

The Witches of Eriadne: Toil and Trouble - Part 4: Life and Death

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Lily

Chapter 2

Angel entered her rooms with Lucas following. Their encounter with the others in the breakfast room had left her excited; it had gone better than she had imagined. Yes, they'd been shocked, and she'd seen their anger, but she wasn't able to see the profound effect of her actions. She didn't care, either; all she could think about was that she had Lucas back. She turned to face him and threw her arms around him, speaking breathlessly.

"Oh Lucas, that went so much better than I thought it would."

His arms came around her and he gave her a small smile.

"Didn't I tell you that?" he asked softly. She gave a little laugh and looked up at him, her eyes sparkling.

"Yes, you did. Did you see their faces, Lucas? Oh, I wish they could know you as I do, then they wouldn't have reacted so badly." Angel hesitated, thinking about the scene in the breakfast room again.

She shook the thoughts away as they started to make her feel guilty. She would think about it later, right now all she wanted was to have Lucas make love to her.

"Why didn't you tell me that your sisters are pregnant?"

Angel's thoughts came back to the man holding her. She looked at him in surprise. "What does it matter, Lucas?"

He was silent for a moment, then said quietly. "Never mind darlin', it's not important."

"Good. Now please, Lucas, let's not talk about the others. All I care about now is that we're together, that you're back. I want you so much." To prove her feelings, Angel pulled his head down to hers, her mouth pushing against his roughly, putting what she felt into the kiss as she forced her tongue deep into his mouth.

Angel cried out when Lucas took a painful hold on her arms. She gave him a startled look when he pushed her away from him with a force that almost sent her tumbling to the floor. He was standing now with his legs slightly parted and his arms crossed in front of him.

"What's... what's wrong, Lucas?" her voice quivered. His silence and the dangerous glint in his eyes as he looked at her was making her nervous. Angel's heart was thumping loudly in her ears and when Lucas moved towards her, she stepped back involuntarily, freezing when he spoke. His voice was level and she could see that he was angry, but his voice wasn't.

"Nothing's wrong darlin'. I just wanted to tell you how proud I am of you. You did a good job bringing me back." He was standing right in front of her as his hand reached up and brushed gently across her cheek. Angel didn't know what was going on. Lucas looked angry, but he was telling her he was proud of her. His hand moved lightening fast to grab her hair tightly at the nape of her neck and he yanked on it, with his other arm coming around to hold her immobile against him. She was too stunned to even struggle. She brought her hands up to his chest and look at him, wide-eyed. She whimpered as he twisted her neck back painfully.

"Lucas, please, you're hurting me," Angel pleaded, as he continued to look down at her like a predatory beast. She thought about using her power to throw him off, but whenever she was afraid or her emotions were too strong, she couldn't focus her abilities. She was helpless.

"This is nothing compared to the pain I felt when I was put back in that Box by *you* and the others," Lucas said in a tone as cold as steel. Angel gasped as she realized that he was going to make her pay for her betrayal.

She started to fight against his hold, but he pulled on her hair even tighter. She screamed in pain and stopped struggling. Her voice was desperate. "You said you understood, that you forgave me! Please, I'm sorry, more than you could ever know. Please, Lucas, don't hurt me! I'll make it up to you. Please don't hurt me."

Lucas sighed and a cold smile spread across his lips. "Don't worry, Angel, I'm not going to hurt you; well, only later, and even then only in a way that you'll enjoy. I'm not going to punish you for what you did. Consider it a reward for bringing me back, but I have to make sure, once and for all, that this time I can trust you, that you really are all mine, body and soul." Angel stared at him in confusion when he released his hold on her and moved away from her.

He turned around to look at her, and this time his expression was unreadable. She found her voice, and spoke with conviction "You can trust me, Lucas, I love you. I'm all yours, body and soul. I'd never do anything to hurt you again. If I'd known what you were really like, that you didn't really deserve to be in the Box, I would *never* have helped banish you." Angel moved forward so that she could place her hands on his chest, letting them move up to his shoulders as she stepped closer.

Lucas looked deeply into her eyes. "I need to be sure of that, Angel. I need proof of your love and your loyalty." He paused, letting his eyes move to where his thumb was stroking the smooth flesh of her arm, and then he slowly returned his eyes to hers. When he continued, he made sure that his voice was neutral and calm. "I want to be able to stay here with you, darlin', but for that to happen, we have to make sure that the others can't threaten me."

Angel blinked as his words sunk in, and sucked in her breath. "Lucas, I... I can't do anything that would hurt my sisters! I know they pose a threat, but I won't hurt them. I can't!" Her voice was frantic.

