

The Witches of Eriadne: Double, Double - Part 5: Departure

by [The Space Witches](#)

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Galen

Taken from The B5/Crusade Spoiler Junkies Page

Chapter 1

Galen's back was turned when Lucas entered the outer room, pulling Angel along behind him roughly. When Galen turned around, Lucas stopped and pulled Angel in front of him, holding her arms tightly.

Galen turned; his eyes widened at the sight in front of him -- Matthew, with what had to be the most exquisite raven-haired beauty he'd ever laid eyes on. She was thin, her skin was pale and she was naked. He couldn't see her face clearly, as she had her head down, her hair hiding her face. Galen ignored how the sight of her sent a fire to his groin and looked at Matthew. If this was his gift, he knew something strange was going on. Offering him a woman just wasn't something Matthew would do, normally.

Lucas couldn't hide a smirk, while Galen took in the sight before him and then looked back at him. He had to tighten his grip on Angel's arms when he felt her trying to pull away from him. He saw Galen was about to say something, but headed him off. This time when he spoke he didn't hide his drawl.

"Here you go, Technomage, snack on this." Angel gasped when she felt herself propelled forward with a hard shove from Lucas, and landed in a heap at Galen's feet. She lay there too stunned to

move and too afraid to look up at the man standing over her.

Galen, shocked at the way Matthew had just thrown the girl at him, looked down at the woman at his feet, then back up to Matthew, who'd now moved to the door.

Lucas turned to Galen. "Watch this one, she bites." And before Galen could question him about what the hell was going on Matthew was gone and the door closed behind him.

Lucas left Gideon's quarters and headed for the bridge. [Time to get this ship moving,] He was whistling softly again, but a different tune. "Love hurts, love scars, love wounds and mars..."

He arrived on the bridge and snapped at the watch officer, "Report." She turned in her chair and spoke crisply.

"Engines back on line, sir."

"About time. Take us out of orbit and prepare to jump." He'd heard Gideon give that command often enough to get it right. "Set course for Babylon 5." He watched the screen as the planet swung out of view and stars appeared in their place. He had to admit to a sudden thrill at the thought of being in space.

"Ready to jump, sir."

"Jump." A hole in space opened up in front of them and the Excalibur surged through. The view screen turned red as hyperspace surrounded them. Lucas sat in the command chair, enjoying the view, pondering on exactly what he was planning to do with the Excalibur now that he had the whole galaxy to play with. Hell, he might even discover a cure for the plague! He might find the role of hero amusing. But that would hardly be his top priority.

With Max's help, he planned to accumulate some serious wealth in the next year or so, then find a nice little planet somewhere to take over and run. He'd need some playmates to make things interesting, which brought his mind back to the sisters. He started to mull over some of the games he could play with them. He'd no intention of carrying out the threats he'd made to Angel. That would be a waste. No, he planned to give Ilas to Max to keep him happy and loyal. Luscious Lily he planned to keep for himself. She'd been an energetic bundle of fun and he'd always had a weakness for red heads. Well, not their heads really. Now Demon was another matter. She'd be a serious challenge. But he wanted to see her beg like Angel had. And he had some ideas about how he could do that. After a few minutes of enjoyable anticipation, he turned his thoughts to more serious matters.

He had the situation contained for the moment, but there were a number of loose ends that he needed to tie up. Dureena could wait; she was secured along with the sisters. But Raven and Matheson were another matter. How could he get rid of them? He cast his mind back to an incident a year or so earlier. They'd taken two visitors on board, one of whom had wanted to be infected with the plague. [Idiot!] Dr. Franklin had arrived from Earth and been confined to an isolation bay while they conducted their experiments. There'd been a near fatal disaster when the

contamination procedures had kicked in accidentally and the isolation bay had been sterilized. Lucas smiled. He'd order the doctor and Matheson confined to an isolation bay. Just a caution in case of infection brought up from the planet. Then there'd be a little accident...

He decided he'd give Angel two or three hours to do the job he'd given her, then go back and check on her. If she hadn't finished the job by then, he might have to get his own hands dirty. With a sigh, he picked up the data pad that rested on the arm of the command chair. He'd better spend some time getting himself up to speed on the running of this ship if he was going to take over.

Galen looked down at the still form at his feet. He frowned when for the first time he noticed the bruises and bite marks on her neck and shoulders. [Gods, did Matthew do this?] No, Matthew would never hurt a woman. Galen got a hold of himself; it was time to find out who she was and what was going on. He bent forward, intending to help her to her feet, all the time trying not to let her nakedness affect him. But as he moved, he saw her flinch and shift away from him.

