

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

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Angel and Matthew at odds

Chapter 2

Gideon stood on the terrace outside Deborah's room with a glass in his hand. He had to admit that they produced some decent wine on this planet. [Just how much will Deborah let me take away with me and where the hell am I going to store it?] The terrace was lit with candles and lanterns, with most of the light focused around the table where they usually had breakfast. More chairs had been brought out and the table extended, then decorated with candelabra, silver and glassware, all picking up reflections from the lights. The sun had gone down an hour before, in its usual spectacular burst of colour. Now the terrace looked like a fairyland of greenery and twinkling lights.

He'd watched as Deborah had given instructions to the servants on how she wanted things placed. She was always calm and patient until she'd chased him off the terrace, telling him that he distracted her. He'd gone to change for dinner and surprised himself by finding that he was looking forward to the evening. Unlike the previous night, this wasn't a dinner for everyone in the formal dining room, but a smaller gathering, to be served on the terrace, under the stars that shone so brightly in this part of the galaxy. He looked up at the night sky, trying to work out where Sirius Minor was, wondering how the refit of his ship was progressing, but he wasn't familiar enough with the constellations in this area to get his bearings.

Deborah was changing now and had told him to stay out of the bedroom while she did so. She knew he'd slow her down if he stayed, (he grinned to himself; [damn right I would]) and their guests would

be arriving soon. So he waited on the terrace, enjoying the warm evening air, the night sky and the taste of the wine in his glass. It didn't get much better than this.

Then it did. Deborah walked out onto the terrace and his heart stopped. She was wearing a long black velvet dress, cut to leave her shoulders bare and enhance her cleavage. The bodice of the dress fitted her like a second skin, tight over her breasts and down her ribcage, but flaring out from her waist into a full skirt that reached to the ground. The front of the dress was cut more generously, but even so, he could see the swelling of her belly clearly. Her hair was twisted up onto her head in a way that showed her long, elegant neck to perfection. Gideon put his glass down on the balustrade and walked over to where she was standing in the doorway to her rooms. He put a hand to her face and with his arm round her waist, pulled her close into a passionate kiss.

When he finally released her mouth, he looked deep into her eyes and spoke. "I wouldn't have thought you could get any more beautiful, but somehow you have." He stroked her bare neck and shoulders, running his fingers across her collarbone and back to the point of her shoulder, which he kissed. "Why do you never wear jewelry? Not that I want to see anything here covered up, you understand." He smiled fondly at her and kissed the other shoulder.

"I just don't like it, I'm not the jewelry type. Now let go. Our guests will be arriving soon." She smiled and pushed him away from her, then turned to check that the table was as she wanted it. He stood close behind her and put his arms back around her waist, resting his palms on her bump and gently pulling her back towards him, then leaned forward and kissed the side of her neck where it joined her shoulder.

"Let's forget dinner. I have a theory that you don't have a thing on under this dress and I want to check it out."

She leaned her head back against his and laughed. "Haven't you seen enough today? I'd have thought you'd be getting pretty blasé about my body by now."

He kissed her shoulder again. "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale--" Before he could progress further, they both heard the door to her rooms opening, and looking back through the French windows, saw Lily enter the room, closely followed by Matheson and Raven. Gideon whispered into Deborah's ear. "Damn. Later, I'm going to show you just how much I am *not* blasé about your body." He moved to stand at her side, keeping one arm around her waist and stepping forward to greet their guests.

Dinner was a great success, with food and company enjoyable. As the evening had grown cooler, they'd moved back into Deborah's rooms for the local equivalent of coffee and brandy. The men agreed that the local coffee was better than what they had to drink on board ship, but still not like the real thing. They decided that the brandy was as good as anything they'd had before. After the wine served with dinner, Gideon, Matheson and Raven were all feeling mellow. Gideon sat back on one of the sofas, his arm around Deborah's shoulders, looking at their guests sitting opposite.

Raven and Matheson sat on either side of Lily, Luke with his arm around her shoulders, John with his hand holding hers, resting on his knee. They'd talked about anything and everything, but the subject had turned to Gideon's near expulsion from Earthforce academy when he'd been caught playing strip poker in a local girls' college. This was his excuse for a life-long love of card games. He'd had them in hysterics as he described a hazardous escape from the first floor balcony, wearing his boots and a

happy smile. He claimed this was when he discovered that losing could be as much fun as winning.

He watched Deborah as she rocked forward in the sofa, laughing hard. He didn't think he'd ever seen her so relaxed and at ease, all defenses down. She suddenly stopped laughing and sat up straight, her face freezing in shock.

He sat forward quickly. "What's the matter? Are you OK?"

She looked down at her stomach then up into his eyes. "He moved." She placed her hand on her stomach and looked down again, sitting totally still. Then her face broke into an incredulous smile. "Matthew, he moved!" She reached out and grabbed his hand, placing it flat on her belly. He could see that Raven, Matheson and Lily had all sat upright and were watching them closely.

Then he felt movement beneath his hand and stared in total amazement at her. He repeated her words. "He moved!" Turning to the others, he felt himself grinning like a complete idiot. Then he realised that they were grinning back, looking equally stupid, and he didn't care. He'd felt his son move!

Raven stood and walked across to them, saying, "May I?" before gently moving Gideon's hand from Deborah's stomach and putting his own in its place. A moment later, he smiled. "Nothing out of the ordinary, everything's fine. It's quite normal at this stage in the pregnancy." But he was smiling while he said it, making it obvious that he understood how special this moment was for them.

As soon as Raven lifted his hand, Gideon put his own back where it had been, then put his free arm around Deborah's shoulder. She was still sitting up straight, staring down at her stomach. He pulled her round to face him then kissed her long and hard.

He sat back on the sofa, his arm still tight around her shoulder, pulling her against him, his hand held under hers on her belly. He grinned across at the others. "I suppose you've been through this already?" He looked at Lily's swollen stomach that gave her the appearance of being so much more pregnant than Deborah.

She shook her head. "No, not yet. But soon, I hope." She smiled lovingly at Matheson, who squeezed her hand tightly.

Raven moved back to the other sofa and sat next to Lily again. "Have you decided on a name yet?"

Gideon was taken aback. He'd got used to thinking of 'my son' or 'the baby', he hadn't thought about a name. "I haven't given it a thought as yet, have you, Deborah?" He turned to look at her and as he did so, movement in the doorway caught his eye. He looked up to see Angel leaning against the doorframe, arms crossed in front of her. She was wearing red and black and her face was set hard.

"Why don't you call him Lucas, after his father?" He heard Deborah gasp and turned to look at her, then turned back to Angel.

He heard Lily speak. "Angel! No!" Then he lost control. He leaped out of his seat and started towards Angel, who whisked herself away from the door and disappeared into the corridor beyond. By the time he got round the table and to the doorway, she'd vanished into the darkness.

"Come back here, bitch!" He plunged into the darkness pursuing her, with no thought for anything other than how he wanted to break her neck when he caught her.