Lucas pulled her in closer. "Relax, Angel, I know that, and I don't want to hurt your sisters, but I have to make sure they're not a danger to me." His tone was soothing, and she relaxed. As long as he didn't hurt her sisters, she'd help make sure they didn't hurt him.

He watched her as she was thinking. He'd told her that he intended to stay here with her, which was a lie. As soon as he could manage it, Lucas was going to leave, taking Angel with him. He had a reason for leaving; he needed to gain power before returning to take over, and the fact that Demon was carrying his child was yet another reason to return. [But Angel doesn't need to know that.] Thinking of Angel made him return his attention to her. There were still a few matters to clear up.

"So, will you help me, Angel?" asked Lucas softly.

She nodded. "As long as you don't hurt them, yes, I'll help you." He smiled and bent down to place a kiss on her forehead.

"And Gideon? Will you help me get rid of Gideon?" Angel frowned; she knew what he was getting at and chewed her lip. "Why are you hesitating, darlin'? Is it 'cause you love him?" Angel looked at him, her mind racing. If she helped Lucas get rid of Gideon, then her sister would never forgive her. But if she didn't, Gideon might kill Lucas, and then she'd be alone. [No, I won't be alone again!]

Angel's tone was strong. "No, Lucas, I don't. I'll help you."

Lucas smiled at her. [Perfect.]

"That's my girl. I want to stay here and make this into a place like Trinity. Will you help me do that, Angel? Will you help me take over?" He watched as her face began to beam.

Angel nodded and said happily, "Oh yes, Lucas, I'll help you." She moved into his arms. She felt the heat of his body against her cheek as she rested her face on his shoulder.

"Tell me again, Angel-face, who do you belong to?" Angel turned her head up, to look lovingly into Lucas' eyes.

"To you, Lucas, body and soul, always."

She parted her lips invitingly, wanting to stop talking; they could talk later. All she wanted now was to have his body merge with hers. Lucas saw the wanting in her eyes. [Hook, line, and sinker.] He knew that Angel was his now. He saw her lips parting, and her tongue darting out to wet them. It was obvious what she wanted. He had to admit from the tightening in his pants that he wanted her, too. Dreams were nothing compared to what he could do to her in reality.

Lucas lowered his head and claimed her mouth. He wasn't gentle as he forced his tongue inside, his lips pressing bruisingly against hers. Angel's arms came around his neck and he pulled her roughly against him. Not breaking the kiss for a moment, he swept her into his arms and carried her through to her bedroom.

Angel lay against Lucas, her head resting on his shoulder as she listened to his gentle breathing. He'd been asleep now for about an hour. They had spent the hour before that making love. At times it had been gentle, followed by a heady mixture of both pleasure and pain.

She sighed as she thought about their bath together. They'd washed each other, and as they'd become aroused again, Lucas had turned her around in the tub, making her lean over the stone side. He placed his arms on either side of her, bracing himself. Then moving up, he'd thrust deep into her from behind, their rocking movement sending water splashing all over the marble floor of her bathroom. Afterwards, they had climbed out and dried each other off before he'd picked her up and carried her back to bed.

Angel shifted against him, feeling the heat burn between her legs again at the memories. She let her hand stroke his chest as her eyes moved down to where his penis was lying limp against his thigh. She resisted the urge to reach down and stroke him. [No, I want to play first,] she thought, mischievously. She looked up at him, [He's slept enough] and then turned her head towards the dressing table, smiling when her eyes fell upon the black candles. Careful not to wake Lucas, she moved off the bed and over to the dressing table, where she picked up a candle. Using a fire-spell, Angel lit it and returned to the bed, placing the candle on the side table before she lay back down beside him.

She leaned against him, her breast pressed into his ribcage as she took the lobe of his ear between her teeth and tugged gently. Letting her lips close around the soft flesh, Angel began sucking. When she felt Lucas' arm move around her shoulder, she pulled back to look at him. As she did so, his other hand held her chin and pulled her to him. As their lips met, her nipples hardened, brushing against his chest.

Lucas shifted, letting both hands hold Angel's face as he pushed his tongue into her mouth. After a moment, he pulled her mouth off his and fixed her with an amused look. "Haven't you had enough yet?"

She gave him a wicked smile and in a quick movement, pulled free of his hands and knelt astride his hips. "Never," Angel replied, shaking her head as she leaned forward to place a quick kiss on his lips before straightening up again. As she did so, she could feel that he was becoming aroused. Her pulse quickened.

Lucas raised an eyebrow and had to admit she looked damn sexy with that mixture of hunger and mischief in her eyes. "Well, far be it from me to say that you've had enough." [Or me for that matter,] thought Lucas as he let his eyes roam over Angel's naked body. He noticed the hard nipples and lifted his hands to touch them. Her hands flew up to grab his wrists, stopping his hands before they reached her.

