently towards her and he'd promised to apologize for his cruel behavior at dinner. His feelings softened further when he saw how unsure of herself she looked. She was wearing a long-sleeved white blouse that flared at the wrists, over a soft brown suede skirt that flowed out around her. She looked much softer than he'd seen her before. It somehow made her appear vulnerable. As he walked beside her, he couldn't deny his attraction to her. He tried to suppress the reaction his body had to her closeness.

When she'd tripped he had grabbed for her and when she'd looked up at him with those incredible blue eyes, and her lips parted, he couldn't stop himself. He wasn't thinking anymore. He was reacting to what his body wanted, and the growing bulge in his pants was telling him that he wanted her right now, more than anything. He completely lost control.

Angel let her arms move around to the back of his neck, her knees buckling as her body melted away at his touch. She moaned slightly as Gideon broke the kiss, suddenly afraid that he'd realized what he was doing and was going to push her away in disgust. But he didn't; he lowered his mouth to her neck, trailing soft kisses down her throat. She arched her neck, throwing her head back, her eyes closed, lost in the sensation. She felt his hand move down the side of her body, where he took a handful of her skirt, pulling it up. He slipped his hand underneath the soft fabric and let it move up the inside of her thigh.

Gideon trailed his hand upwards, caressing the smooth silky skin. He could feel her heat even before his hand came to her entrance. He felt her arch into him as he parted the folds of her labia and slid his fingers into her vagina, wet with arousal. He let his thumb brush back and forth against her already swollen clitoris, causing her to moan loudly against him.

As Angel arched into him, she could feel the evidence of his own arousal making her excitement escalate. He obviously wanted her as much as she wanted him. Her eyes opened in disappointment when she felt his fingers move out of her and his hand slide out from under her skirt. Gideon saw her eyes look at

him with longing, and he lowered his mouth to hers again. This time, the kiss was more frantic. He pulled her shirt out of her skirt, letting his hand move inside to cup her breast, his finger teasing her hard nipple.

Angel suddenly felt herself being guided backwards, his mouth never leaving hers, as he pushed her against the trunk of the fruit tree. He heard her grunt softly as her back hit the trunk. For a moment he thought he'd hurt her and broke the kiss to look down at her, but her hands came up to his face, pulling his mouth back down to hers, where she hungrily kissed him, her tongue probing deep into his mouth. Her hips pressed against him, moving against his arousal painfully, as she gyrated her hips.

He couldn't wait anymore; he wanted to bury himself deep inside her. He dropped his free hand to the buckle of his jeans and with quick movements had them undone, freeing his hard cock from the restraining fabric.

Angel felt his movements and moved herself slightly away from him so that he could undo his buckle and unzip his jeans. She felt herself grow even wetter as she stopped kissing and allowed herself to look down at his impressive erection that was pressed between them. Her arms came around his shoulders as he stopped kneading her breast. With both hands, he lifted her skirt up, exposing the white flesh of her thighs and the dark curls of her triangle to the air. Angel spread her legs apart as he moved forward, giving him better access to her entrance. Both his hands came to hold her waist, lifting her slightly as he moved forward, pushing his cock inside her.

He felt her gasp as he entered her, and stopped moving, unsure for a moment if he should carry on, but then he felt her hips arch forward, taking him further inside her. Then he started moving, gently at first, allowing her walls to stretch comfortably around him. When he felt her leg come up to wrap around his waist, he started to thrust harder, keeping a tight hold on her waist to support her as he drove into her.

Angel tightened her hold on his shoulders and pulled him in closer to her, letting her head rest against his neck as his thrusts slammed her against the trunk. The bark rubbed painfully against her back, but it only heightened her feelings, having the pleasure of him inside her and the pain, mixing together in a heady overwhelming sensation. She arched her head back away from his neck as he thrust harder, and his head came forward, claiming her mouth in a passionate kiss.

He felt Angel's leg tighten around his waist, forcing him to thrust even deeper inside her. Their coupling was fast and powerful, both of them moaning and breaking the kiss as he thrust one more time, bringing them to climax. Angel cried out and buried her head in his shoulder as an orgasm tore through her body, making her shudder and her walls spasm around Gideon's cock. He closed his eyes and tightened his hold on her waist as he came hard, emptying himself into her.

Angel let her leg drop from around his waist. Her legs felt weak and she was grateful for the tight hold he had on her waist. Even though painful, it kept her from sliding bonelessly to the ground when he pulled himself out of her.

Gideon leaned forward, holding Angel tightly against him. He couldn't be sure if it was to support her or himself. He encircled her waist with one arm as he lifted his hand to stroke her hair, amazed at how soft and silky it felt against his palm. His eyes widened in surprise when he heard her start to cry against his shoulder, her body shaking gently against him.

"What is it? Did I hurt you?" He pulled her head gently back so he could look into her face.

"No! It was wonderful! It's just that I haven't --not since--" She ran out of words, overwhelmed by the warmth she could see in his eyes.

"Haven't what? Since when?" He was smiling down at her. She felt him move back from her a little and reach between them, first to push her skirts down, then to adjust his own clothes.