Matheson leapt to follow Gideon, but Raven called him back. "John, go to our rooms and get my bag, quickly." Matheson looked round and saw that Raven and Lily were moving towards Demon, who'd collapsed back on the white sofa and whose face matched it perfectly. He didn't ask questions, just left at a run.

Raven sat on the table in front of Demon and lifted her hands, "Breathe Demon, just try to breathe steadily." He rubbed her hands between his, worried that they were so cold. He knew that she was in shock. He looked up at Lily, who was standing the other side of Demon, looking frightened.

"Lily, get me a blanket from the bedroom, will you? We need to get her warm." He felt Demon's pulse and realised that it was racing and she was now struggling to catch her breath. Lily returned with the blanket and helped him wrap it around her. "Good, now see if there's any hot coffee left." He was trying to keep Lily occupied, as he could see she was nearly as shaken by what had happened as Demon was. He couldn't understand why Demon had reacted so strongly. What Angel had said was cruel and unforgivable, but it shouldn't have had this bad an effect. [Where the hell has John gotten to?] It seemed like hours since he'd left. Lily was carrying a cup over to him and he saw that her hands were shaking and the liquid was spilling. He took it from her and put it to Demon's lips. He became more worried as he saw the blue tinge to her lips. "Try to drink Demon, just a sip." Her eyes were glazed and unfocused.

Matheson burst back into the room with Raven's bag. He sighed with relief; now he could do something. He put the cup down and got John to help him move Demon, laying her down on the sofa, wrapping her in the blanket, trying to bring her around.

Gideon was running flat out down the corridors of the castle, heading straight for Angel's rooms. He'd stopped thinking, stopped analyzing; he was just reacting to the rage that filled him. He'd no idea what he was going to do when he caught her, but was determined that he would, and then ... then she'd pay.

Raven and Matheson between them got Demon to her bedroom and into bed. With Lily's help, Raven undressed her and wrapped her in a quilt to keep her warm. He gave her a very mild sedative that seemed to help. She was breathing more evenly and her pulse had slowed to a more normal rate. She even had a little color back, but she still hadn't spoken. Raven persuaded Matheson to take Lily back to their rooms. He wanted Lily to rest, as he was worried about her, too. She'd been shaking, and he knew that something was bothering her badly. He decided to leave it and wait until she calmed down.

Before they'd left, Matheson had explained why he thought Demon had reacted so severely to what had happened. Raven thought that what he said made sense, but wasn't looking forward to telling Gideon. Leaving Demon to sleep, Raven went back to the living room and sat. Now where the hell was Gideon?

Gideon slammed into the door of Angel's room, finding it locked. He stood back across the corridor and kicked hard at the lock, bursting the door open, slamming it back on its hinges. He saw Angel fly

through the door on the far side into her bedroom, and slam it shut in his face. The bedroom door didn't slow him down any longer than the outer door had; in seconds he was inside the bedroom. Angel was braced against the far wall and came flying at him, her hands out like claws, ready to attack. He didn't stop to think, he just did what he would have done to anyone attacking him like that. He punched her hard on the jaw and watched as she dropped like a stone in front of him.

He stood over her, breathing hard, hands on his hips, gradually regaining some control over his emotions and actions. He could see the deep red mark on her face that his fist had made and as he calmed, he began to regret what he'd done. He kneeled next to her and checked her pulse and breathing, relieved when they both seemed steady. He pushed his arms under her and lifted her to the bed, placing her carefully, pushing a pillow under her head.

He started searching the drawers and shelves in her room to see if she kept a regenerator there, as Deborah did in her room. [My God, this place is a mess, how can she live in this chaos?] He spotted the carry-bag she'd had with her earlier in the day, on the love seat in the corner. He emptied the contents onto the bed and sighed with relief when he found a small gray cylinder identical to the one Deborah had used on him. He examined it carefully, then switched it on and started running it along Angel's jaw in the area where he'd hit her. As he did so, she started to stir and tried to turn her head away from him.

"Hold still." He took her chin between his fingers and thumb and held her head steady while he worked. He watched as she gradually focused on him and what he was doing, and saw the fear enter her eyes when she remembered what had happened. He felt all his muscles lock as she used her telekinesis to freeze him in place. He struggled to speak.

"You don't have to do that. I'm not going to hurt you any more. I just want to talk to you." He was surprised when she relaxed her hold enough to allow him to keep treating her jaw. He hadn't really expected her to trust him.

When he'd finished, he pushed himself back to the foot of the bed, leaning against the footboard. She pulled herself into a sitting position, clutching a pillow in front of her, her back pressed hard against the headboard, as far away from him as she could get.

"We really need to talk, Angel. We can't keep doing this to each other and we can't keep hurting Deborah. Tell me Angel, what is it that you want? Do you know?" Gideon sat back with his arms crossed, trying to show her that he had no intention of moving or touching her.

She licked her dry lips and spoke softly. "I want you, Matthew. I just want you."

He shook his head and groaned. "No you don't. You don't know anything about me. How can you want someone you don't know?" He was saddened to see the tears forming in her eyes.

"But I love you, and I want you to love me. Why won't you love me, Matthew? Why won't anyone love me? Everyone else has someone, why am I the only one nobody loves?" For the first time, Gideon could see her pain and vulnerability. He felt desperately sorry for her, but what could he do?

"You don't love me, Angel. You can't love someone you don't know. You're obsessed, and not with me, but with Lucas Buck. But I'm not Lucas. He's gone, and I'm here, and I'm not going anywhere. I love your sister, Angel. Nothing is going to change that." He watched as the tears started trickling down her cheeks, desperately wanting to reach over and brush them away, wanting to hold her, to... [Get a grip.]

He went on. "You've got to get past this, Angel. You've got to get over Lucas. How could you love someone like that? How much did you know about him? Where did he come from? Why was he in that damned Box anyway? What did you *really* know about him, Angel?"

He stood and paced as he talked. "And why the hell did you say that about him being the father of Deborah's baby?" He found that his anger was building again as he thought about what she'd said. He stared at her, sitting silently against the head of the bed. "Did you want to hurt me? Congratulations. You succeeded, and maybe I deserved it, but you hurt your sister too, and I'm damned sure she didn't deserve it; she's always defended you."

He stopped pacing and turned to her, having reached a conclusion. "I can't let you do that again, Angel. I'm only here for a few days; I want you to stay away from us both for the rest of that time. I don't want you anywhere near Deborah. I can't risk you hurting her again."

He could see that her face had flushed as he spoke and realised that her temper was fraying. She hissed at him. "You're giving out orders again, Captain. But you're not on your ship now. This is my home, don't try to tell me what I can and can't do in it."

He stood with his hands on his hips, legs apart, staring her down. "Well, if you won't stay clear of us, then I'll take Deborah away from here. I'll call Galen and get him to take us--."