He didn't pull away from her hold because he saw that she clearly had something in mind. Lucas watched in silence as Angel lowered her head to take the tip of his thumb in her mouth, the whole time keeping her eyes locked on his. She released his thumb and spoke huskily. "I want to play," she paused and took another finger in her mouth and sucked the tip before releasing it and continuing, "and these will distract me, so no touching."

Lucas turned his head slightly and watched as she placed his hands down either side of him. "Hands off," she ordered, seriously.

He decided to let Angel take control for now. He nodded and said, "You're the boss." She gave him a smile of satisfaction and then leaned over him and picked up the candle. As she straightened up, she watched the flame flicker and then slowly looked down at him.

From the way Lucas was looking at her, Angel could tell that he knew what she had in mind, and the fact that he wasn't stopping her gave her the confidence to continue. There was no need for words now as she tipped the candle over his shoulder, watching as the wax melted. Lucas hissed as it hit his skin, then watched as she lowered her head to the spot, her tongue licking over him, soothing the burned area.

As Angel worked her way down, dropping wax on his chest, she felt his cock swelling against her thigh. The pain was a strong aphrodisiac for Lucas, for them both. She smiled at him as she let another drop of wax fall on his chest. He watched where it fell, his eyes widening slightly as he noticed that as the wax hardened, it turned to a powder, [Now that is handy,] which Angel licked off him. She shifted slightly, and dropped wax onto his flat stomach. Lucas sucked in his breath as she alternated between kissing and licking him where the wax had fallen.

Holding the candle above his growing erection, Angel looked up at him with the same wicked smile on her lips. Lucas gave her a look that told her without words, that he wanted her to do it. She tilted the candle over his semi-hard shaft, her eyes watching closely as a small drop of burning hot wax fell onto the head of his cock. Lucas arched his back at the pain. She blew on him quickly, cooling the wax and soothing the flesh. As the wax turned to powder, she brought the candle to her lips and blew out the flame. Angel threw it to the floor and turned her attention to his cock.

Placing her hands on his thighs, Angel lowered her head and took Lucas into her mouth. She sucked gently, moving one hand to stroke his balls. Taking her mouth from him, she let her tongue lick and trace the small veins on the back of his shaft. She lifted her eyes as she felt one of his hands stroke her hair. His eyes were closed and he moaned as she continued to lick him, working her way back up his shaft to the tip, where she lapped up a drop of liquid. Then she took him completely into her mouth, loving the taste of him. As Lucas began to swell and harden, Angel continued to stroke and suck him. When his hand entwined and pulled on her hair, she let her mouth slide off him and looked at him.

Lucas fixed her with a dark, hungry look, his voice deep and seductive. "I have control, darlin', but not *that* much control." Angel smiled at him and at what he was telling her. Placing a brief kiss on the head of his cock, she straightened up, now very aware of how wet she was. She moved to kneel above his hips, and without hesitation, impaled herself on his cock. Angel didn't move at first, just savored the feeling of having Lucas buried inside her. When his hands moved to cup her breasts, she didn't stop him. He sat up, his arms coming around her and his mouth taking a nipple. She arched her back, her own arms going around his neck, pulling him against her.

Angel gasped as Lucas held onto her tightly and turned over without moving out of her, so that she

was now beneath him. "Time for me to take control. You've had your fun," he told her as he leaned forward to attack her mouth with a demanding kiss. Lucas felt her arms moving to encircle his back and he straightened up, grabbing her wrists. He held her gaze as he shifted his hold, so that only one of his hands held her wrists. His voice was a low drawl as he spoke. "No touching." He pulled out of her, and Angel watched as he stretched to where her scarves hung off the headboard, her eyes widening in remembrance as he tied her wrists together. She winced as he pulled the knot tightly around her, but couldn't deny the thrill she felt as he then tied her wrists to the headboard above her head.

Lucas looked down at her for a moment, then leaned down to whisper in her ear. "Brings back memories, don't it?" Angel spread her legs further and bent her knees, and as she did so he held her hips and pulled her further down towards him. Then he placed his arms on either side of her so that he could look down at her. Her position beneath him made her arms stretch painfully against the restraints, but she didn't care as he suddenly moved forward and drove into her. She arched her back, raising her hips off the bed to meet his thrust.

Angel cried out as Lucas slammed into her deeper than he'd ever been before. Her walls stretched painfully at first, then tightened around his cock in welcome. She brought her legs up to encircle his waist tightly, drawing him closer. She continued to meet every thrust as Lucas bent his arms, bringing his mouth down on hers to stifle another cry of pleasure. He ground his lips to hers, his tongue deep inside her, dancing with her tongue.