Angel lay there, her mind reeling. She couldn't do this. She wasn't a killer. But at the same time she knew that Lucas would kill her and Ilas if she didn't do it. And what he would do to Lily and Demon was beyond bearing. When she sensed Galen moving towards her, she moved away blindly. It was too much for her and she started crying. "I can't do this."

Galen froze as the girl started crying, her voice small as she kept saying, "I can't do this," over and over again. She was trembling visibly. She looked and sounded so frail it tore at his heart. Galen quickly unbuttoned his coat, and took it off. Holding it out in front of him, he approached the girl on the floor slowly, afraid that he would frighten her. She was so lost in her sadness that she didn't notice his approach as he bent forward to place his coat over her shoulders. But she did feel him place the coat around her, and she looked up at him in surprise.

She took his breath away when she looked up, and for the first time he was able to see how beautiful she was. Despite her pallor and the dark rings under a pair of the most startling blue eyes, wet with tears, she was breathtaking. "Don't worry, I'm not going to hurt you," said Galen softly trying to give her the assurance he suspected she needed desperately.

Angel looked for the first time at the man who'd covered her with his coat. He wasn't anything like she'd expected. She could tell, even with him crouching beside her, his hand resting gently on her shoulder, that he was tall. He was dressed all in black. She was surprised that he was human. He was bald and his face, although not handsome, was attractive and gentle. His blue eyes looking at her with warmth she couldn't understand. And the gentle tone in his voice, the accent reminded her so much of Demon. Angel started to cry harder, sobs racking her body. Something told her that this man wouldn't hurt her, as he'd said. When she felt his arms coming around her to hold her, she didn't fight it.

When she started crying harder, Galen reached for her, his arms coming to hold her small frame to his. One hand came up to brush down her hair in a soothing motion. He didn't say anything; he just let her cry. He could tell she was in too much pain now to talk and answer the many questions he had. As she continued to cry in his arms, his legs started to cramp. He shifted one arm so that he was able to hook it under her knees, then he lifted her up in his arms, off the floor.

He paused for a moment, expecting her to protest. But when she tightened her hold around his neck, and buried her tear-stained face in his shoulders, he knew it was all right and he moved toward the bedroom.

When he reached the bed he placed her down gently. As she turned slightly, his coat fell aside, revealing her full breasts, her flat stomach, and the mound of dark curls at the top of her thighs. Galen felt himself stirring, his pants feeling a little tighter. He forced himself to breathe and quickly covered her again with his coat. Years of training in control and her tears were the only things preventing him from letting his hands roam over her body. Ignoring the bulge in his pants, Galen sat down on the bed beside her, placing a comforting hand over hers and waited for her to cry herself out. Then he would ask her about what was going on.

He already knew that something was very odd; Matthew wasn't himself. He suspected Matthew wasn't even Matthew anymore. When he'd left, Galen had heard a distinct accent in his last words, and the look in his eyes had been cold. And this -- Galen looked at the woman who was curled up still crying, although not as hard now -- was more proof. The Matthew Gideon he knew would never manhandle a woman and get enjoyment out of it. And Matthew would never throw a stark naked woman at his feet. It was obvious that he expected this woman to do something... something that she couldn't do by her words in the other room. He looked down at her. Her crying had stopped, but she was still sobbing intermittently. After a few more gasps, she was still. She opened her eyes and looked at him.

Galen smiled at her gently. He wished he didn't have to question her. She looked so fragile and small lying there, her eyes filled with pain and fear. [Gods, what has Matthew done to her? No, not Matthew...] But he had a feeling time was running out and he needed to get to the bottom of this. [But first start off at the top.]

"My name is Galen." He watched as she nodded.

"Yes, I know, he told me," said Angel with a sniff. Then she cleared her throat; it felt raw from all her crying. "My name is Angel."

Galen nodded. "How very appropriate. Nice to meet you Angel." His hand tightened slightly over hers in a gesture of greeting.

He was mildly surprised when she gave a dry laugh. "You wouldn't say that if you knew what... what he wanted me to do to you." The last words were quietly spoken. But they gave Galen leave to ask the questions that were burning in his head.

"And what is it that Matthew wants you to do, Angel?"

Angel closed her eyes a moment, then opened them. Something about this man, a presence to him, told her that maybe, just maybe he could help her. She couldn't do what Lucas wanted and now she felt her strong will returning to her. She knew she had to tell someone. Of course, Lucas would probably destroy her for disobeying him again, especially for this, and the thought of what could happen to her sisters nearly stopped her heart. But she was not a murderer.

Galen watched her closely, giving her time to work out whatever she was obviously working out

inside herself.

"He's no longer Captain Gideon." Angel decided it was best to start with explaining about Lucas.