He trailed off as she spun off the far side of the bed, her face screwed up in revulsion. "Galen? He's the worst of you all." He watched as she scrubbed her hand across her mouth as if trying to remove a bad taste. "You're all the same, but he's the worst. You all just want sex. But he pretended to be my friend, he pretended he understood me, and then he tried -- oh gods, I hate you all. Just get out and leave me alone, will you? Just leave me alone!" She flung herself back onto the bed and started sobbing into a pillow.

Gideon stood watching for a moment, trying to think of something he could do or say to help to make things better. But there was nothing he could think of that wouldn't make things worse. He turned and left, hearing her sobs echoing down the corridor as he walked away.

He walked back to Deborah's rooms, trying to think of a way in which he could help Angel, but couldn't. He thought back on what Angel had said about Galen and couldn't help but laugh at the irony of it. Galen had warned him to stay away from Angel and he'd been absolutely right. But then Galen had made a pass at her and had only made the situation worse. No wonder he'd gone off so suddenly. He realised that he'd lost track of time since he left the others, but knew that he'd been gone much longer than he'd intended. He just hoped that Deborah would understand his absence.

He pushed the door to her rooms open and saw Raven sitting on the sofa. Raven leaped to his feet and glared at Gideon as he entered. "Where the hell have you been?" Gideon could tell that he was furious but wasn't sure why.

He looked around the room and tried to see through the windows onto the terrace. "Where's Deborah?"

Raven stood, hands on his hips. "She's in bed. We've been worried sick about her. She collapsed after you left and I've had to sedate her." He grabbed Gideon's arm as he bolted towards the bedroom. "Wait. She's sleeping now, don't disturb her. Where were you, Matthew? She needed you here."

"I went after Angel -- what happened? What made her collapse? What Angel said was despicable, but Deborah's not that easily shaken." He looked at Raven questioningly.

"John told me he thinks it was the emotional backlash. Angel's anger, which made her say what she did, then, I'm sorry, Matthew but your reaction to it, the anger you felt, created a sort of emotional tidal wave. John felt it, but he's trained to block that sort of thing. Even so, the intensity of it left him shaken. Demon's empathic powers may have diminished during pregnancy, but she doesn't have John's training and she caught the full force of it."

Gideon took a deep breath and turned to face Raven. "So what happened to her is partly my fault? Is that what you're telling me?" Raven could only nod. "Is she going to be all right?"

Raven nodded again. "I think so. She should be fine when she wakes up, but she may be a little vague about what happened. The sedative I gave her can have that effect."

Gideon nodded and looked back towards the bedroom door. "Thanks for staying with her. I'll take over now."

Raven held onto his arm a moment longer. "Captain, what about Angel? What did you do to her? Do I need to pay her a visit?"

Gideon closed his eyes and sighed. "She's not hurt. Well, not physically, anyway. I don't think there's much you can do for her. I'm not sure that there's anything any of us can do for her. Goodnight Doc, and thanks again."

Raven released his hold and watched as Gideon walked through to Deborah's bedroom. He left to join Matheson and Lily and to make sure that she was all right.

Angel lay crying as she heard the outer door to her rooms close behind Gideon. She felt like hitting out at something or someone, hurting them as much as she hurt. Gideon had just proven to her that he couldn't love her, or wouldn't love her. For a brief moment she'd believed he could, but now she knew that he would never return any of what she felt for him.

She pulled herself off the bed and walked slowly over to her dressing table and sat down, looking at the haunted reflection of herself in the mirror. She raised a hand to where Gideon had used the regenerator on her chin, healing the bruise he'd put there. She knew that he hadn't done it because he cared about her. He just hadn't wanted anyone else to see the evidence of what he'd done to her.

"Why can't he love me?" She whispered to her reflection. "What is so wrong with me that all men can do is fuck me but not love me?" She buried her face in her hands with anguish.

[[There's nothing wrong with you darlin'. Space Cadet doesn't know a good thing when it's standing right in front of him. He doesn't deserve you.]]

Angel moved her hands from her face, her eyes wide with surprise at hearing Lucas's deep voice. Although she'd dreamed about him, after the first time he'd spoken to her, she'd convinced herself that she'd just imagined it, that her own mind had played a cruel trick on her, but now she knew that it had happened. Hearing him now made her heartbeat faster and her head spin.

[[Lucas, I thought I'd--]] began Angel unsteadily.

[[Imagined my voice? No, Angel-face, you didn't. I'm the only one who loves you. I'd never leave you like this.]] His voice was low and gentle in her ears, trying to sooth her.

But after what had just happened with Gideon, she was in a dark mood, unable to believe that anyone was there for her, or that any man could want her for anything except sex, including Lucas. After all, hadn't that been just about all they'd done when he was first with her? He'd said he was the only one who really loved her, but she found that hard to believe now. Her temper flared.

[[No! You don't love me! You're just like the others!]] She screamed at him as she started to cry. The tears were a mixture of pain and anger born from all the things that had happened recently.

From inside the darkness that surrounded him, Lucas remained silent for a moment. He had to handle this carefully. If he didn't get Angel to believe what he was telling her, if he drove her away from him, then he'd be stuck in oblivion. And he wanted out. He'd say whatever he had to, in order to make that happen. Talking to her like this, and the dreams, had all been part of the bait to get her hooked. She was going to help bring him back. [Time to show her that she can't beat my charm.]

When he spoke, his voice was seductive *[[Angel honey, I do love you. Don't you know that we're meant to be together? Like Gideon getting the Apocalypse Box. Our meeting was destined to happen.]]*

Angel listened, chewing her lip. He sounded so sincere. Her temper died down. She wanted desperately to believe him, to know that someone loved her and wanted to be with her. But still what good did it do her? Lucas was inside the Box and she didn't know how or if she could bring him out again. She also secretly feared that despite what he was telling her, if she ever did manage to free him, he'd take revenge on her for her part in putting him back there. She may have only known him for a few days, but she knew that betraying him like that would be punished. When she spoke, her voice was filled with sadness.

[[What does it matter? You're gone. I want someone real here, to hold me, to love me.]] She shifted in her seat and wiped away the tears on her cheeks.

[Perfect.] He could sense her coming around, and what she'd just said left the door wide open for him to draw her in.

[[Well, darlin' you don't need Gideon for that, you don't have to settle for second best.]] Lucas smiled, well as much as one could without a body and floating in nothingness, and waited for her to take up on what he'd just told her.

She heard his words and frowned. *[[What do you mean, Lucas?]]*

[That's it. 'Step into my parlor', said the spider to the fly.] Now that he had her attention, it was time to let her know.

[[There is a way for us to be together. You can bring me back,]] he said softly. He sensed her surprise and waited for her to respond.

Angel's eyes widened. [Bring him back?] Was it really possible? Her pulse quickened with excitement, then just as quickly slowed as she thought about how that would be possible. She may want Lucas

back, but if that meant having to replace Gideon's spirit with his, she couldn't do it. She wouldn't hurt her sister like that again. She may have been hurt by Gideon's rejection, but she couldn't take him away from Demon. Then there was the fear that he would make her pay for the part she'd played in exorcising him.