Lucas stopped kissing her and lifted his upper body away from her, so he could move deeper, faster into her. He watched as Angel closed her eyes and thrashed her head from side to side as he picked up the pace. She was biting down on her lips, moaning as he moved harder into her.

Angel cried out his name as with a final deep thrust she came, her body arching up as the most incredible orgasm hit her. Lucas locked his arms as her internal muscles tightened like a vice around his cock. When she arched up in orgasm, she took him in deeper and he let go, coming hard, filling her with a hot stream. When the torrent ended, she lifted her legs from around his waist and he rolled off her.

Lucas lay there for a moment, with his legs and arm draped over her possessively. He lifted his head and looked at Angel's body, which was slick with sweat. He saw her watching him, her eyes bright with the afterglow of sex. He moved to place his arm over her and lowered his mouth to her neck, where he nuzzled her, tasting the salt that mixed with her own unique taste. When she said his name softly, he raised his eyes to look at her.

"Yes, darlin'?"

Angel gave him a small smile and then looked from him to her arms. "Please." She didn't have to finish asking him as Lucas smiled and reached up to untie her hands from the headboard. Her skin was red, but not broken this time. She watched as he gently rubbed her wrists.

At first she winced, and Lucas looked up at her asking her softly, "Does it hurt?" He continued rubbing and Angel felt the pain drifting away at his gentle touch.

"No, not anymore, Lucas. Thank you." She answered a little breathlessly, relieved that he hadn't decided to leave her tied up. Lucas stopped rubbing. Taking her hand in his, he lay down on his back, pulling Angel to lie against him, with her head resting on his shoulder and her free arm tucked between them, while the hand he held rested on his chest.

Angel sighed, feeling happy in his arms. He'd been both gentle and rough with her. It was exactly how she had imagined it would be, a perfect mixture of pleasure and pain. Since he'd brought her to the bedroom, she hadn't thought about the others. At first she'd worried that they'd come bursting in, but Lucas had assured her that it wouldn't happen. They would all be trying to get over the shock of his return. She voiced her concerns; maybe the others were planning something and shouldn't they figure out what to do? He'd silenced her with a kiss, telling her that they were safe for the moment and that they could do whatever they wanted without worrying. Thinking could come later. He'd been right; no one had come looking for them. Angel forced herself to stop thinking about the others and closed her eyes as she snuggled into his shoulder.

Lucas lay back in Angel's bed, his arm around her as she slept with her head on his shoulder, exhausted by the night she'd spent bringing him back, and then their strenuous re-union. He hadn't felt so good in a long time. Gideon's body had been useful, but it was much better to be back in his own. He grinned when he thought about how he'd achieved that. Merlyn Temple might have been a damned nuisance, but he'd learned a lot from her, including this little "rebirth" trick.

Lucas was relieved that it hadn't been his own child's life he'd taken to come back, but his contact with Demon reassured him that his son was fine. He hadn't answered Angel's question about why she should have told him that her sisters were pregnant. If he'd known about Demon and Lily, he'd have been a damn sight more careful about whose life he stole. But it had worked out fine; his son was safe.

He smiled when he remembered Demon's reaction to his assertion of paternity. The kid might genetically be Gideon's, but given the close similarity between the two men, that made little difference. And when Lucas had made contact with the child still in the womb, it was obvious that he had all the potential for carrying Lucas's spirit forward into the future.

Lucas moved on in his mind to the session he'd just had with Angel. He'd had an incredible time with her, but he knew that it was just a matter of time before the others came after them. It had now been three hours since he and Angel had left the dining room. It was time to start thinking about getting off the planet. He needed two things to achieve that. First, access to the comm equipment in Demon's rooms, then he needed Galen. He was annoyed that the Magic Man had gone off abruptly, but was sure he would be back soon. Gideon would be certain to call him.

Lucas also had to think about where they'd go. It had better be a long way from here, for the moment at least. He needed to make damn sure that Angel never found out the price paid to release him. Lucas found her respect for life amusing, but he knew it was that which had driven her to betray him before. He wouldn't test her that harshly again; he knew her limits now. He looked down at her and realized that she was so sound asleep that she wouldn't feel him move. He slid out from under her, placing a hand under her head and lowering it to the pillow.

Lucas climbed off the bed and began dressing, watching Angel as he did so. Asleep, she truly did look like an angel, with her face peaceful, her black hair spread out around her on the pillow, one of her hands resting next to her face, the other lying across her stomach. As he finished dressing, he watched the rise and fall of her breasts. Despite his recent release, he felt his cock twitching in reaction to her body. If he didn't have things to do, he would have just undressed again and woken her up by taking her. Lucas realized that he had become quite fond of Angel, that it wasn't just sex any more. If it had been, he'd have enjoyed punishing her for betraying him.