She watched as Galen took her information in. "I suspected as much. Can you tell me who the wolf in sheep's clothing is?" questioned Galen gently.

Angel began telling him about Lucas, and about everything that had happened, right from when the Excalibur had arrived at Eriadne. Galen never interrupted her, but just let her tell her story as she explained about her sisters, and about the spell and how it had obviously gone wrong, replacing Gideon's spirit with that of Lucas Buck. She went on to tell him about Lt. Matheson, and about how Lucas had told her that her sisters were now on board in the brig, and how afraid she was for their lives. He had to coax her to continue when she got to the part about what Lucas wanted her to do. With some hesitation, she told him how she was meant to seduce him and then kill him.

"But I can't do it. Oh God, I gave myself to him body and soul. But I just can't do it. And now he'll kill me and my sisters." She started crying again and Galen picked her up, holding her tightly.

"I won't let that happen." He pushed her away so that he could look at her. "I promise." Angel couldn't explain it, but she believed him, and for the first time in days she no longer felt lost.

Galen let go of her and stood up. He looked around the room and walked over to where her clothes were lying. He bent and picked them up, then walked back to the bed and handed them to Angel, who was now sitting up on the bed, her small body lost in his large coat.

"Here, put these on. And when you're dressed we can talk a bit more. I believe I may be able to explain where Lucas came from and how we can put him back there." Angel looked at him in surprise, taking her clothes.

"I don't understand, how can you know what to do? I don't even know what I did to cause this," said Angel apprehensively.

Galen reached down to stroke her cheek, brushing away the remnants of her tears. "I am a Technomage, my dear," he said teasingly, even though he knew she wouldn't get it, but she did smile at his light tone. He was surprised that her smiling meant so much to him. He dropped his hand from her face, and turned towards the door, pausing to look back at her.

"Get dressed and then we can talk." Then he turned and closed the screen behind him, leaving Angel to sit staring after him, trying to figure out what he could possibly know that would help her. After a moment she stood up and dressed, then moved to go and join Galen in the other room.

Galen watched from where he was sitting on the large couch as Angel approached him; she'd brought his coat with her. He had to admit again that she was beautiful. And he imagined that when she wasn't looking and sounding so defeated, she would be alive like a flame. He looked at

the bruising and bites on her body, feeling anger well up in his stomach. What kind of monster would do that? He forced away his anger; right now there was work to be done. As Angel came closer, he indicated to her to sit beside him. Angel sat, handing him his coat, which he took and placed on the other side of him. When she was seated she turned to him, a serious expression on her face.

"Tell me about the spell, word for word what it said, how you executed it." Angel looked at him a moment before she explained everything to him. When she was done, she watched as Galen sat quietly thinking about what she had told him. He had some very unpleasant thoughts about who had given her and her sisters their power, but suppressed those suspicions for the moment.

"Yes, as I suspected. I am afraid that your placement of words unleashed Lucas Buck from a prison that he's probably been kept in for hundreds of years." Angel gasped at his words, and at the distress he saw in her eyes he had to rush to explain further. "Oh, I don't blame you, and you shouldn't blame yourself. You couldn't have known what would happen. You couldn't have known that working the spell on someone who had the darkness already riding around in his head would be all that was needed for that darkness to take over."

Angel looked at him in confusion. "I don't understand." Galen nodded and went on.

"Have you ever heard of an Apocalypse Box?" Angel shook her head and then listened in awe as Galen began explaining to her. "Centuries, maybe millennia, ago, a priest, a magician, call him what you will, built these special boxes. And into those boxes were placed the spirits of evil men. These were not normal men. They were able to transfer their spirits into a new host, one suitably chosen, usually a son, when their current body started to weaken or die, thus managing to pass the evil on through the centuries. The priest knew that the only way to stop these spirits from moving on would be to trap them inside this box. The only thing he didn't know was that these boxes, which later became known as Apocalypse Boxes, could talk, if the spirit inside were strong enough. They became like oracles to whichever unknowing soul came to possess one of them. My people have known about them, and have sought them out, and destroyed them. But still, six remain and for a long time I've suspected that Matthew had one. He was able to know things that he shouldn't."

He paused as Angel gave him a questioning look. He explained further. "An Apocalypse Box has the ability to answer questions, tell you things. Unfortunately, because it is the home of evil, it lies, not often, but enough. And the more you ask its help, the more it is able to get into your head. I believe that Lucas was in the Box that Matthew had and has been waiting for the day when he would be released, and could take over Matthew's body. You see, he's been a part of Matthew for a while now, your spell was just the key to let him take over."

Angel sat quietly for a moment. Galen noticed her wringing her hands, as she digested what he had told her.