Angel pushed back her chair, stood up and started to pace as she voiced her fears and concerns in a rush, *[[I can't do that spell again Lucas. I won't! I can't do that to my sister; Gideon may not love me, but I can't replace his spirit with yours and take him away from her--]]* she paused for a breath before launching into her next thought. *[[You say you love me, but how do I know that you aren't just saying that, to get me to do what you want, and if I do bring you back, that you won't kill me for helping the others to get rid of you?]]* She stopped pacing, raising her hand to her mouth where she nervously chewed a nail while she waited for his response.

There was a long silence, and for a moment Angel believed that Lucas had retreated and wasn't going to respond to her concerns. She was surprised when she heard him give a small chuckle.

[[Angel, I do love you. I have no intention of killing you. What you did made me angry, but I forgive you. I know the others made you do it and that even I played a part. I scared you, and wanted you to do something you couldn't. I understand, and when we're together, I'll prove that. Darlin', we're gonna be so good together.]] He said this to her while thinking to himself darkly. He hadn't forgiven her for her part in his banishment, and he had every intention of punishing her for that, but right now he had to convince her that he wasn't angry. He had to lure her with kind words and love.

She stood there chewing her nail; he'd said he forgave her, that he wouldn't hurt her, that he loved her. Dared she hope and believe that was the truth? She was so desperate and so lonely that she ignored her own instincts. She knew that he was probably just using her, was lying to her, but she let herself start to believe him. *[[You mean that, Lucas?]]*

[[You know I do, darlin'.]] She may have sounded hesitant, but he could tell she was almost there.

Angel turned and started to pace again, no longer biting her nail. She smiled; she was starting to believe him. But there was still one matter to be settled. *[[You said I could bring you back, but how?]]*

Lucas could feel that he had her almost where he wanted her. She still wasn't completely convinced. He had to give her something to think about. *[[We won't need Space Cadet. Being in his body made it too easy to get rid of me. There's a better way -- a more permanent way to bring me back.]]*

Angel frowned, raising a hand to her temple to rub the dull ache that had started there. *[[I don't understand, how can I bring you back without a host?]]* She couldn't hide her disbelief.

When he spoke to her, his voice sounded farther away, as if he was speaking to her from a distance. It took a lot of energy to talk to her and he knew that it would affect her mind if he maintained the link for too long. Time to get it out and then leave her to think about it.

[[There's a spell -- you can bring me back from my time, just at the moment I was put in the Box. It will bring me back in body as well as spirit, and then we can be together.]]

Angel's head was starting to hurt even more now and she sat down on her bed, holding both her hands against her temples, which were pounding painfully. She'd heard everything Lucas told her, yet she still wasn't sure and she wanted to ask more, to ask him to tell her what the spell was.

But when he spoke again, his voice was fainter. *[[We'll be perfect together. I'm the only one who loves you, who wants you. Think about it Angel-face, think about what it'll be like to have me back. Forget Gideon, he's a poor replacement. I love you, Angel-face, and if you perform the spell, we'll be reunited.]]* The last sentence faded away until she could barely hear his voice and then there was complete silence. He was gone.

The headache that had appeared so suddenly started to recede and after a moment was completely gone. She realized it must have had to do with her link with Lucas. She was relieved that the headache was gone, leaving her with a clear mind to think about what he'd just told her. Dropping her hands from her temple, she rubbed her chin between her thumb and finger. She started to smile. *[If it's true-- Oh gods, then I wouldn't be alone. I'd have Lucas back].*

Angel fell backwards onto her bed. She had her doubts, but the thought of having Lucas back was driving her closer to accepting it. She lay there thinking through her conversation with Lucas, and she realized that he never did tell her what the spell was, but she knew that he'd be back to tell her more. For the first time in days, even months, she felt happy, and she didn't even think about all the bad things that had happened with Gideon. All she could think about now was Lucas.

When Luke returned to Lily's room, he found her pacing restlessly.

"I'm sorry. She refused to go to bed or even sit down." John said, an unhappy look on his face, from where he sat at the edge of the lounging pit.

Lily immediately ran up to Luke and asked, "Is Demon all right?"

He could see that she was still agitated, so the only chance that she'd find some rest would be if they could calm her. "She's sleeping, and Gideon is with her now," he said in a soothing voice. "I'll check on her tomorrow morning."

Lily calmed down a bit, but he could see that something still worried her. She noticed his investigative look, turned away and started pacing again.

"LILY!"

She whirled around, looking at him wide-eyed. Luke smiled at her sympathetically and said softly, "I think it's time you told us what's worrying you so much." He held out his hand, and after a moment's hesitation she took it, and let him lead her to the lounging pit to sit beside John. Luke sat down on her other side. Each man held one of her hands, and she smiled gratefully.

"What..." her voice failed. She cleared her throat and started again. "What Angel said..."

John frowned. "About Lucas being the father of Demon's child?" Lily nodded.

Luke said, "Even if she were impregnated while Lucas was in Gideon's body - it still was Gideon's body, so physically, there was no difference."

Lily looked at him. "That's just it. Physically."

Luke looked at her blankly, trying to follow her train of thought. John said, "You think--" Trailing off

as the horror of his thought became clear to him.

Lily's eyes bore into Luke's. "Can't you see? Lucas is evil, and his children may be evil, too! And even if not, what if he finds a way out of the Box and into Demon's son, or..." She blushed and lowered her eyes.

Raven studied her face, then drew in his breath as he realized what she was talking about. Matheson's horror-stricken face only registered marginally in his numbed brain.

Lily looked at Matheson, then Raven, tears in her eyes, saying, "I have nightmares about him... There are days when I feel the urge to go down to that room and destroy that Box, so he suffers a *lot* before he stops existing! But I don't know how to do it, and I know that he's just waiting for someone to go down there, someone he can take over, so I don't go."

"Did you... did you have a sight?" Luke asked, his voice trembling. He realized that he was squeezing Lily's hand hard, and loosened his grip, but she didn't seem to have noticed.

Lily shook her head. "My instincts tell me that you are the fathers, but..."

Suddenly, Luke smacked his forehead with his palm. "Dear God, I'm such an idiot!" He held Lily's shoulders and looked at her, his eyes promising hope. "You need to know who the father of your children is, right?" Lily nodded, unsure.

"Why didn't you tell me earlier? There's equipment in the infirmary that will tell us who the father is! I didn't suggest it earlier because I thought you wanted it to be a surprise, but since that's what's bothering you, it would be better to know now instead of worrying for another twenty weeks."

Lily's eyes widened. "Of course," she whispered, feeling Matheson squeeze her hand, squeezing back. She laughed. "We barely use it for the villagers, and somehow I thought that because it won't help Demon, it wouldn't help me, either. "

Raven smiled. "At least I can help one of you. It's too late now, though -- you need some rest. We'll go to the infirmary first thing in the morning, before breakfast. OK?"

