

The Witches of Eriadne: Fire Burn - Part 2: Present

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Captain Elizabeth Lochley

Chapter 1

Lucas stood in front of the comm. unit, planning his next call carefully. It was nearly time to leave Babylon 5 and he needed help to do that, the same help that he'd had when he arrived. Captain Elizabeth Lochley was going to help him get off the station in the same way as she'd helped him get onto it. He had numerous different identity papers for himself and Angel now, but if he attempted to leave using any of them, alarm bells would be ringing the length and breadth of the station. No one using those identities had arrived on B5, so if he tried to use them to leave, the game would be up. If and when he decided to return, there'd be no problem, he'd just use one of the false IDs, but for now, he needed some help.

He took a deep breath and made the call to the Captain's office. As he'd expected, one glance at his face on the screen was enough to get him put through to her personal line. He smiled his best Space Cadet smile as Lochley took his call.

"Hello, Elizabeth. Sorry I haven't been able to call in a while."

She returned his smile, but then frowned. "Where are you? And why haven't you been in touch?"

Lucas shook his head. "I can't discuss it on an open line. Can we meet? Soon?" He wanted to maintain

the air of mystery and continue the impression of clandestine activities.

Lochley looked disappointed as she responded. "I am up to my ears in paper work at present. I can't get away until 18:00 hours."

Lucas nodded. "Then 18:00 hours it is. I'll meet you in the Zen garden."

Lochley looked puzzled. "Why don't you come to my quarters? We could have dinner and..." she smiled suggestively.

Lucas laughed softly and put a regretful look on his face. "I'd love to, but if I were seen going into your quarters, all the work I've done over the last few months would be for nothing." [Damn right it would. I can just imagine what some of my associates would think if they heard I'd visited the Captain in her rooms,] Lucas thought to himself. He could come up with an excuse for why he'd been seen with her in a public place, but going into her rooms? That would stretch even his storytelling abilities. Besides, if he went to her quarters, she would expect sex. His previous experience with her hadn't been interesting enough for him to want to repeat it.

He smiled his warmest smile. "I'll see you at 18:00 in the Zen garden." He touched his fingers to his lips, then blew across them. He watched Lochley smile back at him, then cut the line.

Angel leaned back against the bedroom door, having heard every word of Lucas's conversation. [You bastard!] She couldn't believe that he would arrange to meet another woman using the comm. unit in their apartment. Didn't he care whether she knew what he was doing? Obviously not. He didn't care if she overheard, and he didn't care if she knew he was seeing other women. Well, this time he would care. This time she'd make him care.

Lucas waited patiently in the Zen garden, having gotten there a few moments early. The garden was deserted, as it often was, which was why he'd chosen it for their meeting. It was public enough to give him a cover story if he were seen, but private enough to be able to spin Lochley a line.

He ground the heel of his boot into the gravel surface, adding another dimple to the design and turned as he heard footsteps behind him. Lochley rushed forward to kiss him, but he held her back. "Let me look at you, Elizabeth. You're the nicest thing I've seen in months." Lucas thought he might overdose on saccharine if he went on like that for too long, so he cut to the point. "I need your help again. Can you help me?"

Lucas saw Lochley frown. "Well, it's nice to see you, too. So you only bother with me when you want something, is that it?" Lucas realized that his anxiety to get away from her had led him to rush things. More honey was needed if he were going to trap this fly.

"If I had my own way, I'd be here a lot more often, Elizabeth, but you know what it's like. I'm not always in control of my own destiny, much as I'd like to be." Lucas watched her tension abate, and she nodded at his words. He pulled her closer to him and kissed her gently. "But it's really good to see you again, even if just for a few moments." Lochley's body softened in his arms and she melted against him, rubbing his groin with her pelvis. [Not much doubt about what this lady wants. Well tough, darlin', you ain't gettin' it.]

He pushed her away again, holding her arms and looking deep into her eyes. "I need your help, Elizabeth. The mission I'm on is nearly complete. We're very close to success. I now have the formulae for what we believe will be the cure, but I have to get it off the station and back to Mars. I've been using false identity papers for the last couple of months, but they won't get me off of B5. I suspect Zack Allan has my face permanently engraved on his brain after my last visit. I don't think I'd get past him, do you?" He smiled down at her.