"Is there a way to undo the damage I've done?" asked Angel as she looked up at Galen.

Galen smiled. "There's always a way to reverse a spell. But we'll need the Box itself. Then we have to get your sisters. The spell needed to put Lucas back will require more than one person. My abilities are extensive, but I'll need help."

Angel looked at him with shock. To get her sisters help, she would have to tell them what she'd done. Her heart tightened. Her sisters wouldn't forgive her for this. So much damage had been caused; someone was dead because of it. "I can't tell my sisters, please, isn't there some way we can do it without them?"

Galen took hold of her hands in his and looked deeply at her. "You have to tell them Angel. Somehow, I don't think they'll blame you once we've explained to them what has happened." Angel listened and knew that he was right. As much as she didn't want to, she knew she had to tell them. She had to fight back more tears when she nodded.

"Don't worry, it will be all right." Galen let go of her hands and stood, bringing Angel up to stand with him.

"Lucas has locked us in here. How do we get out?"

Galen looked at the door. When he looked back he raised an eyebrow at her. "Don't worry about that, I have a few tricks up my sleeve for getting out of locked quarters." He winked at her, and was pleased when he heard her actually give a small giggle. It was a beautiful bell like sound. And then Galen knew she was going to be all right, that Lucas hadn't beaten the spirit out of her completely. She was a fighter.

"Right. We have to get out of here. I have the feeling that Lucas will be returning soon to see if you've finished me off." He gave a smile to indicate that he wasn't trying to hurt her with his words. She smiled back at him. "Right. I'm going to get cracking on getting us out of here. What I need you to do is look around. Matthew must have the Apocalypse Box hidden here somewhere. Can you do that for me?"

Angel nodded and moved away from Galen, her eyes searching the room for a place to start. Galen watched her and then cupped her face in his hands, and placed a kiss on her forehead. He didn't really know why he did it. Angel looked up at him with those incredible blue eyes, a perplexed expression on her face at his gesture. He let her go feeling slightly embarrassed. "Ah, right, let's do this then, shall we?" He didn't wait for her to answer as he turned around to see what he could do about the locked door.

Angel stood for a moment watching him as he ran his hands over the door, looking for a way to open it. Then she began moving around the room. As she got to a small cupboard in front of Gideon's desk she stopped, spinning around to look at the locked cupboard she'd found earlier. Her instincts told her that she didn't have to look anywhere else, that the Box was in there. She all but ran to it. Her hand on the handle she turned to Galen, and interrupted what he was doing with an excited voice. "It's in here." Galen looked up to where she was pointing at the cupboard.

He straightened. "How do you know that?"

Angel shrugged. "I don't know. I just have this feeling. It's locked. Earlier I was searching the other cupboards for something to help me get the door open, and they were all open. But when I tried this one, it was locked." She proved her words by pulling down on the handle. It didn't budge. "If I wanted to keep something like an Apocalypse Box, I would keep it locked away," she said.

Galen nodded and moved to the cupboard. He noticed the panel. "It's code protected." When Angel's face fell, thinking that he meant that they wouldn't be able to get it open. Galen smiled reassuringly "Not to worry, I have just the thing to get it open." Angel frowned as Galen moved away to go and pick up his coat, bringing it back with him. He slipped a hand into an inside pocket, and when he pulled it out, he was holding a small, silver ball.

She watched as he held it to the panel, and said a few words she didn't recognize. She watched with interest as the ball glowed, and transformed into something that resembled a gargoyle. Galen looked back at her to explain, "It's a holodemon. It will go inside the panel and attack the circuitry, shorting it out so that it will break and unlock." Angel watched as the holodemon vanished into the panel. A few minutes later there was a popping sound and smoke erupted from the panel. Galen straightened and gave her a grin. "There we go. Now you look inside for the Box, while I take care of the door."

Angel let him move past her and she walked to the cupboard. She felt a sense of anticipation as she opened the door. She paused for a moment to look back at Galen; he was busy placing something over the door panel. She turned back to the cupboard and with shaky hands slid it open. There on the bottom shelf was a medium-sized wooden box. It had a few markings on the sides and looked deceptively innocent. Angel bent down and picked it up. It made her arms tingle when she touched it. Turning with it in her hands, she walked over and placed it on the desk. She glanced over to Galen, who was still busy. Her attention was drawn back to the Box and she was just about to open it when a hand grabbed her wrist causing her to jump away in fright.

"Don't open it yet!" Galen shouted at her. When he saw Angel back away in fright he let go of her wrist, cursing himself for scaring her. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you. It's just that, for the reverse spell to work it mustn't be opened until the last moment." Angel still looked at him wide-eyed. "Trust me on this, Angel, I know what I'm doing. Look I'll explain more once we have your sisters free, but right now we have to get out of here before Lucas gets back." He reached for her arm, glad when she didn't back away from him. "All right?"