Lily nodded, smiling, and Matheson lifted her up and carried her to her bed, followed by Luke. He laid her down on the bed, and when he and Raven had tucked her in, John sat down at the edge, resting a hand on her swollen belly and looking firmly into Lily's eyes. "I would like you to know one thing -- and I know Luke feels the same way as I do about this." He looked up at Luke standing beside him, who squeezed his shoulder and smiled down at him. Matheson turned to Lily again and continued, "No matter who their genetic father is, these are *our* children, and I know that we, your sisters, and our friends will do everything we can to protect them from Lucas. Never forget that."

Lily looked at them, trying to find words to express her gratitude. "What would I do without you?" she finally whispered.

Luke looked at her with a dead-pan expression. "Sleep through the night?"

Lily started giggling, and soon they were lying on her bed together, all shaking with laughter.

Lucas floated back in the darkness. He hated this feeling, like being underwater, unable to hear his own breathing or heartbeat, or feel anything. He just drifted; the only thing that still remained was his consciousness. [To hell with that.] He wanted out. He was Lucas Buck, and he was intended for greater things than spending the rest of eternity in oblivion.

He sensed that Angel was falling asleep. It was what he had been waiting for since his little chat with her, however long ago that was. In here, he had no sense of time. She may not be totally convinced yet, but she was close. He had the hook and line; all that was needed now was the sinker, and he knew just the thing to do the trick -- another dream, one that would show her a little about himself, something nice and romantic that would finally convince her that he loved her. Once convinced, it wouldn't be too hard to get her to do what he wanted.

Lucas focused his mind on Angel and went to work.

At first, there was just darkness surrounding her, then slowly, something started to appear in front of her. Angel stood squinting, trying to see what it was. Suddenly, a bright light flashed, blinding her. She closed her eyes instinctively and turned her head away from the glare, then hearing sounds of people around her and other noises, she opened her eyes.

What she saw left her stunned. She was standing on a sidewalk with shops behind and in front of her. Directly before her were parked cars. Angel's eyes widened. She was transfixed for a moment, and then tearing her eyes away from the cars, she turned to see people walking past her and she stared in amazement. Everyone was wearing 20th century clothing, just like they had in her earlier dreams. Her eyes dropped, and she realised that she, too, was wearing the same style clothing, a dark blue T-shirt with a floral print navy skirt and navy sandals.

She raised her hands to her cheeks and let her eyes dart over the scene around her. [I must be dreaming -- no, in my other dreams, I didn't think there was anything odd about being in the 20th century, but this must be a dream. It has to be.] Her mind raced, something very strange was going on. She gasped as realization hit her. [Lucas! This has to be Lucas!]

Angel gave a startled cry and turned around abruptly when she felt a heavy hand touch her shoulder. She looked up with shock at the man in a khaki and brown uniform standing in front of her.

"Are you all right, ma'am?" he asked gently. Anything she was about to say was cut off as Lucas appeared on her right. Angel felt his arm go around her waist as he looked down at her, smiling. He was wearing the same black jeans, but this time his shirt was black.

"Course she is, aren't you Angel-face?" His sudden appearance, on top of everything else, rendered her speechless. She was overjoyed that he was there and wanted to throw her arms around him, but all she could do was look up at him and nod while thinking silently, [What the hell is going on?] She looked from Lucas to the uniformed man, who was watching them with a perplexed expression on his face and then back to Lucas, who was giving the other man an impassive stare.

"Don't you have some parking meters to check, Ben?" asked Lucas sarcastically. Angel arched an eyebrow in surprise of the way he had just spoken to the man. She watched in silence as he squirmed under Lucas's scrutiny.

His voice was decidedly nervous as he answered. "Ah, yeah..." He paused, nodding his head to her and

then to Lucas "Ma'am, Lucas." He walked away, looking more like a man escaping than going to work. Her attention was brought back to Lucas, as she felt his hands on her shoulders turning her to face him, and she finally found her ability to talk as she launched into some of the thousand questions that were running around her head.

"Where am I, Lucas? Who was that? What's going on here? Am I dreaming again?" His lips came down to still her questions with a quick soft kiss. When he straightened, he was smiling while she continued to look at him in confusion.

"Yes, you're dreaming. Where you are is Trinity, South Carolina. And that, he stopped long enough to nod his head in the direction that the uniformed man had gone, "was my Deputy, Ben Healy." He raised a finger to her lips, while his other hand took hold of hers. "Let's take a walk."

He led her along the sidewalk. An elderly man greeted him as they walked past. "Afternoon, Sheriff. Thanks for helping my daughter out with that apartment." With his free hand, Lucas gave him a wave.

"No problem, Art. Can't have a nice girl like Susie out on the street, can we?" Angel twisted her head around as the elderly man nodded and then continued with what he was doing, sweeping the walk in front of his store.

Enough was enough. She wanted answers. Angel stopped dead, pulling her hand away from his. Lucas turned to look at her with a frown. "Please, Lucas, tell me what's going on here?" He arched an eyebrow at her tone of impatience. Angel responded by stamping her foot in frustration. "Now, Lucas, or I don't go a step further!"

He raised a hand to her face and stroked her cheekbone softly, smiling at her kindly. "I know it's confusing darlin', but just go along with me for a bit will you? I want you to know something about me, about who I am, where I come from, and I want you to see for yourself. I can tell you things and you'll never know whether they're true or not, but if you see for yourself, you can make up your own mind. Just watch and listen and later we'll talk in private. Will you do that for me, Angel? Please?" He leaned forward and kissed her softly, all the while holding her head and running his thumb along her cheek. Her knees began to tremble at the pleasure even this small gesture gave her.

She said the only thing she could think of. "Yes, Lucas." He smiled down at her fondly.

"Now you keep sayin' those words, darlin', and we're gonna have a wonderful time together." He kissed her softly again, then put his arm around her waist and steered her gently along the street. She could feel the heat of his hand against her side, burning through her clothes and she suddenly wished she were alone with him and could remove everything she wore to stand naked in front of him. She felt a slow burning start between her legs at the thought of doing that and her nipples hardened.

Lucas glanced down and saw her nipples standing out against her t-shirt. He smiled. [This is gonna be easier than I thought.]

They walked together down the main street, keeping under the shade of the trees and out of the glare of the hot sun. Every person they met greeted Lucas cheerfully. Several thanked him for his help with problems they'd had. Some he'd helped with money, some with a good word in the right place, but it was obvious that he was respected and admired by the people of this little town. Angel watched carefully, seeing not just the people, but also the town itself. It was small and clean, with no litter on the sidewalks, families walking together, children playing in a small playground. She noticed a plaque

hanging on the fence of the park; she steered towards it and Lucas let her go. She stooped and read the dedication.