"I haven't done that, not since the library--" Her voice trailed off as she saw the warmth drain out of his eyes. He stared down at her, the smile gone.

"Well, thanks for the reminder. Do you have any idea how much I've regretted what happened that day? I've never done anything like that before and I promised myself I wouldn't--" He pushed away from her, releasing her waist and dropping his hand from her hair. She leaned back against the trunk of the tree, horrified by what she'd said and his response to it. She wanted to stop him, to turn the clock back a few moments, to take back the words that had set this in motion. But she couldn't move, couldn't speak, could only watch and listen in horror as he talked, more to himself than to her.

"What the hell do I think I'm doing? I've got a beautiful, kind, and generous woman pregnant. I want to be with her and our child and I risk it all by fucking her sister?" Angel flinched at his words. Was that all it had meant to him? How could she have been so stupid as to think he felt anything for her? He just wanted to fuck her. Just like Galen, just like the men from the planet she'd been with before Excalibur had arrived. None of them felt anything for her. They just wanted sex. Only Lucas had ever really loved her. Her temper started to rise as she watched him pacing in front of her, listening to him rant.

"If Deborah found out about this, about the library -- it would crucify her. She'd never forgive me -- or you." He turned and glared at Angel, his eyes the same angry hazel she'd seen before. She couldn't help herself.

"Pity you didn't think of that earlier. What are you going to do if I'm pregnant now? How do you think we should explain that?" The look of complete horror on his face was devastating. He wanted Demon's child, but hers? The thought of having a child with her obviously appalled him. She clamped down on the pain this caused and turned it into anger. Pushing herself away from the fruit tree, she pulled her shirt together. "Don't worry about it, Captain. Even if I am, I'll get rid of it. I feel sorry for my sister having you as the father of her child, I'll make damn sure I don't repeat her mistake." She couldn't believe the words that she flung at him. She hadn't realized she was capable of such cruelty, but he deserved it.

She bent and picked up her carry-bag and stormed off towards the village.

Gideon watched Angel walk away, stunned by the hatred in the words she'd just flung at him, well aware that he'd provoked them with what he'd said and done to her. He cursed himself for his inability to stay away from her, and to behave decently when he did see her. He wasn't a man who usually let himself be led by his dick -- why did he let Angel get to him like this? He started walking back towards the castle, trying to work out why he'd just done what he had.

He was still angry with her, her last words echoing in his ears. He found himself praying that she wasn't pregnant. It had never occurred to him that it could happen, which was pretty stupid in the light of Deborah's current condition. How the hell would he explain it to Deborah if she were? [Sorry darling, I was thinking with my dick instead of my brain.] He could almost imagine her making damn

sure that he never got the chance to do it again. She was handier with a knife than he liked to think about at that moment. He winced and turned his thoughts back to Angel as he walked into the courtyard.

He'd never reacted to a woman in that way before. He knew he was capable of violence; he could fight when he had to, but it was never his first choice. With Angel, however, there was something about her that made him want to hurt her, to pound her into submission, to fuck her until she begged for mercy, which was crazy, and totally out of character for him. He thought about his relationship with Deborah. She could be assertive or submissive in turn, and he enjoyed both. Sometimes she took control, and he enjoyed it when she did, at other times she was happy for him to take the lead, and he was happy to do so. He felt no need to try to dominate her or be dominated by her. They just got along.

So why did he need to browbeat and break Angel's will? Did he still resent the fact that she'd used him and dominated him when they first met, using her telekinetic ability to hold him powerless while she did what she wanted to him? He knew that while he'd resented what she'd done, he'd also enjoyed it, so why this need for revenge? Why did he need to do to her what she'd done to him?

He arrived back in Deborah's rooms, still with no idea of how to handle the problem that he knew he'd just made ten times worse. There was only one thing he was sure about. He wanted to wash every trace of Angel away before he saw Deborah again. He stripped quickly, throwing his shirt and briefs into the laundry basket, then went to shower.

After sending Luke off to the infirmary with a kiss, John and Lily continued sleeping. They were still tired; after dinner they had gone to look at the tapestry the sisters had finished after the Excalibur had left, then come back to Lily's room, but hadn't found sleep until early morning.

When Luke came back from checking out Demon, he found them still lying in bed, talking. Lily sat up as soon as he stepped in. Before she could ask, Luke said, "They're both perfectly healthy," putting his bag down beside the door where he could get to it quickly in case of an emergency.

Lily smiled. "I'm glad!"

Luke walked over to the bed and sat down on Lily's side, laying his hand on her swollen belly. "Do you want me to check you three out, too?" For the blink of an eye, he thought he saw a slight frown on her face, but decided he'd imagined it when her smile broadened.

"I'll let nature take its course, as long as I feel OK. Thank you." She leaned forward and kissed him on the cheek. Luke nodded. Of course he wanted to be sure that their children were all right, but he knew most women had a natural instinct that warned them if something wasn't as it should be, and he had learned to trust that instinct. "John and I were just talking about spending the afternoon in the orchard," Lily said, changing the subject. "We can take some books with us from the library."

"Sounds perfect. Count me in."