Angel let out a breath, and placed her hand over his. "All right. Let's get out of here." Galen gave her a smile and then turned back to the door.

"Stand back, Angel, there's going to be a small explosion," Galen told her as he placed something onto the panel. Then he backed away to stand with Angel. They watched as the small object let off a bright spark and then there was a bang that caused Angel to jump and Galen to hold her as she moved into him. When the smoke cleared, Galen let go of her and moved to the door. As he approached, it opened. Galen turned to Angel, "Works every time."

Angel smiled and walked to the desk where she picked up the Box in both arms. "What do you say we leave this place and go find your sisters?" Angel nodded. As Galen led her out the door she thought about Lucas. All hell would break loose when he came back to find her and Galen gone.

Gideon felt like he was floating. He was surrounded by darkness and silence; he couldn't even hear his own breathing. He couldn't feel his body or touch anything. He thought he ought to be afraid,

but it seemed like too much effort. Sometimes he got flashes of images which he couldn't make sense of. He thought that maybe they were memories, but that didn't seem quite right.

At one point he saw Deborah on the bed beneath him. Now that was a good memory to hold on to. But something wasn't right. Her hands were tied. He'd never done that, had he? Then he saw Angel, stretched out beneath him, bound at wrists and ankles. Now surely that had been the other way around?

Then the worst image yet. He saw his own hand holding a PPG and firing, and John Matheson falling to the ground. It all went black again.

He was sure his heart should be racing. But he couldn't hear or feel his heart. He may as well not have a heart at all. What was going on here?

Darkness descended.

Galen lifted the Box from Angel's arms as they left Gideon's quarters, and motioned for her to follow him. They made their way through the corridors to a bullet car, where Galen put the Box down on a seat. He really didn't want to touch it more than he had to. Even if he were right and it only held the spirit of his old friend Matthew, it was still a very dangerous thing to handle. They rode the bullet car in silence, watched with a degree of curiosity by two crewmen who shared the car with them. Galen became aware that they were looking sideways at him and Angel. They had obviously seen the marks on her, which her clothes didn't entirely hide. [Well there goes my reputation,] Galen thought with a degree of exasperation. He could hardly turn around and say to them "I didn't do that, your Captain did!"

When they arrived on Deck 4 where the brig was located, Galen first found a small storeroom. He passed the Box back to Angel and told her to wait for him there. He proceeded through to the main security area alone. Fortunately, there was only one guard on duty at this time, and that guard was asleep. Galen shook him gently by the shoulder and smiled down at him as he awoke. He knew that everyone on the ship knew who and what he was and that they also knew he was a friend of the Captain. They wouldn't question his presence here.

"Hello. Captain Gideon has asked me to interview the prisoners. He thinks I'll be able to tell him who and what these women are. Would you be so kind as to let me see them?" The security officer looked wary.

"I haven't had any orders about that." He didn't want to do something the Captain wouldn't like. The whole ship knew that Gideon was on a very short fuse these days.

"Oh, by all means, call the Captain and check. I'm sure he won't mind being interrupted. I mean, he isn't likely to have fallen asleep yet. He only went to his quarters half an hour ago. Please do give him a call."

The officer blanched. The thought of waking the Captain to check if his friend was allowed to see the prisoners was untenable. And Galen might just tell Gideon that he had found the guard

asleep.

"Oh, I don't think that's necessary. They're in Cell 4. You want to see them all together or individually? I can bring them out here if you like." Galen shook his head

"Entirely unnecessary. I'll manage quite adequately in the cell with them. Just lead the way."

Ilas had managed to tear Dureena's boot apart quickly by changing her arms and increasing their strength. Dureena had watched this happen with interest. Although she had seen Ilas transform herself before, it still fascinated her and excited her when she remembered what she, Ilas and Max had done together.

While Ilas was working, Dureena spoke quietly to Demon. "We've got a problem. Look up into that corner." Demon looked to the corner of the room that Dureena pointed to with her chin. "That's a surveillance camera. The guard outside is watching everything we do. Any ideas?" Demon smiled down at the shorter woman.

"Leave it to me." Demon closed her eyes and concentrated. Dureena suddenly felt drowsy. Waves of tiredness and exhaustion passed through her; all she wanted to do was sleep. She struggled to keep her eyes open as the feeling of tiredness intensified, but the effort was too much. She staggered to one of the bunks and collapsed. The next thing she knew Demon was shaking her arm.

"Wake up, Dureena." Dureena forced her eyes open and looked up into Demon's impassive face. "The guard will sleep for a while now, so you can get to work" Dureena shook off her sleepiness and stared at Demon.