"Dedicated to the memory of Merlyn Temple. This land was kindly donated by Sheriff Lucas Buck."

She turned back to face Lucas who was smiling at her. "Who was she, Lucas?" He shook his head and the smile faded, replaced by a look of sadness.

"A sweet child, sadly handicapped, who never got chance to play in the sunshine. She died tragically when she was still only a young girl. It seemed like a fitting tribute." He sighed and she could see that the memory troubled him. His head was lowered and he seemed lost in thought.

"Was she a relative of yours?" Angel asked gently. Lucas straightened and smiled sorrowfully at her.

"No Angel, just one of my people, one of those I tried to take care of. In her case -- well maybe I didn't try hard enough." He tugged at her waist and led her away, leading her down to the riverside where she could see people picnicking and children playing in the sun. She leaned her head against his shoulder, breathing in the calm and tranquility of this happy place.

"So what do you think of my town, Angel? Like it?" Lucas turned and placed both hands on her waist, holding her at arms length while he smiled into her eyes. She put her hands on his shoulders and pulled, bringing herself close to his body, enjoying the feel of his arms, now encircling her.

Laying her head against his chest she answered. "Oh it's lovely, Lucas. How could you bear to leave it?" His hand lifted her chin so he could kiss her softly.

"Well, that's a long story Angel, and I don't want to get into it here. Let me show you where I live and I'll tell you the whole thing." He led her to a large dark blue car and opened the door for her to get in.

Only when Lucas pulled the Crown Vic to a halt on the side of the street did Angel turn her attention to him. Until now they had ridden in silence, with Angel too busy watching the houses they passed to say a word. He didn't say anything as he opened his door and climbed out. Angel watched as he came around to her side and opened her door. She took the hand he offered her and got out of the car. He never let go of her hand and the smile he gave made her stomach flip.

"You keep looking at me like that, Angel, and I won't be able to wait to get you inside," She felt herself blush and the warmth between her legs increased at the seductive tone in his voice. Then he leaned forward to whisper in her ear just what it was he wanted to do to her in the privacy of his bedroom.

When he straightened, he was smiling again. Wordlessly, he led her towards a tall iron gate, which he pushed open, leading her into a large garden. He let go of her hand and let her walk forward along the path alone.

Angel took in the garden; it was the most beautiful place she'd ever seen. There were large trees everywhere and several statues lay scattered in front of her. She saw dozens of rose bushes, all with incredibly red flowers. Their petals looked like blood standing out against the rich green leaves.

She moved forward, forgetting Lucas, who she had left standing by the gate. She looked up at the house; large, red brick with white gabling. It was incredible. She turned towards him, asking

breathlessly. "This is your home, Lucas?" There was no sign of him behind her. She turned back to look at the house, gasping in surprise as she found him standing in front of her. [How does he do that?]

"Yes, this is my home, now come on, darlin', let's go inside." He took her hand and led her up the stone path. In a matter of moments, she was standing inside. If the house was incredible from the outside, the inside could only be described as stunning. A broad staircase led up to a landing, where a spectacular oval stained-glass window glowed with the sun shining through it. Her attention was dragged from the window by his arm coming around her waist from behind. She felt the heat from his body on her back as he pulled her in close to him.

"So what do you think of my home, Angel?" He asked as he brought his face close beside hers, while his free hand brushed the hair off her neck.

She leaned her head back against his shoulder and sighed, "Oh Lucas, it's beautiful. This whole town is."

"Not as beautiful as my Angel-face," he whispered seductively as he lowered his lips to kiss her neck. Angel trembled as he worked his way along her neck, her knees turning to jelly. When his lips left her warm skin, she turned around to face him, raising her hands to draw his face down to hers. Her mouth claimed his, her tongue tracing the outside of his lips before pushing its way in to seek his out. She was aware of his free hand coming around to gently hold the back of her neck. Not once did she feel that he might pull on her hair roughly. Every fiber of her being told her that he was going to love her in the way she'd always dreamt.

After several minutes, he pulled back, breaking the kiss, his hand coming round to caress her cheek. She had to place her hands on his chest for support; just kissing him left her knees weak and shaky. She lifted her eyes to his and smiled.

Lucas looked down at her, [Oh yes, almost there,] and returned her smile. He wanted to just push her roughly against the wall and take her hard, but knew that he had to play this out. He had to romance her. [First you seduce her, then you make her your own.]

"Do you like wine, darlin'?" Angel was a little surprised by the question, but nodded, as she felt thirsty from the hot afternoon sun. She let him lead her into a room she assumed was a study of some kind. He steered her to the large sofa where, placing his hands on her shoulders, he pushed her gently down. He gave her a brief kiss before straightening up.

"You sit back and relax, darlin'. I'll be right back." Angel watched him as he sauntered out of the room. Just watching him walk had an effect on her hormones. When he was gone, she turned her attention to the details of the room. She raised an eyebrow at the stuffed crow, then let her eyes roam around the rest of the room. Everything about it said, 'Lucas Buck lives here.' She felt a thrill run through her as it finally hit her that she was here sitting in his house. She knew it was only a dream, but it was a dream showing reality. His world, his life, his home. He was sharing himself with her. She leaned her head back against the sofa and closed her eyes. She was deliriously happy and giggled.

"What has you so happy, Angel-face?" Angel opened her eyes at the soft drawl, finding him standing in front of her. She hadn't heard him return. [One of these days, I'll have to ask him how he does that,] she thought before she responded lightly.

"You, Lucas."

"Now that's what I like to hear," said Lucas, as he turned to where a bottle of wine and two glasses were sitting on the coffee table. She watched as he poured. He handed her a glass filled with warm red liquid. She took the glass, her fingers lightly brushing against his. Just that touch sent the heat rushing to her center. She took a sip of the wine, hoping it would steady her nerves. She felt as if she were coming apart at the seams with the effect he was having on her.

Lucas watched her closely as she took a long sip of the wine and then with visibly shaky hands set the glass down on the table beside her. He put his glass down, untouched, and turned to gaze down at her. He could see her hardened nipples pushing out against her T-shirt. He knew she was already wet with arousal.

Angel looked at him watching her. Her heart was starting to beat faster now, and she was sure that he could hear it. Her mouth went dry as she watched him undo the top button on his shirt and then the cuffs, turning them back as he approached her. Something about the way he did it was more exciting than if he'd removed the shirt entirely. Before she knew it, he was sitting beside her on the sofa, his hand resting on her leg.

"Close your eyes." Angel looked at him for a moment, about to question him, but he repeated the words, his voice low and sexy. "Close your eyes, Angel." She did as he told her. She felt something soft brushing against her lips and a sweet fragrance filled her nostrils. She took a deep breath and then slowly opened her eyes when she could no longer smell the scent. Lucas was holding one of the roses she'd seen earlier. She reached out a hand to take it, for a brief second he let it go, but before she could draw it back, his hand came around hers and he pulled her to him. She was taken aback by the sudden movement, but didn't fight him as his mouth claimed hers in a deep passionate kiss. The arm he rested on the back of the sofa entwined in her hair, pulling her deeper into the kiss. She moaned as he leaned into her, pushing her back against the sofa. When he finally let go of her, she was slightly breathless.