Lochley laughed. "You're probably right. Zack was pissed off for days after you arrived. He wasn't at all happy that I overruled him about you. Of course I'll help you. Just tell me what you need."

Lucas pulled her back to him, holding her tightly, then kissed her passionately. He put everything he had into the kiss, wanting to leave her so turned on and distracted that she'd do whatever he wanted. His tongue was deep inside her mouth, twisting and touching hers as she responded.

"You bastard!" He went rigid as he heard Angel's voice behind him. [Shit! How did she get here?]

"You double-crossing, evil minded, two-timing bastard!" Lucas whipped his head around to see Angel standing at the entrance to the garden. She wore a skin-tight, red halter neck dress that showed every curve of her body to advantage. Her hands were on her hips and she was furious. For a moment, he thought she was the most beautiful thing he'd ever seen, but at the same time, the most dangerous. She looked as if she was about to completely blow his cover with her jealousy. He watched and gave silent thanks as she spun on her high red heel and ran from the garden.

Lucas turned back to Lochley, who was looking up at him suspiciously. "And what was all that about, Matthew? I thought you said she was your bodyguard? Sounds like she's been taking a more active interest in your body than just guarding it." She started to try and disentangle herself from his arms.

Lucas held on to her tightly. "Elizabeth, she's young enough to be my daughter. Unfortunately, she doesn't see me as a father figure and she's become a bit obsessive. That's another reason I need to get back to Mars. I need to get her back to the Psi Training Center there before she goes completely nuts. She's becoming more unstable every day. It seems that mental stability and telekinesis don't mesh well together."

Lochley nodded. It was well known that incidents of mental breakdown were more prevalent among teeps and teeks. Lucas bent and kissed her again. "Can I call you when I know exactly which ship we'll be leaving on? And can you clear it with Zack for us to leave without formalities? I really should go after her and try to calm her down."

Lochley pulled his head down into a deep kiss, then let him go. She smiled at him again. "Maybe next time you're here, we can spend more time together and have a bit more fun?"

Lucas pushed her away from him and grinned. "Now you know I never get to have any fun...Well, almost never."

He spun on his heel and left the garden rapidly, cursing Angel under his breath as he went.

Angel flew into the apartment. Her heart was racing and her breath was ragged from running. She was so angry—no, angry didn't come close. She was furious at what she had just witnessed. [Lucas

with that bitch!] Angel closed her eyes and tried to rein in her temper. Music; music would help calm her down. Angel moved over to the entertainment unit and picked up a data crystal that held 20th century music. Lucas had built up quite a collection during his time on B5, saying it reminded him of home. The soft, mellow music filled the apartment. Angel closed her eyes, trying to let it soothe her, but it wasn't working. She let out an anguished scream and lashed out at a vase of synthetic flowers on the table beside her, her arm swinging out as she smashed it off the table. She watched as the glass shattered, spilling its contents all over the floor.

"Havin' another temper tantrum, darlin'?" Angel spun round in shock as she heard Lucas's voice behind her. She was too upset to take notice of the dark and dangerous expression on his face.

"You sonofabitch!" screamed Angel as she flung herself toward him, aiming to hit him, but he was too quick for her. He grabbed her wrist and brutally twisted her arm behind her back, while his free hand grabbed her around the throat. She tried to break away and struggled against his hold, but it was a vain attempt as he tightened his grip, until finally she stopped struggling as she began to feel faint.

Lucas watched her in silence, taking in the anger in her eyes as she looked up at him. It was taking a lot of control to stop himself breaking her neck for what she'd done. She'd come damned close to jeopardizing his cover with Lochley because of her jealousy. When he finally spoke his voice was deceptively calm.

"Do you realize the trouble you could have caused with your petty jealousy?"

Angel looked up at him in defiance. It took a lot for her to talk with his hand clasped so tightly around her throat, but she was damned if she was going to be quiet this time.

"I don't give a damn, you bastard," she gasped. She could accept his infidelities as long as she didn't see him betraying her. Knowing what he did and seeing it beyond a shadow of a doubt was very different. Lucas emitted a cold chuckle, then surprised her by suddenly releasing his hold on her so he could move away. She rubbed her bruised throat, wishing she could knock the laughter right out of him. She was about to raise her hand to hit him when his drawl stopped her.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you Angel-Face," he warned as he moved to sit on the edge of the large desk against the wall, his arms crossed in front of him, watching her intently.