"How did you do that?"

"Exhaustion is a feeling like any other. And at the moment I'm familiar enough with it. Sending it isn't difficult." Demon turned to Ilas and Lily who were sitting together on another bunk. "Have you finished yet?"

Ilas passed Dureena the strip of metal, and Dureena started to work on the wall next to the door, behind which she knew the locking mechanism lay. She managed to hack a small hole in the wall, while Demon watched over her shoulder. The constant presence at her back was beginning to irritate Dureena, who really didn't like being watched in that way.

They'd now been in the cell for over three hours with little conversation other than whispers between Ilas and Lily who sat on the bunk together. Demon had stood the entire time, either leaning against the wall with her arms crossed or standing right behind Dureena, watching intently. Dureena was just about ready to spit in her eye when they heard a noise from outside the cell door.

Dureena quickly put the pieces of broken panel back into place, trying to hide the damage she'd done. Dureena was convinced that it would be "Gideon" come to collect one of them to ... well

to do whatever it was he wanted to do with them.

Demon spoke "It's not him. It's someone else. Someone different. He feels ... strange." She had her eyes closed and was obviously focusing on whoever was outside the cell. They all turned as the door opened.

Galen stood in the opening, quickly taking in the occupants of the room. The tall blonde must be Demon and the tiny redhead Lily. He looked more closely at the girl with blue hair, recognizing her as something he'd never come across before. Then finally he took in the fact that Dureena was with them. He hadn't expected that. Angel had only told him that her sisters were being kept in the brig. She obviously hadn't known about Dureena. Before any of the women could speak he turned to the guard who stood behind him.

"That's very kind of you. I'll conduct the interview here. Please turn off all monitoring devices while I do so. I'm afraid some of the equipment I'll be using will destroy your systems if you don't." He watched the guard return to his station and switch off the cameras. "Thank you." Galen turned to the women in the cell and deepened his voice to a threatening tone. "Now, the Captain tells me that you are dangerous aliens. We'll see," he said, and pulled the cell door closed behind him as he entered.

As the cell door closed, he was nearly knocked off his feet as Dureena leapt in the air, flinging herself into his arms. "Galen! I'm so glad you're here!" She hugged him hard enough to hurt. "You don't believe that crap about dangerous aliens do you?" Galen tried to pry her loose.

"Well if you carry on squeezing me to death, I think that will make you a very dangerous alien!" Dureena relaxed her hold on his neck and lowered herself to the floor. "Perhaps you could introduce me to your companions?"

Dureena quickly introduced the sisters as Galen walked across the cell and settled himself on a bunk. He was watching them closely, using his enhanced eyes to analyze their physical structures as he did so. His implants allowed him to look beyond surface features to skeletal and muscular systems. What he saw in Ilas astonished him. He turned to her and said, "Exactly what are you? You're certainly not what you appear to be."

Ilas gave him a brief summary of what Max had told her about her people. Galen was horrified. "Vorlon? You've all been adapted by the Vorlon?" The very name was anathema to all Technomages. They were the enemy. Galen leapt to his feet. "It seems that the Captain was right. You are dangerous aliens. Dureena, I'm taking you out of here but they stay. And I'll have their other sister brought here and locked away with them. Whatever the problem is with Matthew, I'll deal with it myself."

Dureena stared at him in amazement. "Galen, what's the matter with them? They haven't hurt anyone, why are you willing to leave them here?" But before he could answer her, Demon had grabbed his arm and flung him back against the wall. She stood so close that her breasts pressed into his chest and he could feel her breath on his neck. She was only a couple of inches shorter than him and he could feel her strength as she leaned into him and hissed.

"Our sister? What do you know about our sister? Where is she?"

Galen admitted to himself that he rather enjoyed the sensation of having this woman pressing against him, but then reminded himself that she was the enemy's tool, perhaps deliberately engineered by the Vorlon to attack the Technomage order. His fears were reinforced when he realised that she was projecting waves of anger at him. She was an empath. What other powers had the enemy given these women? He used all his strength to push her away from him, and she took a step back.

"Your sister is safe for the moment. I've hidden her from Matthew, or whoever it is that's now occupying Matthew's body, so he can't hurt her any more. But that doesn't change my decision. You've been corrupted by the enemy; my order has been warned against monsters like you. Have you never read the Bible? 'Suffer not a witch to live'? That warning might have been given specifically about you and your kind. You are indeed well-named, Demon!" He was almost spitting the words into her face. Demon was taken aback by the vehemence of his attack, and stepped back. Dureena was watching him completely dumbfounded. She had never seen Galen behave like this, and she couldn't understand what had brought it about.