He took in a breath and released it, letting his eyes rake over her one more time, then he turned and

headed for the door. Lucas turned the key, amused that Angel's fear of someone coming in had made her lock it. He unlocked and opened it. As Lucas pulled it open, he heard Angel mumble in her sleep and turned to see if she was waking. She wasn't, she just stirred, turning on to her stomach in her sleep, giving him a nice view of her butt. [Later, Buck, you've got work to do.] He returned to the bed, pulling the sheet up to cover her.

Lucas turned away and slipped into the living room, closing and locking the door quietly behind him.

Gideon was waiting in the dining room with the Guard Captain when Matheson and Raven arrived. He had all the castle floor plans spread out on the large dining table, and stood leaning forward on the table, studying one particular area. He looked up as the others arrived. "Good. Doctor, how's Dureena?"

He looked keenly at Raven, who frowned as he replied, "She's still out. I used a strong sedative that should keep her under for the next 24 hours, but sometime soon, I'm going to have to get that baby out of her or it'll kill her. I just want to give Max and Ilas time to get used to the idea."

Matheson and Gideon both flinched as they tried to imagine what they would have gone through if faced with the same situation. Gideon silently thanked the God he didn't really believe in for not having put Deborah through that.

Gideon asked, "How are Max and Ilas coping? Is there anything we can do?"

Raven shook his head. "They're still pretty shocked by it all. They're with Dureena and they have each other. I think they need some time alone for them to come to terms with what's happened and what has to be done."

Gideon nodded and looked down at the plans in front of him. "Right. Now we try and figure out how we go after the bastard who did this. I want him locked up down here, ready for transfer to the brig when the Excalibur comes back. I don't know how we're going to do it, or what I'm going to charge him with, but he's going away." His mouth set into a firm line as he finished, showing the determination he felt.

Matheson moved around the table to join Gideon in looking at the floor plans. He traced his finger across the plan, placing the dining room in context with Angel's rooms, the infirmary, Demon's rooms, the courtyard, Lily's rooms, and the armory. He moved his finger back to Angel's room and spoke.

"This isn't going to be easy. Angel's rooms are on the second floor. There's no access to the windows from outside. The corridor leading to her room is narrow, restricting the number of troops we can take in, and there's only one entrance, so there's no chance of flanking them." He looked up at Gideon standing next to him. "What weapons do we have? I didn't bring a PPG down with me, did you?"

Gideon shook his head. "No. I never expected to need one, and Nikarran here has nothing more than swords and knives in the armory. The most sophisticated weapon on this planet is a crossbow. Ever used one, Lieutenant?" He looked up at Matheson quizzically.

Matheson grimaced. "No. I wouldn't have a clue how."

"Me neither. William Tell I'm not. But these guys know how." Gideon pointed to the Guard Captain who nodded agreement. Gideon continued, "The problem is that there's no field of fire. As you say,

access is restricted, and we have to take Angel's abilities into account. She can freeze up anyone who approaches and may be able to deflect any projectile weapons. We'll take casualties at an unacceptable level if we try to go hand to hand. Angel will just knock down anyone going in."

Matheson agreed. "I don't see how we can take him out with her around, Captain. Any ideas?"

Gideon nodded. "Yes. We get help. I'm calling Galen. Maybe he can use some of his talents on this one." He looked across at Matheson. "My commlink is back in Deborah's room. Do you have yours?"

Matheson pushed his shirt cuff back to show the wristband and spoke. "I'll call him now."

When Gideon and the Guard Captain had left Demon, she decided that she needed to see her sisters and discuss with them what they should do. She was deeply troubled by what Gideon had said about Angel. Could she really let him imprison Angel? Demon knew that morally and ethically, what Gideon said was right. But this was her sister, how could she let her sister be taken away? What about their link? If Gideon took Angel away, it would destroy her sisters.

Demon's head spun. If she stood up against Matthew and refused to let him take Angel, she'd probably lose him. He'd promised Dureena that he'd go after the people responsible for hurting her and her baby. Demon knew that he wouldn't renege on that promise. If she tried to make him do so, she'd destroy their relationship, but if she let him do what he planned, it would destroy her and her sisters. There was no good way for this to end. Whichever way she looked at it, disaster loomed.

She stood and smoothed down the simple black sundress she'd put on that morning. She remembered planning a trip back to the pool, thinking, as she'd buttoned the front of the dress, how much fun it would be letting Matthew undo those buttons later. It seemed like an eternity since then, but it had been just that morning and it was still only noon. How could so much happen so quickly? How could life fall apart so easily? Demon left the office and headed for the infirmary.