"So Lucas, is she your new whore?" asked Angel bitterly as she defiantly walked toward him.

Lucas took in a slow breath. He was tempted to shake the life out of her for the way she was behaving, but he knew he had to keep her calm and under control, because he still had many uses for her. He lifted a hand to caress her face gently, but she slapped it away and moved away from him.

He let out a heavy sigh.

"Angel, Honey, I have no interest in Captain Lochley." He forced his tone to sound soothing, as a parent would talk to an upset child.

Angel snorted and gave a dry laugh. "Really? Well you looked pretty damned interested to me, Lucas."

"Tell me something, Angel-Face. Do you want to go back home?" The soothing tone and expression on

his face only served to irritate her; she wasn't about to let him manipulate the conversation away from him and Lochley.

"Don't you dare change the subject!"

Lucas crossed his arms in front of him and offered an indulgent smile. "I'm not changing the subject, Love. I'm trying to explain to you why I was with Captain Lochley." He was about to continue but was cut off by her next outburst.

"Oh, gods. Give me a break, Lucas. What does my wanting to go home and you fucking that woman have to do with it?" Angel paused as she moved towards the porthole, looking out of it a moment before turning to glare at him. "Unless, of course, you plan to take her with you. Is that it, Lucas? Are you going to replace me with her?"

[To hell with being Mr. Nice Guy,] thought Lucas darkly as he moved towards her, causing her to shriek in fright as he grabbed her roughly and pushed her against the wall. For the first time, Angel became aware of the risk she was taking by attacking him. The way he was looking at her now made her throat contract in fear.

"You know, darlin', you're really beginning to try my patience." Angel's heart skipped several beats at the tone in his voice, but she was tired of always giving in to him, so instead of showing her fear, she looked him straight in the eye.

"Welcome to the club," she said, with all the courage she could muster. For a moment he gave her a deadly look, and then to her utter surprise, he started to laugh. He then let go of the painful hold he had on her arms. He began to caress her face for a moment before backing away from her.

"Darlin', I do admire your spirit," he said with amusement as she watched him closely. "Angel-Face, I'm flattered by your jealousy, but there really isn't a need for it."

Angel was again surprised. Instead of trying to change the topic, he was actually acknowledging the problem. [What is he playing at?] she thought suspiciously.

"Really, Lucas?" she asked in disbelief.

"Yes, really, Look, Angel-Face. In order for us to be able to leave here and go back to Eriadne, we need to get past Security. Lochley can do that for us." Lucas watched as she digested his words for a moment.

She realized he was telling her that he was just using Lochley to get what he wanted, but she was still not convinced. She knew he lied regularly and that this could be just another one of those times when he lied to get what he wanted, or perhaps in this case, to manipulate her. Her temper flared again.

"But that doesn't mean you have to sleep with her." She arched an eyebrow at him and crossed her arms, waiting for him to respond.

"Well actually, darlin', I do. Lochley thinks I'm Gideon. She and Space Cadet had a relationship. If I behaved any differently, she might suspect something. Whether you believe it or not, I was trying my damndest *not* to fuck her when you interrupted us. She's just not that good at it. If for a moment she suspected that I wasn't Gideon, well, we don't get past Security and you don't get to go home." Lucas approached her slowly, pleased when she didn't back away from him.

Angel looked up at him as he placed his hands on her shoulders, looking at her gently. "Angel-Face, she means nothing to me. She's just a means to an end."

Angel wanted to believe him, but she was finding it harder to trust anything he said. More and more lately, she was waking up to the true nature of the man she loved. She looked up at him. "I want to believe you Lucas, but..."

He moved one arm around her waist and stroked her cheek with his free hand. "Angel, I'd never leave you or replace you with anyone else." Lucas paused to place a gentle kiss on her lips. His voice was low and seductive now as he continued. "Don't you know that I love you and that we'll always be together?"