"Galen, please, what is it about them that you hate so much? They've done nothing to deserve this!"

Galen gathered himself together and made a conscious effort to bring himself under control. "It's not what they've done, Dureena, it's what they are. They were created by the Vorlon, who were the great enemies of those who created my order. They're an abomination." Dureena couldn't believe what she was hearing. Galen was always so cool and rational. This sounded crazy.

"But Galen, you need them. Can you fix what's wrong with Gideon on your own? I know they can help you."

Galen calmed further. He knew that this was a good point. The power needed to release Matthew and imprison the spirit that had taken his body was greater than even he possessed. He couldn't do it alone. And he couldn't leave Matthew's soul in limbo. Could he work with these women, use their power, then destroy them after? That might be the best solution. He turned to Dureena.

"You may be right. I can't do what is needed to bring Matthew back alone." Demon leapt towards him again.

"What do you mean 'bring Matthew back'? Is he still alive? I thought that monster had killed him when it took his body!" Waves of grief and hope were almost overwhelming them all as Demon lost her control over her sendings at the implications of what Galen had said. "He's not dead?"

Galen put his hand out and gently touched her shoulder. "No, I don't think he's dead. I think he's imprisoned. And we can bring him back, if you're all willing to help." He realised that Demon was in love with Gideon and that his 'death' had left her grieving. His attitude towards the sisters softened a little. If one of them could love like this, perhaps they weren't totally evil. He reconsidered his position. These women had themselves done nothing; they hadn't asked to be

manipulated by the enemy. They could help him to bring Matthew back, and their leader did seem to have genuine feelings for Matthew, and could he bring himself to destroy Angel? Already his feelings toward her made that impossible.

"Perhaps we can call a truce, and work together long enough to help Matthew. Now we need to work out how we can do that."

The security guard was becoming worried about the amount of time Galen had spent with the women. Maybe he should have checked with the Captain after all. But the thought of what the Captain would say if Galen told him about his little sleep kept him indecisive. At last Galen emerged from the cell and walked over to the station.

"They've confessed that there is another woman on board in hiding and have told me where she is. I'm going to get her now. Stay here and watch that cell door carefully while I'm gone." Galen swept out of the brig area, his coat flapping behind him as he left. The guard turned and watched the cell door as if his life depended on it.

Angel had been hiding in the storeroom, her anxiety increasing all the time. Her head was spinning with so many fears that she didn't know which was the worst. What if Galen had betrayed her and gone to Lucas? Or just abandoned her? What would Lucas do to her if he found out that she'd disobeyed him again? Would he kill her and her sisters? Or would he do something worse? She had never believed in a fate worse than death, until she met Lucas. Now she could believe in such a thing. If she hadn't cried so much already that day, she would have cried now. But she had no tears left. What had she done? Trusting Galen seemed like such a stupid thing to do now, what had made her do it? Why hadn't she obeyed Lucas and killed him? Maybe it had just been a test. Maybe Lucas had been testing her to see if she would obey him, and had planned to step in before she did and tell her it was all right, she didn't have to go through with it. And she'd failed the test. What would he do now? Her head spun as she curled into a ball on the floor.

As she did so, her head rested against the Box and she felt that strange tingling again, but this time a sense of reassurance came with it, as if something inside were trying to tell her that everything would be all right. Could that be Gideon? Could he somehow be in there and sensing her distress? If it was him, and he was trying to calm her, she knew she didn't deserve such kindness from him. She had hurt him and brought this on them all. Why should he be kind to her? She pulled away from the Box and curled up again.

Galen found her asleep on the floor of the storeroom. He looked down at her and was touched by her beauty and vulnerability. Could anything that beautiful be evil? His head told him that she could, but his heart denied it. He stooped and touched her gently on the arm. She woke abruptly and cried out in fear, scooting backwards across the floor away from him. She looked absolutely terrified of him, making him angry again at the thing that had provoked this response in her. He would destroy it or put it back where it belonged even if it meant co-operating with the tools of the enemy.

"It's only me, don't panic." He smiled at her and helped lift her to her feet. He explained how he had found her sisters and that they were unharmed. He held her up as her knees gave way at that news. He went on to tell her that he was taking her to them and that she shouldn't be worried by the fact that they were going to the brig. He could tell that she was struggling to believe him, but also saw the resignation in her eyes. She really didn't have many choices left.

Galen picked up the Box. "I think you're gaining weight Matthew, you'd better do a little more basketball practice." He left the storeroom with Angel following.