When she opened the door to the main room, there were no signs of occupancy. She realized that Raven must have moved Dureena to a side room to give her more privacy. Each side room had a glass panel in the door, so she found the right room quickly. Looking through the glass, Demon could see that Dureena was asleep, probably still sedated. Ilas had curled up next to her on the bed, her arm across Dureena's body, hugging her.

Demon couldn't see Max at first, then realized that he was sleeping in a chair, with its back to the wall beside the door. As she watched, Ilas opened her eyes and looked straight at Demon as she stood outside the door. Ilas carefully disentangled herself from Dureena and tiptoed across to the door, opened it carefully, then stepped through, silently closing it behind her. As soon as the door was shut, she flung herself into Demon's arms and started to weep.

Demon held her sister tightly, pressing Ilas' head to her shoulder, stroking her blue hair and making comforting noises. There were no words Demon could use to provide the comfort her sister needed. Slowly, Ilas' sobs diminished. She pulled back her head and looked up at Demon, sending, *[[I'm going to kill him, Demon. I know you've taught me that killing is wrong, but I can't help it. I'm going to kill him for what he's done to us.]]*

Demon wiped away the tears from her little sister's face and replied, *[[If we can, Ilas. I don't know if we have the power, but if we have, I'll help you. I think we need to talk to Lily. She knows much more*

about the powers we may need to draw on than either you or I do. We're going to need all the help we can get.]]

Ilas looked back into the room where Max and Dureena both slept, reluctant to leave them, but then nodded and stepped back from Demon's arms. She grasped Demon's hand and tugged her toward the infirmary's outer door. *[[Let's go.]]*

Ilas and Demon arrived at Lily's room and found the door locked. Demon sent, *[[Lily, it's us, please let us in, we need to talk.]]* They heard the sound of the key turning in the lock and the door opened. Demon took one look at Lily's red eyes and hollow cheeks and threw her arms around the tiny girl, hugging her closely. Ilas leaned against Demon so she would move her arms to encircle them both. The three of them stood holding each other tightly, drawing strength and comfort from each other.

Demon straightened and spoke aloud, "We have things we must discuss and decide." She outlined Gideon's plans as far as she knew them, the plan to take Lucas and Angel captive. She watched the horrified looks growing on her sisters' faces as she talked.

Ilas burst out, "But he can't do that! Gideon can't take Angel away from us. She couldn't have known what he was doing! She would never have helped him if she'd known. How can she have committed a crime if she didn't know what it was? Does he know what will happen to us all if he takes her away? Oh, you must stop him, Demon, you can't let him do that." She was so agitated that she spoke aloud.

Demon looked sadly at her sister and sent, *[[Matthew made a promise, Ilas. He promised Dureena that he'd go after whoever was responsible. Should he break that promise? Would Dureena forgive him if he did? Would she forgive you if she knew that he'd broken his promise because of you?]]*

Lily looked up at Demon. *[[And what would it do to your relationship, Demon, if you tried to stop Gideon delivering on his promise? Would he forgive you for stopping him? I think promises mean a lot to him.]]*

Demon clamped down on her pain. *[[I know. I seem to have the choice between losing my sister or losing the father of my child. How am I supposed to make that choice?]]* Her eyes filled with tears that she fiercely quelled. *[[Enough. We'll deal with that when it happens. For now, we need to talk about what we can do to help Matthew take Lucas down. That's one subject we're all agreed on. Lily, I have questions for you, so why don't we sit?]]*

They moved to the lounging pit and sat. Demon started with her questions. *[[First, if we kill Lucas, will the life force he stole go back to Dureena's baby? Can we save the baby by killing him?]]* She looked hopefully at Lily.

Lily shook her head. *[[That would only work if he gave up the life force voluntarily. I think we can be sure he won't do that. I'm sorry, Ilas.]]* She turned and hugged her blue-haired sister, whose face had shown her hope for a moment.

Demon nodded. *[[I didn't think it would work, but wanted to be sure. Next question: Do we have any ideas about what powers Lucas has? I've been thinking about it and concluded that he's probably a contact telepath. He can read minds, if he chooses to, when in physical contact, but not otherwise. He raided my mind for the location of Angel's rooms, but he doesn't know everything. I think he has to touch or be very close to his target to be able to read them. The exception to that might be Angel. I*

think he got close enough to her last time, so maybe he can read her any time he wants.]] The other girls nodded. This seemed to fit the facts.

Demon continued, *[[He also seems to have some telekinetic abilities. He can move so quickly at times that some form of self-teleportation must be involved. He can also move some objects. He threatened to stop Matthew's heart, and I have no doubt that he could do it.]]*

Lily nodded enthusiastically. *[[Yes! The first time I saw him, the doorway was empty, then he was standing there. He just appeared!]]*

Demon concluded, *[[And finally, we know that he can block a telepath. He did that to John. The problem is, when you put his powers together with Angel's abilities, they're formidable. I can't think of a way to approach him without their knowing, or to tackle them if we could. We were lucky last time because Angel was on our side. Without her powers, we could never have put him back into the Box. Without her, we're helpless. Unless you know any spells that might help, Lily?]]* Demon looked hopefully at her sister.