She broke eye contact, for an instant, she was lost in him again. He had just told her he loved her. Her inner voice screamed back at her [Wake up, Angel! You know what he's doing. Don't let him.] Angel did know what he was doing, and if she wasn't afraid of what he would do if she resisted and stood up to him, she would have told him where to go. But she knew it was safer to push down her anger and let him think she was no longer upset with him. Oh, she knew it wasn't just that. No matter how angry she was with him, she loved him and despite herself, she couldn't resist him altogether when he touched her and held her as he was holding her now. She closed her eyes for a moment, only opening them when his voice broke into her thoughts.

"You do know that, Angel. Don't you?" he asked quietly. He hadn't been too happy about her long silence. Something about her hesitation concerned him. He decided that he'd have to keep a close watch on her. She was starting to show too much resistance lately.

Angel looked up at him. She knew what he was doing. [Well, two can play at that game,] she thought as she smiled at him. "Yes, Lucas," she admitted while she thought sadly, [No, Lucas, I don't.]

Lucas gave her that lazy smile of his, and let the hand at her face join the other around her waist, pulling her even closer to him. "That's my Angel." She didn't resist as he lowered his mouth to hers. His tongue slipped between her lips and meshed with hers in a deep passionate kiss. She raised her arms and let them snake around his neck. She let her hand twine in his hair, pulling him closer into the kiss.

As they kissed, Angel remembered the music that was still softly playing. An idea formed in her head. She knew that he wasn't stupid, that he would quickly realize she was just playing along. She had to do something to convince him she was still under his thumb, or there would be hell to pay. She felt a sudden thrill at the thought of turning the tables on him, at being the one to seduce him. She knew she was playing a dangerous game. If he caught on to what she was doing, she would be in serious trouble. [No, I'm going to do this. For myself, I have to do this,] she thought as she gently broke the kiss.

Lucas gave her a questioning look. In response, she smiled and let her hand move from around his neck so she could trace a finger along his mouth while she pressed her body into his. "I'm sorry, Lucas. I was being stupid. Let me make it up to you," she whispered huskily as she leaned in to kiss him again. After a moment, he pulled her away.

Lucas could sense that she had something in mind. He decided to let it play out. "And how do you plan to do that, darlin'?" Angel smiled at him seductively and moved away from him over to the entertainment unit. Pressing a control, she selected a song, but paused the replay and turned to him as he watched her with interest.

She smiled again, lowering her eyes coyly at him. "I want to dance for you, Lucas."

Lucas arched an eyebrow in surprise. [Well, that's a first.] He had to admit, she had him intrigued. "Well, darlin', you have my undivided attention," he drawled as he moved toward a chair.

"No, don't move. Just stay where you are." At his questioning look, she continued, "You'll see." She smiled seductively when he stayed where he was, with his head inclining toward her.

"Whatever you want, darlin'."

Angel watched him for a moment, then glancing away from him briefly, she let her hand hover over the play control. She had chosen the music especially for this moment. The song was perfectly suited to her relationship with Lucas. She knew that she ran a risk by playing this song, but rebellion refused to let her use any other music but this. After a moment's hesitation, she pressed play.

She didn't take her eyes off him as she began to move and sway seductively as the sultry song began to play. Swaying her hips and moving to the beat of the music, she moved toward him. She moved her hands over her breasts and hips, caressing herself.

*The world was on fire and no one could save me but you
It's strange what desire will make foolish people do
I never dreamed that I would meet somebody like you*

As the lyrics filled the living room, she reached out her hand and ran it over his chest. Moving to the music, she moved around him, letting her hand slide from his chest over and around his back, until she stood in front of him again. Angel swayed her hips, and let her hands move down her legs. Taking her skirt in her hands, she swirled in a circle, her eyes fixing on him as he watched her hungrily.

*I don't want to fall in love
No I don't want to fall in love with you.*

Angel listened to the lyrics and the music, letting it move her body. Bending her knees, she rotated her hips, letting her hands move up, lifting the skirt to expose her thighs, giving him a teasing smile before she let it go to fall around her legs again. Raising her arms to her neck, she played with the halter tie, but she didn't undo it. She just let her fingers slowly trace the line of her dress down to her breasts before she moved fluidly toward him again.

Bending her legs and moving her feet, she swayed up against him while her hands moved over his face, then moved down his chest. Then she turned her back on him. Moving in a swaying motion up and down, she brushed her butt against his groin.