They sat in silence, watching each other. It was in this silence that Angel remembered Lucas had said earlier that he would tell her more. She'd been sidetracked for a while, but suddenly remembered. She looked at the rose she was still holding, then placed it on the sofa between them, deciding that he was waiting for her to say something.

She cleared her throat "Lucas, you said that you'd tell me more --" She hesitated, suddenly unsure of whether she really wanted to know more, afraid that it would spoil the mood between them. When Lucas moved away from her and stood, she believed her fear was well-founded, and cursed herself for pushing. [If he wanted to tell me more, he would. Then again, do I really need to know more?] She jumped up, her mind made up. She'd seen enough to tell her that Lucas wasn't the monster that her sisters, Gideon, and Galen believed he was.

"Lucas, no wait. I don't need to know anymore." Angel told him as she came up behind him, her hand on his shoulder.

He kept his back turned to her, unable to hide a smile of satisfaction. This is what he'd hoped for, that Angel would buy what he'd shown her, and form an early opinion of him. Save him having to make up some more fairy tales for the little witch. When he felt her moving to come round and face him, he put on a serious face.

"Are you sure about that?" Angel heard the heavy tone in his voice. Obviously, he couldn't believe that she had seen what a truly good man he was.

She wrapped her arms around him, hugging him tightly as she said with all the conviction she felt, "Yes, Lucas." She felt his arms come round to embrace her -- or so she thought. Instead, she felt herself being pushed away, where he held her at arms length, a serious expression on his face.

"You don't even want to know how I got put into the Apocalypse Box?" he asked quietly.

Angel was quiet for a moment. She'd forgotten all about that, and now that he'd raised the issue, she had to admit that she was curious. Galen had told her that the Box was used for the dark spirits of evil people, and in reality, he'd been rough to the point of cruelty with her. He'd shot Matheson, [Still wasn't that in self-defense?] and wanted Galen dead. [Maybe I should have done what he asked. He was right about Galen all along,] thought Angel darkly. But that was for survival, and everything she'd seen today showed a man of a different nature, certainly not one who appeared to deserve being put into oblivion.

She turned her gaze and pulled away from him to think clearly, which she couldn't do with him holding her. "I don't understand, Lucas, Galen said -- but you're not evil. How could you -- why would someone do that to you?"

Lucas sighed, "Helping people can sometimes make enemies, and as Sheriff, I had to put away some bad people who never forgave me and wanted revenge. One of them was into magic. He escaped from prison and found me. He'd gotten hold of one of those Boxes and he performed the spell, killing me and trapping my spirit in oblivion, where I've been ever since."

Angel heard the pained tone in his voice, and she rushed forward to hug him to her again. She didn't want to hear anymore. She just wanted to love him, and to make up for the cruel injustice done to him so long ago. She raised herself on tiptoes and kissed him briefly, her hand twining in his hair that curled so sexily at the back. "No more, Lucas, I don't need to hear any more." She placed a series of kisses along his jaw as if that would take away the pain.

Lucas brought his hands up to take hold of her face, pulling her head back so that he could look into her eyes. "Does that mean you've decided about me?" Angel raised her hands to where his rested on her face. She could hear the uncertainty in his voice.

"Yes, Lucas," she replied with conviction.

He arched an eyebrow, "And what have you decided, Angel?" He wanted to hear her say it.

Angel leaned into him, her voice husky. "That you're a good man, who was hurt for doing something good, and that you don't deserve what happened to you -- and that I don't want to talk any more. I want you to make love to me." Her last words were whispered as she leaned against him, her lips millimeters from his.

His hand moved from her face to her waist, then his lips came down to her parted ones, claiming them in a passionate kiss. She was no longer able to think about anything else as their mouths meshed together. Her mouth left his when she felt herself being lifted into his arms. He held her eyes as he left the study and carried her upstairs.

Lucas carried her into his bedroom and gently set her down, standing beside the bed. She turned to look

at the large four-poster bed, noticing that it had already been turned down. She felt his hand under her chin, bringing her face back to his. His mouth came down to hers, his tongue brushing across her lips before sliding into her mouth, where it merged together with her tongue.

She leaned against him as his hand moved from her chin to her hair. She could feel the heat of his body through his shirt, and she wanted to feel his skin beneath her hands. As he continued to kiss her, Angel began to undo the rest of his shirt. When it was open, Lucas lifted his head as her hands caressed his chest. Angel looked at him hungrily, her hands still for a moment, before she pushed the shirt off his shoulders, tugging it down off of his arms. Her mouth came down to suck his nipple, then she heard his intake of breath and raised her head.

"You keep doing that, darlin', and I won't be able to take this nice and slow." Angel smiled and let her fingers graze across his nipples. Her tone was mischievous as she feigned a petulant look.

"But they're so tempting, Lucas," she squealed as he growled at her, his arms coming around to pull her roughly against him, trapping her hands against his chest. She tilted her head back, parting her lips invitingly.

"I'll show you tempting," growled Lucas with a chuckle, as his mouth came down, not to her lips, but to her neck, where he kissed the soft flesh where her neck and collarbone met. Angel arched her back, as he worked his way up her neck, his lips cool against her skin that was burning at his touch. She all but collapsed when he took the lobe of her ear in his teeth. She had to lean against him when he began to suck on the sensitive area, and then licked the outer edge of her ear, before he straightened up to look lovingly at her.

She felt his hands coming to her waist, where he tugged the t-shirt out of her skirt. She raised her arms as he pulled it over her head. He threw the t-shirt to the floor, his hands coming up to cup her breasts while his thumbs rubbed her erect nipples. He felt her tremble with desire.

"You like that, don't you?" he asked softly. She nodded mutely. He chuckled, letting his hands drop to her waist. He heard her intake of breath as his fingers slipped into the waistband of her skirt, his eyes holding hers as he began to push it off her hips, letting it fall. Angel stepped out of it, and at the same time, she toed off her sandals. He stepped back, his eyes raking her naked body.

Angel felt her excitement grow as he looked at her for a long moment, then she felt herself lifted up and placed on the bed. The black satin sheets felt cool on her skin. He placed a brief kiss on her lips and then straightened up. Angel followed his hands as they moved to the belt of his jeans. She licked dry lips as she noticed the bulge, his arousal evident through the black fabric. She swallowed convulsively as he undid the buckle and then the zip, but before going any further, he bent down to take off his boots. When he returned to removing his jeans, Angel couldn't tear her eyes away from him as he pulled them and his briefs off. She let her eyes fix hungrily on his hard cock. The wetness between her legs was increasing in anticipation of having him fill her with it.