Lily shook her head sadly. *[[I'm sorry, Demon, I can't think of anything, but I'll start looking right now!]]* Lily leaped to her feet and rushed over to her workroom, disappearing through the tapestry.

Demon turned to Ilas and spoke aloud, "Shall I come back to the infirmary with you? Can I help at all?"

Ilas shook her head and replied, "Thanks, Demon, but there's nothing anyone can do to make it better. Luke has told us that he needs to get Dureena's baby out of her soon, or it will kill her." Demon leaned across and hugged her sister again.

Ilas pulled herself away and looked straight into Demon's eyes, sending so Demon would know how strongly she felt. *[[Just promise me one thing, Demon. When Gideon goes in to take Lucas down, promise me that you'll tell me. I have to be there. I know that Gideon will just want to take him prisoner. I can't allow that. I want him dead. I know that will hurt Angel, but I can't help it. I'm going to kill him, Demon. Somehow, someday, I'm going to kill him.]]*

Lucas walked silently through the corridors of the castle, all his senses fully alert for any signs of other people. He wanted to avoid confrontation if he could. Until he'd had a chance to talk to Galen, it was in his best interest to stay out of sight. He stood outside the door to Demon's rooms and stretched his perception outwards. Finding her rooms empty, he smiled in satisfaction and entered, closing the door behind him.

Looking around at the white room brought back pleasant memories of the time he'd spent with Demon here and in her bedroom. [Some day we're gonna stage a rerun, Whiplash,] he thought. He moved over to the comm equipment and studied it carefully. During the time he'd spent in the Box, he'd carefully observed everything his hosts had done. Everything that Gideon knew how to do, in theory, Lucas knew how to do it too, but theory and practice weren't always the same. The comm equipment was something he'd watched Gideon use, when Lucas was still inside the Box. Unlike the shuttle, this equipment wouldn't kill him if he screwed up, so he was prepared to try to use it himself. He set to work.

After an hour, he'd achieved what he needed and sat back to study the result with some satisfaction.

That should take care of Galen and the threat he represented. He downloaded a copy of his work onto a data crystal, and standing, pushed it into his jacket pocket. As he did so, he became aware of someone approaching the room. He moved instantly to stand beside the door, his back to the wall, waiting for the door to open.

Gideon paced the dining room, waiting impatiently. They'd made contact with Galen's ship, but he hadn't been aboard and wasn't answering directly. Matheson had left a message, asking Galen to call him immediately. They'd been waiting for his response for over an hour.

Matheson's commlink beeped. He raised his wrist and responded. Galen's cheerful voice echoed around the room. "Did you want me? Sorry about the delay. I got a little preoccupied; this place has proved quite fascinating."

Gideon grabbed Matheson's arm and pulled it towards him. Speaking into the commlink, he said, "Galen, we need you back here, now. We've got a major problem on our hands and we need your help." He went on to outline the events of the morning, about Lucas' return and the loss of Dureena's baby. He was careful to play down Angel's part in it all, knowing that Galen had feelings for the girl, but emphasized the difficulties they faced with her using her powers to protect Lucas.

When Gideon finished, Galen spoke. His voice was flat, lacking all emotion. "I'm coming straight back. It will take me two hours to reach you. Don't do anything until I get there. You'll only get hurt and make things worse. I think I have a way to deal with this." The commlink went dead.

Gideon turned to Raven and Matheson. "Well, we have our instructions, gentlemen." He smiled ironically. "I want to make sure that Deborah is all right, and I'm sure you want to check on your patients, Doctor. Let's meet back here in two hours." The other men nodded and the three of them left the room. The Guard Captain watched them go, then carefully rolled up the floor plans and took them back to his office.

Demon walked slowly back to her rooms, trying to sort out what she could do to put things right, but she realized that she was facing problems she couldn't fix. This was difficult for her to accept, as she'd spent her life solving problems, and making things right, always acting and taking charge. Helplessness was something she hated and was completely unfamiliar with.

She arrived at her room and opened the door. A hand grabbed her throat and threw her against the wall, and a body slammed into her. Demon fought with hands and feet, trying to break his grip, but all the while conscious that she had to protect her belly. He was much too strong, though and soon had her pinned against the wall. His hands had her wrists caught on either side of her, and his legs were pressed between hers, with his knees and feet placed so that her legs were spread apart, and unable to move. His body leaned in hard against her, his face millimeters away from hers. She could feel his breath on her cheek as he spoke.