They entered the brig with Angel in front carrying the Box, Galen behind her apparently pushing her forward. The guard stood up to watch this strange pair. [They may be dangerous aliens but they're also the best looking bunch I've seen in a while.] As Angel drew alongside him she stumbled, almost dropping the Box. The guard automatically leaned forward to stop her falling. As he did so Galen hit the back of his exposed neck and he dropped like a stone. Galen dragged the unconscious man to the cell holding the women as Angel followed with the Box.

As they entered the cell, Ilas and Lily hurled themselves at their sister. She barely had chance to drop the Box onto a bunk before they were all over her, hugging and kissing her, telling her how they had missed her. It almost broke her heart. She became aware that Demon was standing back impassively watching. No warm welcome there. She turned and watched as Dureena and Galen trussed and gagged the unfortunate guard using strips of blanket torn from one of the bunks.

Angel turned to face Demon, as Ilas and Lily stood back to watch the reunion.

"Hello, Angel. Are you all right?" Demon's voice was quiet and unreadable. She made no move towards Angel. Angel nodded, tears welling up in her eyes. How could she tell the others what had happened since she last saw them?

Galen came over and gently steered her to a bunk. "Angel has a story to tell you. It will take a while, but it's worth listening to. Go ahead, Angel." He sat next to her with his arm pressed reassuringly around her shoulders.

Angel took a deep breath. She knew she had to do this. She launched into her story.

Demon stood leaning against the wall with her arms crossed in front of her. She was appalled at the actions Angel had taken to bind Gideon to her. Did Angel really hate her that much? She must, to want to hurt Demon so. Then as Angel told what Lucas had done to her and about his threats (and she knew that Angel was giving them a very toned-down version, her own experiences with him led her to that conclusion), Demon's anger, pain and grief built. She would kill the bastard who'd done this to her sister. It took every ounce of her control to prevent the others knowing what she was feeling. She kept her mask firmly in place until Angel had finished her story and Galen had explained about the Apocalypse Box.

Angel looked up at her sister, standing motionless, showing nothing. "I'm so sorry, Demon, there's nothing I can do to change what I did, but if you knew how much I wish I could ..." Tears were coursing down her face. Although she couldn't usually read her sisters, this time Demon felt every bit of contrition, guilt and remorse that Angel felt. It broke her control at last. She rushed forward and wrapped Angel in her arms, hugging her closely, stroking her hair, telling her it was all right, everything was all right, they'd fix it somehow, but please don't cry any more.

The others stood watching as the sisters held each other tightly. Eventually, Demon broke away.

"We've got work to do. There's someone on this ship who needs teaching a lesson, and we're going to send him back to school."

They spent the next hour planning their course of action. It would involve great risk, for all of them, but particularly Angel. She insisted that she could do the job they needed her to do. She was terrified, but she could do it. She would do it.

When their plans were in place, Ilas transformed into "Gideon" in front of their eyes. Galen left for the landing bay with Demon, Lily and Dureena. Ilas and Angel waited another half hour after the others had left, then Ilas left the cell. Angel pulled herself together and headed back to Gideon's quarters. This would be the hardest thing she had ever done in her life.

Lucas had stayed on the bridge, reading reports, studying data pads and generally boring himself to tears for three hours. [How the hell did Space Cadet stand it?] He gritted his teeth; he needed to know these things if he was going to get what he wanted, so he persevered. After three hours his eyes were sore, his back hurt and his head ached. He felt like throwing the damn data pad at the wall. Enough!

He stretched in his chair to ease the stiffness in his back, [Couldn't Space Cadet even get a comfortable chair for himself?] and decided to call it a night. Time to check on Angel. He smiled in anticipation of the enjoyment he was going to have in the next hour or so. If she'd done as he'd told her, she'd be a complete wreck by now. She'd need some comforting and he knew just how he was going to do that. On the other hand, if she'd disobeyed him and the Technomage still lived, then she'd have to be punished. And he'd enjoy that too. He felt his cock stir at the thought of how he planned to punish her this time. Time to leave the bridge.

He stood and told the Comm officer that he was finished for the night. If they needed him, he would be in his quarters. He left the bridge and headed for Gideon's cabin.

He paused outside the door, trying to sense if there was only one person in there or two. He became wary when he got no sense of any presence at all. He opened the door to the cabin and entered slowly, scanning the room for any signs of occupancy. Nothing. His temper started to rise.

He slid open the doors to the sleeping area and looked inside. The birds had flown. He stood with his hands on his hips. "Angel, darlin', I'm gonna cut your heart out and use it as a shammy"

{Chapter 1} {Chapter 2} {Chapter 3} {Epilogue}

The Witches of Eriadne: Double, Double

{Part 1: Arrival} {Part 2: Introductions} {Part 3: Changing Partners} {Part 4: Moving Forward}
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