*What a wicked game to play
To make me feel this way*

Lucas stood still as she moved against him. She saw his arms move, and for a moment she thought he was going to reach out for her, but he didn't. Angel didn't want him taking control of this seduction. She didn't hesitate as she turned around, and still moving to the beat, slowly began to undo the buttons of his shirt, continuing to move her hips against him.

What a wicked thing to do

To make me dream of you

When all the buttons were undone, Angel slipped the shirt off his shoulders and down his arms. Tugging gently, she slipped it off his arms, then holding it, she lifted it to drape across his shoulder before letting it drop to the floor. Then she began to run her hand over his bare chest and down to his stomach. She swayed to the beat of the music, bending her legs so she could move lower and lower, until she was kneeling in front of him. She let her hands dance over his legs, then moved to his feet, where with quick movements, she removed his boots and socks.

*What a wicked thing to say
You never felt this way*

Then with a graceful movement, she stood up, and still swaying to the music, she moved her hands to the belt of his jeans. With deft movements, she undid the buckle and looking up, she gave him a slow, sexy smile and pushed the jeans off his hips. When they fell to the floor, Lucas stepped out of them.

With him now standing before her, completely naked, she swung away from him for a moment to feast her eyes on him. He stood there, watching her every move, his arousal obvious. She made her movements more seductive as she moved towards him. Placing her hands on his chest, she gently started to back him up until his legs touched the seat of a high-back chair. With a gentle shove, she pushed him down, letting her hand briefly trace along his face before she danced away from him again.

*What a wicked thing to do
To make me dream of you*

Angel moved her feet further apart, bending each leg alternately she continued to swing her hips, while she ran her hands through her hair and then over her neck. With one hand she untied the knot at the back of her neck, then holding both ties of the dress, she held them in front of her. Then slowly she began to lower the dress, giving him a brief teasing glimpse of her breasts, before raising the dress up again. She repeated the movements as she danced toward him again.

Standing in front of him, almost touching his legs, she closed her eyes and let her whole body sway back and forth to the beat. Then she let the dress go and she danced, letting her movement cause the dress to slip down her body, falling at her feet in a pool of red velvet. She stepped out of the high-heeled red shoes and moved closer to him, so she was standing astride him with her legs on either side of him.

*And I don't want to fall in love
No I don't want to fall in love--with you*

Raising her hands, she cupped his face as he looked up at her like he was ready to devour her. Angel continued to move above him. As she swayed, her thighs rubbed against his hard shaft, causing him to suck in his breath. She felt his hands move to hold her waist as she teased him with her movements.

Angel could feel her own hot arousal, her flesh burning to have him fill her. She might have been seducing him, but she wanted to have him inside her as much as he did; however she held back from lowering herself onto him. Instead, she bent her knees slightly and moved so that the tip of his cock brushed against her wet center. Then she straightened her legs, rising away from him. She did this over and over again as the song started to come to an end.

*I never dreamed that I'd love somebody like you
I never dreamed I'd lose somebody like you.*

She felt Lucas' hands tighten their hold on her hips, and she looked down at him. This time her breath caught in her throat at the look of desire that darkened his hazel eyes. Bending forward, she flicked her tongue along his mouth, then pulling his face up with her hands, she slid her tongue between his lips into the warm, spicy interior of his mouth. Rocking on the balls of her feet, she continued to move as she kissed him, purposely rubbing her breasts against his chest.

*No, I don't want to fall in love
No I don't want to fall in love--with you*

As she felt his hands move from her hips to encircle her waist, Angel broke the kiss, watching him she smiled softly, returning his hungry look. She let her arm drop to place it on top of his hand at her waist, while with the other hand, she traced two fingers along his mouth. Straightening, she ran her hand down the length of her body, moving it down across the top of her thigh and between her legs, using two fingers she parted her folds, and with the last line of the song, she lowered herself slowly onto his hard cock

Nobody loves no one

Angel didn't move as she waited for the music to stop. In the silence, she stared into his eyes, for a moment just savoring the feeling of him buried inside of her. Then leaning forward, she placed both her hands on his chest, letting her fingers play with his nipples as she kissed him roughly. When she felt his arms moving around her waist to hold her tightly to him, she started to move.