When Demon returned to her rooms, she thought for a moment that Matthew was still elsewhere, then she moved to the window leading to the terrace and saw him sitting on a bench, legs stretched along the seat, reading in the sunshine. Her stomach flipped over at the sight of him. She loved to look at

him at any time, but when he wore those black jeans and the gray t-shirt that outlined the muscles in his chest and shoulders, she could feel herself melting inside. No sooner did he put it on than she wanted to take it off again. She stood watching him from the window, loving the way his long legs crossed at the ankles, the way the muscles in his forearms stood out as he held the book in front of him -- his strong profile, the way his thick hair fell into his neck. Hell, she even loved his ears, although she knew any impartial observer wouldn't think them his best feature.

She moved through the voile curtains that shielded her rooms from the sun, out of the open French window and onto the terrace. He looked up as he heard her and smiled. It was the smile that made her knees go weak every time she saw it, but most of all, when it was directed at her. He swung his legs down to make room for her to sit next to him, putting his book down carefully. As soon as she sat, his arm was around her shoulders, pulling her close to him, and turning her slightly so he could kiss her.

"Everything OK?" He asked gently, worried when she didn't speak immediately.

"Oh we're both fine. It's just that I *hate* being prodded and poked at. Well, except in certain circumstances." She smiled at him. "But I've always hated medicals, they make me feel like a side of meat."

Gideon laughed. "I know just what you mean. Earthforce likes to make sure its Captains are fit, so they subject us to an annual medical that barely stops short of dissection. But Raven's a good doctor. I'm sure he only did what was necessary." He pulled her close and kissed her again.

"You're right; he did and we're fine. It's good to know that every test he did confirmed that we have a perfectly healthy baby, if rather a large one."

Gideon nodded. "That's probably my fault. Apparently all male children in my family grow really fast in the early stages of pregnancy, but slow down later. Looks like you're carrying a true little Gideon in there." He stroked her stomach gently then looked closely at her before he continued. "And what about his mother? Is she perfectly healthy, too?"

She could hear the concern in his voice and she kissed him gently before speaking. "I'm fine, Matthew. I think "sickeningly healthy" was the term Luke used, then he told me that he'd be out of a job if everyone were as fit as I am. So what have you been up to while I've been out? If you've been reading all the time, you haven't made much progress. Have you been snoozing? Did I exhaust you so much last night?" She chuckled as she kissed his neck lightly between her words. She was surprised when he didn't respond, but pulled away from her slightly.

"No, I went for a walk." She could feel him draw away as he spoke. "I met up with Angel, and we--" She could tell he was searching for the right words to tell her what had happened. She interrupted before he could continue.

"You fought again, didn't you? What happened this time?" She sat upright, pushing herself along the bench so that they were no longer touching. He sat forward with his legs apart, his hands clasped together, elbows on his knees, and his head down.

"One minute we seemed to be getting along fine; we were going down to the village and she was going to show me around, and then--" Again he hesitated. Demon wished she could tell what he was feeling, but decided that post-mortems were pointless. She spoke again before he could.

"Well, it seems that the only way you two are not going to fight is if you don't meet. So let's get out of

here." She stood and turned to where he still sat with his head down. She placed her hand under his chin and pulled his head up so she could see his face, then bent down to kiss him. "I'll just go make a few arrangements, then we can leave." She turned and went back into her rooms.

They dropped to the overgrown ruins, with Ilas controlling their descent as if she'd been flying a bike for years. Max had found her to be both a quick learner and physically dexterous. [And not just on bikes,] he grinned to himself. She watched, learned, repeated, and then drove like a professional. Max had to admit, to himself if not to her, that she was by now better at handling the bike than he was.

Dureena was waiting for them as they landed, and the women wanted to start exploring immediately. Max put his foot down and insisted that they set up camp first, including the ultrasonic defense perimeter. The women co-operated, although he was sure that they were only humoring him. [Never mind. As long as they do what I say.] Having set up camp, they decided to eat before continuing, as the sun was now past noon. They started exploring the ruins in the light of the afternoon sun, finding that the area was laid out in a grid. None of the buildings were intact, which was disappointing. Some walls remained standing, but most had collapsed into heaps of vegetation-covered rubble.

By late afternoon they were all hot, bothered, and frustrated, having found nothing of any use or interest. As the light faded, Max tripped as they crossed to a half-fallen wall, and his foot went straight through the greenery beneath him. He yelled as he fell and Ilas grabbed him quickly, just in time to stop his whole leg from disappearing into a hole. She strengthened her arms, then lifted him out of the hole. She carried him a short distance and laid him gently on the ground, then stooped to inspect his leg.

"It's all right. Nothing is broken, no real damage done, just a few scrapes and bruises. I've done far worse in the field before now," he insisted. He was quick to reassure her, as her face was full of concern as she hovered over him.

Dureena was tearing away the vegetation that covered the hole and growled her frustration as she completed the task. "The hole is too small. I won't fit through that."

Max yelled at her to stop. "I don't want any of us dropping into a dark hole when the light is going. We stop now and call it a day. Tomorrow at dawn we can come back and investigate." The women grumbled, but agreed to be guided by his experience, and they returned to their camp for the night.