"Welcome back, Whiplash. Pleased to see me?" Demon started to struggle again as Lucas pressed his hips hard against her and she could feel his erection through the fabric between them. "Stop it or I'll hurt you." He growled at her, his voice low and threatening.

She stared him straight in the eyes, full of defiance. "You're going to hurt me anyway, so what do I

have to lose?"

Lucas smiled at her, easing back a little, giving her room to breathe. "It doesn't have to be like that, darlin'. You liked me well enough before. I can make it so that you'd like it again. Do you want to keep this baby? Then you'd better start co-operatin'."

Demon stopped struggling and held herself rigidly. "You can rape me, Lucas, and I won't fight you, for my baby's sake, but I won't do anything to make it easy, either."

Lucas let go of her arm and gave her a look that told her not to try anything. He brought his free hand to Demon's face and gently stroked her cheek. "I don't do rape, darlin'. Well, not any more. And I don't believe you can play dead-ass on me, either." His hand slid down to her shoulder and her breast. He undid the buttons at the front of her sundress and soon had her breasts exposed to his touch. He started to massage a nipple gently.

Demon's mind was fighting her body. The man who was doing this to her was her worst nightmare. He'd killed her sister's child and put another sister in danger of arrest and imprisonment. She hated him, but the body that was pressed against her, and the hand that was touching her, were identical to Matthew's. Her body wanted to respond to his touch as she did to Matthew's. All her senses told her this was Matthew who was now gently massaging her breast and kissing her neck. He smelled like Matthew and felt like Matthew. When he moved his mouth over hers, he tasted like Matthew. Demon could feel herself melting under his touches and kisses, as she did with Matthew. She knew this was a battle she was going to lose when he moved his hand down to her leg and pulled her skirt up.

Lucas shifted his hips slightly, rubbing his erection against her as he did so, but still keeping her legs pinned apart with his. His hand moved under her skirt and slid up the inside of her thigh. Demon closed her eyes and clamped every muscle in her vagina as tightly shut as she could, but she knew it was too late. His hand had found her labia and he slid a finger inside her. He whispered in her ear as he did so. "You're a little too wet to be pretending you don't want me, Whiplash. Just tell me, how do you want it? Right here against the wall?" Lucas slid in another finger and started moving his hand inside her, stimulating her further.

Demon was in turmoil. She hated Lucas for doing this and hated herself for letting him. She wanted him to stop and knew that if he did, she might beg him to continue. Her eyes were closed as she struggled with herself. His hand pulled out of her and she felt him grasp her chin, forcing her head back. "Look at who you're doin', darlin'. I don't want you to be in any doubt as to who I am." Lucas let go of her chin and reached down to pinch her nipple hard. It had the effect he wanted. Demon's eyes flew open and she gasped in pain.

Lucas reached down between them to undo his belt, then froze. Demon stared at him, wondering what had made him stop. He stood back quickly and let her go. Her legs had gone so weak that she nearly fell when he removed his support.

Demon watched as his mouth twisted into a bitter smile, then he spoke. "Looks like we're gonna have to wait for our re-union, Whiplash. I'd hate for us to be interrupted." Then Lucas was gone. He had disappeared out of the door so fast she hadn't seen him move.

Demon stumbled away from the wall and staggered toward her bathroom, ripping her dress off of her as she walked. She almost ran to the shower and she turned the water on full, with the temperature as hot as she could stand it. She then started to scrub herself, trying to remove any trace of Lucas that might linger on her body.

Lucas cursed as he moved quickly down the corridor away from the direction where he'd felt Gideon's presence. [Why the hell couldn't he have waited another half an hour to come back?] He'd been enjoying Demon's resistance, knowing that his close resemblance to Gideon was confusing her and making her respond. He just hoped that there would be another opportunity to finish what he'd started with her. Looping round the back corridors, keeping well away from the more frequented parts of the castle, he returned to Angel's rooms. He locked the door to the living room behind him as he entered, then moved to unlock the bedroom door.

Glancing in, he could see that Angel was still sleeping deeply. She'd turned onto her back as she slept and the sheet that he'd placed over her had slipped down to her waist, exposing her breasts to view. Lucas still had the erection that the fight with Demon had brought on and he was tempted to use it on Angel. The thought of gently removing the sheet to bare her legs, which he could see were spread wide apart, and entering her hard as she slept, was enticing. But he hoped to have a visitor soon, so he pulled the bedroom door closed, moved to the living room door and unlocked it, then went to sit on the sofa. Pulling the data crystal from his jacket pocket, Lucas placed it carefully on the table in front of him. Then he waited.

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The Witches of Eriadne: Toil and Trouble

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