Slowly thrusting back and forth, Angel closed her eyes, and pulling away from the kiss, threw her head back, gasping as she felt his mouth fasten around one of her nipples. She moved her hands up to hold onto his shoulders as she arched her back. Supporting herself on her feet, she changed her movements, rising up almost completely off him before moving down on his cock. Then she began thrusting faster, taking him in deeper inside her.

She opened her eyes and brought her head back up so she could look down at him when she felt his mouth leave her breast. When he looked up at her, she lowered her mouth to his and kissed him deeply, loving the taste of him as his tongue meshed with hers. Then just as quickly as she had kissed him, she broke away. Keeping her eyes locked with his, she picked up the pace of her movements.

She felt his hold tighten as she brought them closer and closer to climax. She started to rotate her hips as she thrust, tightening her internal walls around his cock. With a final deep thrust, she drove them over in an intense release. She felt him emptying his hot essence into her, and as her body shuddered with an overwhelming orgasm, she remembered the refrain that had run throughout the song.

This world is only gonna break your heart.

As her body finally stopped trembling, she collapsed against him, gasping for breath. Neither of them said anything for a long moment as she continued to sit astride him, with him still buried inside her. Only when she felt his fingers stroke her spine did she raise her head from his shoulder and move off him, but she didn't move away from him. Her legs were still shaky, so she swiveled around to sit across his lap with her arm around his shoulders, while her other hand rested on his chest.

She absently let her fingers play with the soft hairs on his chest as she let herself think about what she had just done and wondered if he realized what she was thinking. She raised her eyes to his to find him watching her closely. He lifted his hand to run his thumb along her cheek, then let his hand move to the back of her neck. For a moment her heart stopped, waiting for him to grab her hair and tell her he knew what she had been doing with her dance, but he gently stroked the nape of her neck and then pulled her head down to place a soft, brief kiss on her lips. Then letting her go, he placed his hand on her thigh and gave her a sexy smile.

"Well, darlin', that was something else." His deep drawl made her stomach flutter with pleasure. Lucas chuckled and stroked her thigh as he continued, "Angel-Face, I think you're gonna have to do that more often."

Angel felt happier than she had in a long time. Her idea had worked. She leaned her head against his shoulder. "I'm glad you liked it. I wanted to do something special to show you how sorry I was." She briefly kissed his neck before resting her head against his shoulder, trying not to realize that there was some truth to her words.

Lucas moved his arm to hold her gently around the waist. "You did, darlin'." Angel smiled at the gentle tone in his voice and with a sigh of contentment, let herself just sit quietly against him, saying nothing.

With the silence came the thoughts, and she quickly realized she was no longer angry with Lucas. In the moment when he'd shown that he'd enjoyed what she'd done, she was happy that she'd pleased him. [You stupid, stupid girl,] taunted her inner voice, making her feel suddenly sad and angry with herself. Somehow, her own seduction had led her to being seduced, but that didn't mean she'd forgiven him. She was hurt by his infidelity and couldn't forgive him for that. She buried her face in his neck and tried to chase the thoughts away, but her inner voice was relentless. [Don't let yourself get lost in the passion, Angel. Don't let him control you.] She suddenly felt like crying, and cursed herself for being a fool, because at this moment, she wanted nothing more than to remain where she was, being held by him. At times like this, it really did feel as if he loved her.

Angel decided to enjoy the moment. In that instant, all she wanted was to forget their fight. She closed her eyes and let herself enjoy being in his arms without either of them finding it necessary to speak. [Fool.] She clamped down on her inner voice, refusing to let it spoil this moment for her. She snuggled her head against his neck and let herself relax.

Lucas leaned back against the chair, holding Angel close, enjoying the warmth and softness of her body against him. He was mentally running through the women he'd known, and had to admit that Angel was the best he'd ever had. She gave him more pleasure than any other woman he'd ever known. [Even Selena wasn't this good.] And part of that pleasure was that she never ceased to surprise him. Whenever he felt that he had her completely tamed, she would break free and show that she was still capable of independence. He was beginning to think that he would never totally control her, and the thought excited him. He loved to control but he also loved a show of independence and spirit--as long as she ultimately obeyed him.

Lucas thought back to the words of the song she had danced to and smiled to himself. [Revealing choice, Angel.] How conscious had that choice been? Was it an open display of rebellion? Or was it her subconscious trying to wake her up to reality?