John, Lily, and Luke were all lying on a big blanket in the shade of one of the fruit trees, each of them reading a book they'd chosen from the castle's extensive library. Luke almost hadn't been able to tear himself away from the extensive Shakespeare section -- all of them ancient, many even first editions -- and had finally decided on *Anthony and Cleopatra*.

John had been browsing the shelves when he suddenly stopped dead and took a thin book out with shaking hands. It was a collection of Asian fairytales and legends -- exactly the same as his mother had read to him when he'd been a child. He carefully opened it and flipped through the pages, admiring the illustrations as he used to so many years ago, a smile spreading on his face.

Lily had chosen *The Mistress of Spices* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, an Indian-born writer of 20th century Earth. She'd read it many times already, but never got bored of the beautifully crafted

sentences.

Luke had just finished reading another act when John closed his book and stood. "I'll get another one," he said and walked towards the archway that led back to the castle.

Luke followed him with his eyes, then let his gaze wander over the rows of fruit trees to give his eyes some exercise. Lily was still deeply immersed in her book. [If she could she'd probably climb into it,] he thought, smiling. She laid on her left side with her back to him, leaning slightly forward, left leg flexed to stabilize her, leaning on her elbow, with her head resting on her hand. She'd put a folded blanket under her swollen belly to support its weight. The orange-red silken summer dress she wore, with puffed three-quarter length sleeves and the neckline worn off-shoulder, molded to her every curve, and her red curls flowed down her back onto the ground, a few strands blowing in the warm breeze.

Lily was so immersed that she didn't even notice when Luke silently slipped behind her and looked over her shoulder to see what she was reading.

Raven turns off the lamp.

[Raven?] Luke thought and grinned, continuing to read.

In the cool silver moonlight I feel his breath behind me, smelling of almonds and peaches. He twines his arms around my waist. His lips against my ear, his whisper warm as skin.

"Tilo."

I close my eyes. He is kissing my shoulders, my neck, little kisses on each separate nub of the backbone. He is turning me to him, unbuttoning my dress and letting it fall in a silken swirl to my feet. His hands move like doves over my body.

"Tilo, look at me, touch me too."

I am too shy to open my eyes but I slip my hand under his shirt. His skin is firm and smooth everywhere except at the collarbone, where there is a small puckered scar, vestige of some long-ago fight. It rouses in me a tenderness I am amazed by, I who have always craved the power of perfection and find now that human frailty has its own power too. I kiss it and hear the breath sharp in his throat. Then his lips are everywhere, his tongue, teasing, drawing me out of myself. I Tilo who never thought I would learn the ways of pleasure so surprising-fast, pleasure that flows over the body like warm honey, fingertips, toes, each pore of the skin.

We are in bed now, the walls fallen away, the stars shining in our hair. He lifts me on top, lets my hair cover his face like a song of water. "This way, dear one."

But I know already. Makaradwaj kingspice tells me what to do so that Raven laughs low in his throat, "Tilo!" then gasps and shudders.

The voice of the spice is in my ears, [Use everything. Mouth and hand, yes, nails and teeth, flutter of eyelash against his skin, that special look in your eye. Give and take back, teasing. As did the great courtesans in the courts of Indra the godking.

Let him be discoverer of the land that you are, mountain and lake and cityscape. Let him carve out roads where none went before. Let him enter finally where you are deepest and most unknown, thick vines, jaguar cry, the dizzying odor of rajanigandha, the wild tuberose, flower of the bridal night. For isn't love the illusion that you will open yourselves totally to each other, suffering no distance to be kept.]

O makaradwaj, why do you say illusion? I am willing to give this man all my secrets, my past and my present both.

[And your future? Will you tell him when your loving is done that this first time is also the last? Will you tell him of Shampati's fire?]

"Tilo," cries Raven urgently, pulling my hips into him, again, again, bone to bone, till I feel the hot release take us both. Till we are one body and many bodies and no body all at once.

Luke found himself imagining doing with Lily what he was reading ... and his body responded in a familiar way, even more so when he saw the glow in Lily's eyes and the little excited smile on her lips.

Luke carefully slid his arm around Lily's chest, feeling her flinch the slightest bit as he startled her a little, and cupped her left breast while grazing his teeth up her neck, making her close her eyes and moan. She arched her back when his hand slipped under the neckline of her dress and started caressing her hard nipple. He massaged it gently, yet firmly, increasing the tempo of her breathing and building her excitement. It didn't take him long to make her pant, then moan, but when she wanted to turn onto her back to face him, he stopped her.

"Trust me," he whispered, answering her protesting moan, and bent over her shoulder, turning her face upwards to claim her mouth in a passionate kiss. His hand left her breast and wandered down her side, over her hips and thighs, then pulled the silk up the back of her leg. Lily guessed what he wanted to do and shifted her legs slightly as he released his swollen cock; moments later she felt him push into her wet center from behind, his right arm across her chest, hand holding her left shoulder. His thrusts were gentle at first, then grew faster, harder; Lily grabbed Luke's arm, her long fingernails clawing his skin. He had intended to take her slowly, gently, but soon his body's urgency proved too much to ignore. Lily's fingernails cut into his skin as she grabbed his arm, pain adding to the pleasure. Lily's moans and gasps became more urgent, her body begging him for release in a silent scream. Luke thrust into her hard, again and again, making her cry out, until he couldn't hold back anymore.