Lucas watched the hunger in her eyes. He could sense her arousal, and he moved slowly to lie down beside her on the bed. He felt her shudder as he caressed her flat stomach and then made his way to her left breast, where taking her nipple between his thumb and forefinger, he began to rub gently. He lowered his mouth to the other breast.

Angel writhed beneath him as his hand and mouth expertly rubbed, licked, and teased her nipples. When he took her nipple between his teeth and bit down gently, she arched up, her hands twisting in his hair. She didn't release her hold as he shifted again, keeping most of his weight on the arm beneath

him, to lean over her. His mouth left her taut nipple to clamp down on her mouth, his tongue probing deep inside. As he moved, she was aware of his cock pressed into her leg.

Lucas drank in the taste of her mouth for a moment longer and then started to kiss down along her jaw to her neck. His tongue flicked out to lick at the soft hollow at the base of her throat for a moment before working his way to her other breast. He felt Angel shudder as he let his hand slide down to her stomach and his mouth suckled on her nipple. He heard her groan and could sense that she was getting impatient for more.

Angel lay back, eyes closed, her pulse jumping in her throat as his hand moved from her stomach to her damp curls. She spread her legs as his hand moved between her thighs, where he slid his fingers into her wet folds and deep into her. She arched her hips as he began to rub in and out of her, then almost cried out when just as he started, he stopped, withdrawing his fingers.

Her eyes opened, when she felt him move off of her. In a fluid movement, he was kneeling between her spread legs. She couldn't help but notice that his cock now appeared even larger than it had before. She watched as he bent his head down between her thighs. She felt his hands spread the folds of her labia wide, and gasped as his tongue licked along the insides of her folds, lapping at her juices. Her hands clenched into the sheets tightly when his tongue slid into her vagina then back out again. He repeated his movements over again, then again he licked her, his tongue working its way to her clit. She arched upward as his tongue and mouth sucked on the swollen nub.

Lucas could feel she'd reached the point where he wanted her and after a few more seconds of flicking his tongue over her clit, he lifted his head and pulled himself forward, her legs spreading wider as he moved his body between her thighs. As he moved, he kissed her stomach, circling her belly button with his tongue for a moment before working his way up her ribcage, his hands coming up to caress her breasts again. He felt his cock brush against the inside of her thigh as he moved higher so that he could kiss her swollen mouth. Her arms came around his shoulders drawing him down to her, deepening the kiss.

Angel felt the head of his cock against the entrance of her vagina and she raised her hips up just as he moved forward to thrust into her gently, not going in too deep. He broke the kiss, then looked into her face. Her eyes were shining brightly and her face was flushed, her freckles standing out against her pale skin in her excitement. He was unmoving inside her and Angel looked up at him questioningly.

"Who loves you?" Angel felt her heart leap at the soft loving way he spoke.

"You do, Lucas, only you," she whispered thickly as she pulled his head down, kissing him. She gasped against his lips as he began to move inside her. Angel spread her legs even further and raised her hips to meet his thrusts as he started to move faster. She moaned as his large cock pushed deep into her, reaching the most sensitive part, her internal muscles stretching to accommodate him.

She raised herself up, holding him tightly around the shoulders as he buried his face in her neck, kissing her and sucking on the soft flesh of her ear. Angel arched her hips up hard, taking him even deeper inside her, so that he was buried to the hilt. Lucas was now moving almost completely out of her before driving back into her again. She could feel herself getting hotter as she headed closer and closer to that cliff that only he could take her over.

Their bodies and movements matched perfectly as Lucas drove them over with one final thrust. His back arched as Angel cried out and dug her nails into his shoulders, her body spasming with a powerful orgasm. He raised himself onto his arms above her as her walls tightened around his cock,

and he remained deep inside her as his hot essence burst out like a river in flood.

When he was completely emptied, Lucas moved off of her, rolling on his back beside her. For a moment, Angel didn't move as she lay catching her breath and trying to will her muscles to move. Finally, she rolled onto her side, moving against him, her leg entwining with his as her head and arm rested on his chest. They lay there in silence for a while.

She felt content as he stroked her hair, while his other hand came to hold hers on his chest. She knew that this was just a dream, but nothing like this had ever felt more real to her, and she knew that she wanted this in reality more than anything else. She no longer doubted that he loved her or that he wanted her. She placed a kiss on his chest and looked up at him.

"Lucas, I love you so much," she stammered. He was looking at her in a way that left her speechless. He raised her hand to his lips, kissing each of her fingers tenderly before holding it tightly against his chest again.

Lucas could tell what Angel was thinking, and that he had her where he wanted her, but he wasn't going to ask her if she would do what he wanted yet. He knew that she was convinced by what she'd seen and that she believed him, but mentioning that now could turn her away. No, she had to say yes on her own, to turn this dream into reality. Something told him that Gideon would be the one to give her that last push. Space Cadet would reject her one last time and then she would belong to him again and would do anything for him.

He sighed softly and smiled at Angel, who was watching closely. "I know you do, darlin'. Now just close your eyes and think about how much better this will be when we're really together again." He leaned his head forward and met her lips in a soft tender kiss. When he pulled away, Angel gave a sigh and put her head back down on his chest and closed her eyes. Happy and content lying in his arms, Angel felt herself drifting away--

Angel stirred and rolled onto her back, slowly opening her eyes. For a moment, she thought she was still with Lucas in his bedroom, but as her eyes came into focus, she recognized her own room. She gave a small groan, feeling a sudden knot of sadness in her stomach at waking from a dream that Lucas had held her in his arms. Then as she remembered the dream, she broke into a smile and rolled over onto her side, hugging her pillow tightly to her.

She let every detail of his talk with her earlier, and now the dream, play over in her mind. She also thought with a frown about what Gideon had said to her about Lucas -- that she should get over him, and his asking her how could she love someone she really didn't know. [Well I know something about him now,] thought Angel with pleasure. She did. Lucas had shown her enough for her to see what an amazing man he was. He didn't deserve what had been done to him and now this dream had proved to her that he did love her. She had no intention of giving up on loving him.

That thought brought her back to what he'd told her when he spoke to her before the dream. That there was a way to bring him back. She frowned, even though she wanted him back, she still wasn't completely sure that she could do it. Even though Lucas had assured her they wouldn't need Gideon's body, Angel was torn between loving Lucas and fearing what would happen if she did bring him back. Angel sighed heavily and looked at the clock on her bedside table. It was already early morning. She lay for a few moments wondering what to do with herself, when she heard Lily calling her through their link. She blocked everything other than Lily's words, which were asking her if she was all right and

inviting her to join her and the others for breakfast.

Angel nearly laughed at the idea. How could Lily ever imagine that she could face Raven and Matheson after last night? Angel begged Lily to leave her alone, then closed her mind completely. She pushed herself out of bed. Walking to her cupboard, she picked out a black leather top and matching pants and dressed quickly. She decided a good walk outside in the morning air would help clear her mind and help make her decision.

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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}