He decided that a little test was needed--a test of her loyalty.

Gideon sat at the desk in his quarters, looking at the last of a pile of reports he'd just worked through, feeling a mild wash of contentment and relief that he was in front of the paperwork again. It had a tendency to creep up on him when he got involved with his real job of searching planets for a cure. Then he'd find that he'd have to lock himself away for a week or bureaucrats from Earthforce would start chasing him for this return or that schedule or the other inventory. He sometimes wondered what he'd do if John Matheson wasn't so good at filtering and sorting the crap that flowed across his desk.

For the moment it was under control. He was up to date with all the bulletins, memos, advisories, and reports that Earthforce demanded, and he hadn't a clue what to do with himself. Gideon thought about heading to the gym for a workout, but was feeling lazy. He'd used a rowing machine for an hour that morning anyway; he didn't really need another session. He looked up at the view screen on the wall and thought about the only exercise he really wanted.

The screen was currently showing the last picture he'd taken of Deborah. In it, she wore a strapless, black satin bra, the briefest of g-strings, and the things that made Gideon's cock twitch every time he looked at this picture, those black, lace-top stockings. She was on her back on the bed, her head resting on the pillows, her pale gold hair spread around her like a cloak. Deborah's arms were stretched wide, seeming to beckon him to join her. Her back was flat against the bed, the bra pushing her beautiful breasts together, creating a cleavage that utterly fascinated him. He dragged his eyes further down her body, over the curve of her belly—which was just barely showing the swelling of their child—to her hips, which she had twisted sideways, with her legs held together, her knees bent and her toes pointed. He ran his eyes along the length of those legs, which were always stunning, but in those stockings, made him whimper with desire.

Gideon closed his eyes and remembered the night he'd taken that picture. He recalled how much he'd enjoyed removing that bra and g-string, smiling as he remembered the games he'd played with the ice cream. He was usually fairly conservative in his approach to sex, but that night, he'd felt inspired. He remembered the taste of the melted ice cream as he licked it off her breasts, and the way her nipples had hardened as he dropped the cold liquid onto them.

Before he'd met Deborah, Gideon had never thought of himself as fixating on any one part of a woman. When he was a junior officer and had talked about such things with friends, he'd never classified himself as a tit man, or a butt man or whatever--he'd always said he liked the whole package. Well, he still did, but he had to admit that it was Deborah's breasts that drew his hands and mouth like magnets.

He thought back to the first night he'd spent in her bed, how he'd woken with a start to see Deborah [Demon. I only knew her as Demon then,] lying next to him and how she'd rolled onto her back in her sleep. He sometimes thought it was that first sight of her naked beauty that had stolen his heart. Gideon remembered everything about that night and the day and night that followed when they'd explored each other, finding new ways to arouse and give pleasure to each other.

Gideon leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes, remembering every time he'd made love to Deborah--every position--lying, standing, sitting, kneeling, in her bed, on the sofa, on the floor, in the tub, in the shower, in the lake, on the bike, in the grass, him on top of her, beneath her, behind her, and in front. He was sure that by now they'd tried every position in the Kama Sutra and perhaps had

invented a few of their own. So much for a conservative approach to sex. He looked down at the bulge in his pants and said, "And what do you want?"

He knew the answer to that question, but sadly, she was light years away. Gideon got out of his chair and walked stiff-legged to the bathroom. He had to find a way to get back to Eriadne before he had to explain to Sarah Chambers why he had a sprained wrist.

Lily looked sadly at Demon and spoke. "Please, Demon, try to eat a bit more."

Demon looked up slowly, then glanced down at the plate in front of her, where she'd been idly pushing food around with a fork. "I'm sorry, Lily. It's delicious, honestly."

Lily watched as Demon made an effort to clear the plate. She looked back over the table at Lily and smiled. "See? It was wonderful. And thank you for inviting me to your room for lunch. Even though I know it was a plot to make sure I ate properly. You can tell Luke that I was a good girl and ate up all my lunch." Demon rose from her seat. "Now I think I'm going to take a nap. I'll catch up with you later." She turned to where Ilas and Dureena sat silently watching. "It was lovely to see you both. We must do this more often."