Feeling his hot fluid shoot into her was all it took to make Lily come, her orgasm tearing through her body in long, violent waves.

When John came back with another book, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, he looked at them lying there reading as before, only slightly closer together and emanating a familiar mix of emotions, and he grinned. "Can't I leave for a few minutes without you two getting all hot and heavy?"

Lily just looked up at him and grinned as he lay down on his belly beside her. Luke kept his eyes fixed on the page he was reading and said, "Not as long as Fire-Lily acts as a living aphrodisiac."

Gideon watched Deborah go and cursed his own cowardice. He'd wanted to tell her what had happened but couldn't bring himself to hurt her like that. So what was he going to do if Angel told her instead? All he could hope was that Angel loved her sister enough not to want to hurt her any more than he wanted to. She returned to the terrace after a few moments during which he could hear her speaking to someone on the Comm. console, but couldn't catch what she was saying.

"Come on." He looked up to see her holding her hand out towards him, smiling at him in a way that nearly broke his heart. She trusted him completely, how could he be such a bastard? He stood and reached for her hand, taking it and pulling her to him, hugging her fiercely. She looked at him in surprise. "What's that for?"

He kissed her gently and spoke. "I just felt like it. Now where are we going?"

She grinned at him, her eyes glinting with humor. "It's a surprise. Come and see."

He followed her as she led him by the hand, out of the castle and into the woods outside. They followed a completely different path than that which he'd taken earlier, walking in silence through a lightly wooded area until they came to a deep pool. Trees surrounded one side, while the other was open to the sun. Flat rocks shelved gently into the water, and on the far side, a small waterfall made soft splashes against the surface. The water looked cool and inviting in the sunshine.

Deborah turned to him and grinned. "Ever go skinny dipping?" He didn't need a second invitation, but stripped quickly and dived into the pool, doing a flat out crawl to the far side, then turned to look back at her.

She was still standing on the rocks, laughing down at him. "So you like to swim? Wait for me then." Gideon watched as she slowly undid the buttons holding her high-waisted dress in place, then slid the straps off her shoulders, letting the dress fall to the ground, and stepped out of it naked. He could feel himself becoming aroused beneath the water, watching her as she loosened the ribbon holding her hair back and let the blonde curls fall around her shoulders.

He called across to her, "All you need is a shell and you could do a wonderful imitation of Botticelli's Birth of Venus." She laughed and placed her hands coyly, posing as Venus did in the picture. Then she straightened, swung her arms back and executed a perfect racing dive into the pool. He watched her swim underwater towards him, amazed at how long she stayed under, surfacing only when she reached him.

She pushed her hair back from her face as she trod water in front of him, grinning at him. "Race you back." She turned and he watched as with powerful strokes she sped back across the pool. He followed quickly and had nearly caught up with her when she reached the far side. He grabbed her as she floated, pulling her close to him so she could feel his erection. She pulled herself tightly against him, and lifted her legs, positioning herself to allow him entry. As he pushed slowly into her, she wrapped her legs around his hips, pulling him close, giving him the leverage he needed. He found the bottom of the pool with his feet and started thrusting into her, feeling her respond, her hips flexing around him, building their excitement until they climaxed together.

He dropped his head to her neck, kissing along the line of her shoulder. "Good job we did that in the shallow end. I think we'd have drowned if it'd been any deeper." He felt her throaty chuckle, which traveled through her body, setting up an interesting vibration in her vagina, which was still clasped tightly around his cock.

"I don't think you can get in any deeper. Well, not without giving me a tonsillectomy." Gideon burst out laughing and lifted her off him.

She was grinning at him, then asked, "Hungry?"

He looked down at her breasts, which showed above the water. "Yes, and I've just seen lunch." He lowered his head and licked at her nipple, then caught it gently between his teeth.

She pushed him away, laughing. "Later. I'm starving and so is your son, so let's eat." He released her nipple, kissing her before letting her twist out of his arms and walk up the rocks to where they'd left their clothes. To his surprise (and embarrassment when he thought about it), there was now a blanket and cushions spread across the grass, with a pile of soft towels to the side and a large picnic basket nearby. She stooped and threw him a towel that he used to dry himself, then quickly rubbed his hair with it. He watched as she took a towel and wrapped it around her hair before pulling another round her body, tucking it in so it covered her from breast to mid-thigh.

"Hey, I was enjoying the view," he protested as she covered herself. She turned and smiled back at him.

"Well you can have fun taking it off again later, but I'm *really* hungry now, so let's eat."

They spent the rest of the afternoon eating, swimming lazily in the pool, and making love, slowly and satisfyingly.

Angel climbed into bed and pulled the sheet over her, enjoying the feel of the cool satin on her naked skin. As she rested her head on the pillow she sighed. She'd been in the village for most of the day, tending to the little girl who'd been hurt and then not wanting to go back to the castle. She stayed as other villagers came to see her, keeping her too busy to think about the awful ending of her encounter with Gideon in the orchard, the horror in his eyes as she asked him what he would do if she were pregnant now. She knew that couldn't happen, but she wanted to strike out at him, and that just came out, as well as telling him she would get rid of the baby if she were. A lie; she had a strong regard for life, and would never do that. Angel groaned as the thoughts came, but with an effort she forced them away, their memory too painful. It was still only late afternoon, but she felt exhausted and had decided to take a nap. Besides, she was too tired to think or allow her thoughts to keep her awake.

She turned on her side, facing the fire, and snuggled into the pillow. She watched the blaze; it always soothed her to watch the flames and listen to the gentle crackle, so she kept the temperature in her rooms low enough to enjoy the fire. Soon her eyes became heavy and they closed, her breathing becoming relaxed as she drifted towards sleep. Just as she slipped away she heard Lucas's voice inside her saying gently, *[[Sweet dreams Angel-face.]]* Unlike the shock she'd felt when she first heard him speak to her, she smiled. Oddly comforted by it, Angel was asleep in seconds.

The full moon hung in the night sky like a beacon; its reflection on the still river like quicksilver as it hit the gentle ripples. The air was warm and filled with the sounds of nocturnal creatures calling out and with the scent of night jasmine.

Angel walked along the bank, enjoying the peace of the night. She stopped and looked out across the water, tempted to just slip into its coolness and escape the warmth of the summer night. She chewed

her bottom lip, trying to decide whether she should or not and looked around to see if she was as alone as she believed herself to be. She looked back at the water and watched it lapping against the embankment, and moved forward to stick her bare foot into the water. She smiled; the temperature of the water was perfect. Her mind made up, Angel moved to undo the long row of buttons on the front of her dress. She had just undone the first button when she froze, her hand unmoving. She was suddenly aware that she was no longer alone.

"Hello, Angel-face," drawled Lucas seductively from behind her.

Angel gasped and spun around to see him leaning against the trunk of a large willow tree, arms folded in front of him. She felt a jolt in her stomach as she looked at him. He was dressed in black jeans, just like the first time in the park, and wearing the same white shirt, but this time with a tan suede jacket over it. She licked dry lips, aware of how sexy he looked. He was just watching her and her mind reeled, unsure of what was happening.

"Lucas?" she asked in a whisper, even though she knew it was he.

"Expecting someone else darlin'?"

Angel struggled to find her voice. "How? It's not possible. You're gone. The spell--" Her voice faltered as Lucas pushed himself away from the tree and started moving towards her, but she stepped back away from him. Lucas stopped at her movement, a small smile on his lips.

"You know I'm not. I'll always be with you."

Angel stared at him, dumbfounded. She was torn between being excited that he was there, so close to her, and being terrified. Was this a dream or was it real? She looked up at him "I--this can't be happening."

"Oh but it is Angel-face." Lucas paused and moved towards her. "Let me prove it to you," he said as he raised his hands to cup her face. Angel's eyes widened as he lowered his mouth to hers. She stood, unable to move as his lips meshed with hers and his tongue slipped between her parted lips and moved deep into her mouth. For a moment, Angel didn't respond, but as his tongue moved against hers, she couldn't help herself, her hands came up to wrap around his neck, pulling him closer to her and deepening the kiss. She drank in the taste of him and realized that he and Gideon tasted alike.

Angel's eyes snapped open as she thought of Matthew, and suddenly realized that this didn't seem right. She started to struggle against Lucas and managed to break the kiss, but he was too quick for her, and before she could break away, his hand moved to the back of her neck, where he grabbed a handful of her hair and yanked backwards. Angel gasped in pain, and stopped struggling, her eyes wild as she looked up at him.

"Please let me go!"

Lucas cocked his head slightly to one side and frowned at her "Why do you keep fighting me, Angel? You know that you want me. Every day you think about me and miss me. You belong to me, yet even now, you resist that." His tone was controlled, but Angel could feel and hear the anger. She cried out again as he pulled back harder on her hair, her neck pulled back painfully so that she was unable to look anywhere but up at him as he continued, not giving her a chance to say anything.

"Maybe I'm wrong and you really don't want me. Maybe it's Space Cadet you want now. Is that it,

Angel-face?"

Angel pushed against his chest with one hand, as the other came up to where he gripped her hair tightly. "Lucas," she began, her eyes pleading with his, her voice filled with confusion. Anything further she wanted to say was cut off as he released her suddenly, causing her to lose her balance and fall to the ground. She looked up as he moved away from her. He turned back, his hands on his hips, ignoring the fact that she was now crying.

"You know what, darlin'? You're gonna choose who you want, but if you choose Gideon, you'll never see me again. I'll be gone forever." Lucas stopped, watching Angel carefully as he let his words sink in. When he continued, his voice was low and steely.

"Who's it gonna be, Angel-face?"

Angel looked up at him, her heart racing and her mind reeling. Yes, she wanted Gideon [But wasn't that because he reminded her of Lucas?]. She wanted Lucas, she missed him, longed for him, but she knew what it would mean to be with him. If she chose Gideon, Lucas would be gone forever. Could she handle that?