As Demon left the room, Dureena let out a sigh of exasperation. Lily looked around at her quizzically. Dureena growled, "Why does she have to act the Drama Queen all the time? When I first met her, I thought she had some fight and guts to her. Now she just pines away, waiting for her man. It's pathetic."

Lily's temper flared. Her eyes flashed bright green as she stood, leaning her full weight on her arms on the table, placing her face within inches of Dureena's, teeth bared and hissing, "How dare you! You have no idea what Demon's going through or what she's feeling. And it's not just 'her man' she's missing. That's only the half of it. What's crippling her is losing Angel."

Dureena rose from her seat and pushed her face straight back into Lily's. "At least she still has her baby! That's more than I have! And why doesn't she do something about it? You all just sit here moaning on about how you miss your sister, but you don't do a damned thing about it! Why aren't you out there searching for her? Why didn't Demon go with Gideon and the Excalibur and track her sister down? If you're all so certain that Angel didn't have anything to do with killing my baby, then why are you so reluctant to find her?"

Ilas leaned between the two women and pushed them apart, strengthening her arms enough to force them both back into their chairs. "Enough. Please, Dureena. You don't know what you're talking about. Stop it."

Dureena looked up at Ilas in surprise. She had never seen this side of Ilas before, never seen the steel that lay beneath the flexibility and pliancy that Ilas usually displayed.

"So explain it to me, Ilas. Explain why poor, sad Demon is so badly off, when she still has her child. And tell me why you're all here instead of out there looking for Angel."

Lily started to yell, but Ilas glared at her. Lily took a deep breath and started again, this time in a calm, controlled voice that met with a nod of approval from Ilas.

"OK, but first consider this. Demon is alone. I have Luke, you and Ilas have each other, but Demon has no one. She misses Angel and Gideon more than you can imagine. So think about that before you call her a Drama Queen. Think about how you'd feel if you were alone right now. Yes, she has her baby, but he can't keep her warm at night, he can't hold her and be there for her when she needs comfort and love."

Lily took a deep breath and continued, "Demon begged Gideon to take us with him. She wanted to go with the Excalibur to find Angel, but if she went, it meant that Ilas and I would have to go too. Breaking the link with Angel was bad enough; if she had tried to break her link to us, it would have killed us all."

Lily's eyes filled with tears, and she swallowed before continuing. "Gideon asked Luke what he thought. Luke told me that Gideon would have risked his career to take us with him if he thought it would be safe for us to go, but Luke had to tell him that it wasn't safe, and there were two reasons for that."

Lily stared straight into Dureena's eyes, letting her see the pain and guilt she felt. "Demon would have been fine. She was strong and carrying her baby easily. She could have gone anywhere and done virtually anything without harming herself or her baby but because I'm small and carrying twins, Luke has been worried about me since he read up on multiple births. At one time, he even tried to tell me that we should stop having sex!"

Lily's indignation on this issue made Ilas and Dureena smile.

Lily carried on. "So Luke told Gideon that it wouldn't be safe for me to travel, and if I couldn't go, neither could Demon. Gideon had to tell Demon that he couldn't take her with him." The tears were now streaming down Lily's face.

Dureena had calmed a little and asked quietly, "And the other reason? You said there were two reasons Luke advised against you going with the Excalibur."

This time Ilas responded. "The other reason was you, Dureena. Luke felt that you weren't fit to travel when the Excalibur returned. It was only a week since you'd lost the baby and you were very weak. We couldn't leave you here alone, so I agreed to stay with you. And if I stayed we all stayed."

Dureena looked from one woman to the other, realization dawning. "So if it hadn't been for us, Demon could have gone with Gideon and searched for her sister? She could have been with him, and doing whatever she could to find Angel?"

Lily nodded. "Because of us, she has to sit here alone, desperately lonely, missing Gideon and feeling useless because she can't search for Angel. She's worried sick about what Lucas is doing to Angel, but she's even more worried about what will happen if Gideon finds Angel, and there's nothing she can do about any of it."

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The Witches of Eriadne: Fire Burn

[{Part 1: Past}](#) [{Part 2: Present}](#) [{Part 3: Present Perfect}](#) [{Part 4: Future}](#) [{Part 5: Conditional}](#)