Lucas stood quietly, watching Angel as she thought. It concerned him that she had to think about who she wanted, but he was confident enough to be sure that she would choose him. Despite her attraction for Space Cadet, she was in love with him and enjoyed how they were together. Gideon would soon bore her. He arched an eyebrow as Angel got to her feet.

"Made your decision?" asked Lucas, keeping his voice neutral. Angel nodded and moved towards him. He could tell she was nervous as she came to a halt inches from him. He stood unmoving as she placed her hands on his chest and leaned into him. Her voice was breathless when she spoke.

"You, Lucas - you're the one I really want." Angel slid her hands up his chest, making her way to encircle his neck, but his hands grabbed her wrists tightly, holding them immobile. She winced at the iron hold he had on her, but didn't struggle as he pulled her closer to him, trapping her arms between them. His head came forward, his lips close to her ear.

"And who do you belong to?" asked Lucas in a whisper, his warm breath tickling her ear, causing her to tremble. He felt her reaction and straightened up to look into her eyes.

Angel smiled, "To you, Lucas, body and soul." The words reminded her of the first time she'd said it to him, and just like then her body was becoming hot and desire started coursing through her.

Lucas smiled. He released her wrists and let her arms fall to her side. He raised his hand to caress her chest above the dress line for a moment, then it came to rest where the top button was undone and he played with it. His eyes looking at her intensely, Angel could clearly see and feel what he wanted and it was what she wanted now more than anything

"I think you're a little overdressed, don't you?" Lucas asked seductively. His lips curled up in a smile as Angel nodded. His other hand came up and she gasped as in one swift movement, he ripped the dress open from top to bottom, exposing her naked body to the warm night air and to his hungry eyes. He moved his hands to either strap and slid them over her shoulders. The destroyed dress slipped off and fell to her feet.

Lucas let his eyes roam over her body. The light from the moon made her pale skin shine like marble.

He slid his arm around her waist and drew her closer to him, his hand moving to her breast where he let his finger and thumb rub her already hard nipple roughly. He lowered his mouth to her neck, letting his lips trail down from below the jaw-line to her collarbone and then moved back to the soft flesh of her shoulder where he bit down roughly.

Angel had been lost in the sensations of his lips caressing her neck and his hand on her breast. When she felt his teeth bite down on her shoulder, she bucked in his arms, her head snapping back. Her eyes met his as he raised his head to look at her. There was amusement in his eyes at her surprise. "Did you forget, Angel? With me, there's both pleasure and pain." To prove his words, he tweaked her nipple roughly. Her gasp of pain was cut off as his mouth claimed hers in a bruising kiss.

Angel could feel the hard bulge of his erection poking her leg through his jeans, and she could feel her own body's reaction as the wetness between her legs increased. Suddenly, she was no longer aware of the pain, only of pleasure. She wanted to feel his skin on her hands and she let her hands move to the front of his shirt. Lucas felt her movement and broke the kiss. He decided to help her by moving his hands off her body to remove his jacket, letting it fall to the ground behind him.

Angel struggled with the button of his shirt, her hands shaking with excitement. She looked up at him as he placed his hands over hers. She let her hands drop and watched with hungry anticipation as Lucas quickly undid his top button. Her hands flew up to stop him undoing the rest.

"I want to do it," she said huskily. Lucas shrugged, letting his hands move to hold her waist. Angel got a firm grip of either side of the shirt and pulled, ripping it open, exposing his chest. He shrugged out of the shirt. She didn't hesitate as she moved her hands over the soft chest hair and lowered her mouth to suckle on an erect nipple, her tongue tracing back and forward. She felt his hand in her hair, gently pulling her head up, his mouth meshing with hers.

The next thing she was aware of was that he was holding her tightly and lowering her to the ground. His lips moved from her mouth to where he'd bitten her, his tongue soothing over the area. His hand moved over her breast, kneading it roughly, then his mouth was on her other breast, his teeth gently biting down. Angel arched up, her hands digging into the grass as his mouth and tongue gently sucked on her nipple.

Lucas raised his head, leaving her nipple and he lifted off her. His jeans were rubbing painfully against his cock and he had to get them off. He kept her eyes locked with his as he stood to quickly remove his boots, followed by his pants and black briefs.

Angel watched him, her eyes moving to his impressive erection, as he stood completely naked before her. He was magnificent and she let her tongue dart out to wet her dry lips. Then, lightening fast, he was lying on top of her again. His mouth was once again on hers as his hand moved down her body. She moaned against his kiss as his hand slipped over her damp curls and let two fingers slide past her wet folds and into her warm wet center. Angel spread her legs further apart and arched her hips, wanting to take his fingers deeper into her.

Lucas shifted his position, keeping his fingers inside her as he moved to lie between her parted legs. His cock brushed up against her leg as he moved. He continued to move his fingers inside her and to rub her swollen clit. After a few more thrusts into her, he withdrew his fingers; he didn't want her coming yet. Angel's eyes opened as he moved out of her, disappointment in her eyes.

Her body was on fire, and she wanted to have him inside her. She looked at him as he shifted his position, one hand coming up to her breast as the other slid to her thigh pushing her legs further

apart. Angel bent her knees, so that she was positioned better beneath him. She felt the tip of his hard shaft against the lips of her center.

Lucas looked down at Angel, taking in her face as she looked up at him, her eyes dark with desire. He could see the pulse in her neck beating, and he lowered his head, letting his mouth rest on it, feeling the pulse on his lips. Then he placed his arms on the ground on either side of her and raised himself up.

"How do you want it?" He saw a flicker of surprise on her face at the sudden question and the first words spoken after such a long silence. He could see that she understood what he was asking.

Angel swallowed convulsively. She wanted him --she wanted him like it had been before. The way it had always been between them. "Hard, Lucas. I want you to take me hard."

Lucas let out a small sigh and smiled down at her, his mouth cruel and predatory. Then without another word or warning, he thrust into her, driving his large, hard cock deep inside her. Angel cried out at the pain as her walls stretched against the invasion. The pain was there for only a moment as he withdrew almost completely out of her before thrusting brutally into her again, burying his cock up to the hilt. He started to move in and out of her hard, his thrusts driving her into the ground.

She wrapped her legs around his waist tightly, wanting him deeper inside her as she raised her hips up to meet his movements. She arched her neck back and closed her eyes as he rained kisses on her, his movements frantic.

Angel was moaning loudly, her body being driven closer to extreme heights by him thrusting deeper into her, feeling her walls tightening around him with every move. He moved his hand between their bodies and let his fingers rub her clit. She pushed up and took him almost impossibly deep into her.

Angel felt like she was spinning and spiraling. She cried out as with a final deep thrust he pushed her over the edge, her body shuddering beneath him as an intense orgasm washed over her body, rising up from her very center to every part of her body. He continued rubbing her clit, creating another orgasm more intense than the first. She felt like she was falling into a never-ending abyss, but she didn't care; she wanted to fall now.

Lucas felt her walls tighten around him, as her body shuddered with release, and he arched into her as he came hard, his warm essence coming out in a torrent as her tight walls milked him until he was completely drained. Angel's legs unwrapped from around his waist and fell bonelessly to the ground.

He withdrew from her, and moved to lie beside her. Neither of them spoke for a moment, then he raised himself on his arm so that he was looking down at her. Angel smiled up at him.

"Oh Lucas, I've missed you so much," she said breathlessly, her hand moving to caress his cheek.

Lucas smiled "I know you have darlin'. But don't worry, we'll be together soon." He lowered his head and Angel closed her eyes, parting her lips in anticipation of his kiss. When she didn't feel anything, she opened her eyes then sat up in shock. Lucas was no longer there with her.

Angel awoke with a start. She was covered in sweat and she pushed the sheet off her where it stuck uncomfortably to her skin. She jumped out of bed and grabbed the red silk gown that was lying on her loveseat. She put it on quickly, and with shaky hands, tied the belt. Then she sat down on the edge

of the bed, biting her lip as she allowed herself to remember what she'd just dreamed about.

For a brief moment on waking, she thought she'd really been with Lucas, but now as she looked at the familiar surrounding of her bedroom, she knew it had been a dream. Angel frowned.

No, it had been more than a simple dream. It scared her to admit it, but somehow, Lucas had been speaking to her through her dream. She didn't know how, but he was able to talk in her head and control her dreams. She knew this because something had been very different from the dreams she'd had before. They had always taken place here on Eriadne, but this dream and that other one had taken place somewhere else, and again, her clothes and his had been late 20th century style.

"What's going on here?" She couldn't deny that she'd enjoyed the dream; her body felt as if she'd just been with Lucas. Even in her dreams, he was the best lover she'd ever had. She frowned as she remembered what had been said. He'd made her choose who she really wanted, and she'd chosen him. She stood up in frustration. What good did that do her? Lucas was gone and she didn't know if or how she could bring him back without involving Gideon.

And what had he meant by saying that soon they'd be together? She bit her bottom lip, trying to figure it out. She decided to ask him. It was crazy, but it might work.

[[Lucas are you there?]] Angel stood still waiting for -- what? All she heard was silence.

[[Lucas please tell me what's going on.]] She asked with desperation. Again, there was no response. Angel felt like screaming.

"I'm losing my mind!" she shouted, as she threw herself face down on her bed. She lay there for a moment trying to calm herself, but it didn't work. Instead she started crying. Sobs wracked her body as emotions swept over her uncontrollably.

She was so tired of all this and wanted it all to stop. She wanted Lucas back, but didn't know how. She wanted Gideon because he reminded her of Lucas. She hated him for the way he'd treated her. She wanted him because he wasn't Lucas. She was becoming someone she didn't like very much and she was saying and doing things she shouldn't. Angel buried her face into her bed and moaned. She lay sobbing into her bed, until she felt completely drained. She turned on her back and stared up at the ceiling, feeling both physically and emotionally exhausted, but she knew she wasn't going to sleep. It was still only evening and the long lonely night stretched ahead.

She rose and dressed quickly, unconscious of the choice of clothes. She pulled on tight black pants, and then tucked a red shirt into the waist. She couldn't stay in her rooms any longer. She had to get out, to find out what was happening. Where was everyone and what were they doing? She left her rooms and started prowling through the castle, like a wild cat looking for prey.

{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}